

Speaking Silences: Lyric Poetry in the Narrative Strategies of Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish, and Jane Barker

by

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Abstract

My dissertation is an exploration of how Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish, and Jane Barker co-opted Philip Sidney's prose romance interpolated with poems, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. I explore how each writer uses her own poetry to fill silences and create alternative narratives in her prose fiction. In *Arcadia*, Sidney integrates poetry into the narratives as a means by which to explain motivations behind human behavior. Conjured by the heroines, poems enter these narratives as creations springing from the heroines' need not only to express themselves emotionally and lament injustices, but also, crucially, to imagine worlds where they are not restricted as writers.

Important for my reading of the narrative form of prosimetrum in these fictions is the theory that silence as a rhetorical technique provides women writers with a space to work both in and against conventional patriarchal discourses. Poems in prose fiction by Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker occur at moments when silence takes over the prose. Silence invades these romances as a testament to limitations faced by early modern women fiction writers as they attempted to express the experience of the woman writer. These silences speak forcefully to the ways in which early modern women writers found themselves restricted by patriarchal discourses. Poems then enter as recourse for female expression. Innovations in narrative discourses enable women writers to question available plots, support structures, and means of emotional expression. Furthermore, the space provided by narrative innovation gave women the power to transform

that which they questioned and criticized into what they imagined the world should allow for them.

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Dedication

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Introduction

Prose, Poetry, and Silence: Co-opting Sidney

The Experiential Reveal

Scholarship continues to uncover female voices lost, muffled, or misread in early modern literature in an effort to reveal missing stories, experiences, and histories. One of the ways to recover lost voices is to examine rhetorical techniques used in texts written by women. Often, writers of fiction deploy narrative strategies such as broken syntax or unresolved plots in order to express what they cannot pursue within the narrative conventions of their time and place. This dissertation demonstrates that early modern British women writers expressed their experiences as writers in poetic passages integrated into their prose narratives, often in the voice of the heroine. An analysis of these moments in their fictions reveals consistencies in narrative strategies created in the space before and after an interpolated poem attributed to the poet-heroine in the prose narrative. These consistencies deal with more than the form of prosimetrum; rather, early modern women use this space to assert their perspectives on writing.¹ This project shows how early modern women voiced not only the limitations they faced regarding lack of respect, space, and

¹ Prosimetrum is a text composed in alternating segments of prose and verse. Often these verses are connected to the prose narrative. Differentia of variables is wide and some are still not wholly understood. Definition from *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, edited by Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 981.

support, but also the power they possessed concerning presence of talent, knowledge, and audience.

Philip Sidney's prose fiction, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593), marks an important moment in the history of English prose fiction. One convention established by *Arcadia* is the integration of poetry into prose narrative. Sidney's reputation as a master of poetic technique unites with his deliberate use of poetry in prose fiction in *Arcadia* to respond to the prosimetrum form of medieval literature from Boethius to Dante. Generally, the purpose of the poetry was to allow a character an opportunity for lyric reflection or self-reflection. While not every writer of prose fiction after Sidney imitated this technique, its importance to the development of the genre as a means by which to further transfer upon readers the experiences, thoughts, and emotions of characters suggests the sustaining belief among early modern writers that, often, inwardness is best expressed in poetry.²

Early modern writers used poetry within the prose of their fictions in order to support what the prose offers. That is, when reading these works, we can see the poetry interpolated in the narrative of the prose; the poems are interpolated into the story with clear directives to the reader as to the motivation behind a character reading, reciting, or writing verses (i.e. to express emotion, because the event recalled a poem that best describes their reaction, etc.). The prose and poetry work together to move the narrative along, yet remain distinctly separate from one another – notably creating a first blank gap on the page where the prose ends and the poetry begins, and then another where the poem ends and the prose begins again. Although the prose and poetry work together, they are aesthetically different. While the poems contain a variety of subjects, the narrative surrounding interpolated poems, as well as the poems themselves,

² By inwardness I refer to the innermost personal thoughts and feelings.

functions as a site for ideas, experiences, and emotions that might otherwise be lost because they are taboo, unacceptable, or dangerous to express for women writers.

Important to my argument is the narrative pattern in the prose that announces the entrance of a poem. Since poems are interpolated into the prose with reasons for the motivation behind writing, reading, or reciting them, a shift occurs in the prose of the narrative before and after their appearance. In many of *Arcadia*'s poems Sidney presents a brief sentence about what a character is thinking or feeling, then signals the entrance of a poem by creating a statement along the lines of "he began thus."³ After the verses that enter the narrative at this point, the prose picks back up with "when he ended," "concluded," "was finished," or "would proceed." These signals that begin and end the shift from prose into poetry are apparent throughout *Arcadia*. They provide Sidney a forum from which to assert firmly the reasons for including poetry in his epic romance, their precise relation to the narrative, and their definitive end in the narrative.

For the women writers that are the subject of this dissertation, these shifts are not as clearly defined. Female poet characters often find themselves struggling to find a private location in which they can express themselves in poetry. Even when they locate this space, they are interrupted upon completion of their verse. However, their shifts from prose to poetry and back to prose mark a pattern that the writer often deploys each time she is about to include a poem. At this point in the narrative, we can see a voice emerge in this space that expresses her experiences as a woman and as a woman writer. That these shifts are less clearly delineated than the shifts in

³ I am using *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593) because as late as 1725 it was still popular enough to produce a fourteenth edition. It is the book that Samuel Richardson based his *Pamela* on, the romance that the Romantics read, and the text of which Pope owned a copy. *Old Arcadia*, although circulated as a manuscript, was not printed until 1912. Wroth certainly would have read both, but the text that a wider audience would have recognized in her own work, the text that influenced authors for centuries beyond Wroth, is the 1593 *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. There were five editions by 1621.

Arcadia indicate rhetorical moves that reveal the experience of the early modern woman writer – how difficult it was for many women to find space for poetic expression, as well as how easily this space could be taken away from her.

The point of this study is not only the recover of female poets' lost experiences, but also the examination of the strategies these writers use to express those perspectives. I call narrative patterns that I discuss the "experiential reveal," meaning both the narrative pattern surrounding poems attributed to heroines and the experiences of the woman writer that are revealed in that space. The experiential reveal differs for each writer I discuss; yet the use of silence before and after the pattern (not related to the blank space between prose and poetry) is a consistent rhetorical strategy in each of the works I explore in this project. Silence as a rhetorical strategy appears in many works in many ways – from characters who do not speak, to broken or missing language or syntax. In the works I examine, the silences at the beginning of the experiential reveal occur because the heroine finds herself wishing to express inwardness and cannot because of social expectations that she remain silent and because language by women had not yet been developed, while the silences that occur immediately after an interpolated poem result from intrusion upon the female poet.⁴

The alterations to the experiential reveal reflect the evolving genre of prose fiction, as well as the shifting limitations facing women writers in each historical moment I examine (early, mid, and late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century). These limitations occur through the silences surrounding the experiential reveal. When we move from the *Arcadia* to the early eighteenth century, we see how the silences imposed upon women change. We can also see how,

⁴ Such intrusions most often involve other characters interrupting her thoughts, or literally intruding into her poetic space.

as the genre of prose fiction changes, women gained new forums as professional writers. With each new forum different means of silencing appear, however. Therefore, in tracing these shifts in silences, in genre, and in the deployment of the experiential reveal, we gain insight into the evolving attitudes toward, and practices of, the woman writer, such as what topics and genres are socially acceptable for her to publish and how much space or time she expects society to allot for writing. In addition to social attitudes toward the women writer, and perhaps even more importantly, we gain unique insights into her perspectives regarding those attitudes.

The first female writer after Sidney who uses his paradigmatic mixture of prose and poetry in a prose romance is his niece, Lady Mary Wroth. Her *Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1621) is an epic romance, modeled on *Arcadia* with several innovations attributed to her poet-heroine-avatar, Pamphilia. Pamphilia's poems present changes to Sidney's form that reveal a female perspective on writing professionally. For instance, Wroth's poems search for a transcendent love, while Sidney's do not. By attributing such poems to her heroine-avatar in *Urania*, Wroth presents the argument that the female poet provides new perceptions on poetry. In this model, early modern women writers can offer up poetic forms and contents that are otherwise missing from the canon of respected works.

At this moment in print culture, English women do not have a public forum for publishing prose romance. As Sidney's niece, Wroth, perhaps, was in a better position than other women to publish in print.⁵ While we cannot know if Wroth intended to publish *Urania* in print, it is likely that she did desire its publication. Shortly after publication she faced criticisms that forced her to suggest publically that it was printed without her permission, yet there is no evidence that she took any active means to recover *Urania* from the public eye. It is likely that

⁵ Margaret Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 182-183.

she circulated sections of the manuscript among writing friends – a form of publication in early modern England. Her sisters and cousins were poets as well; and professional musicians that were among a coterie, a coterie which included John Donne and George Herbert at one time, often sang family poetry at the Sidney/Herbert estate, Baynards Castle.⁶ This evidence of Wroth imagining an audience for her work – whether within her writing circles or amongst public consumption – provides a paradigm for a woman writing in the fashion of *Arcadia* with intention to offer her perspective to literary history.

Pamphilia, Wroth's avatar in the work, is noted for her poetic talent, and we receive several of Wroth's poems as expressions of Pamphilia's deepest emotions. While Wroth situates Pamphilia as a poet, she resides within the confines of Wroth's historical climate; that is, she cannot perform publicly as a poet because, as a woman, she must be discrete with her emotions. The experiential reveal in *Urania* occurs when Pamphilia finds herself stifled with emotion and seeks to vent those passions discretely. Wroth deploys the experiential reveal to express the ways in which Pamphilia, and therefore, by extension, Wroth, must go beyond the confines of patriarchal limitations in order to find her space as poet. Wroth's version of experiential reveal features on one hand the female writer's talent, and on the other hand, demonstrates that she is shut out from the professional world of writing. In many of the experiential reveals Wroth constructs in *Urania*, she unites Pamphilia with several poet qualities uplifted during Wroth's time, and even imagines a public audience for Pamphilia's poetry. At the same time, the silences that occur before and after Pamphilia's poems reflect the lack of space for women to express themselves, while also gesturing to the absence of a public place for professional women writers.

⁶ Ibid.

Wroth's own life reflects this silencing with the publication of *Urania* and its immediate withdrawal due to criticism from Sir Edward Denny. Denny, one of the many figures believed to have been satirized in *Urania*, begins his attack against Wroth with gender, calling her "Hermaphrodite in show, in deed a monster." The focus on Wroth as a woman in Denny's attacks of *Urania* demonstrates the nonexistent space for a female romance writer in the early seventeenth-century print marketplace. Denny does not attack *Urania* as a poorly written work, or as an ill-deserved satire. Instead, he discounts the author by concentrating on the poor decision of a person of her sex to present her fiction to a public audience. Although Denny's attack models the ways women could be disciplined out of the print marketplace, the fact that he focuses on Wroth as a woman reveals the difficulties facing her aspirations for print publication. Yet, that she did publish, that we have little evidence that she sought to suppress *Urania* after Denny's attack, and that she publically defended herself in verse against Denny, demonstrates that Wroth imagined a place for herself as a professional writer despite forces working against her.

Margaret Cavendish's *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, contained in *Natures Pictures* (1656), demonstrates a place for authoritative, professional women writers within the patriarchal strictures of seventeenth-century England. Her remarkable assembly of texts showcases her experimentations with genre, as well as her desire for fame as a literary contributor in multiple genres. Cavendish uses prosimetrum in her romance to open a way into the male-dominated world of publishing. Her use of poetry as a safe place in which to discourse accompanies her bold foray into the fields and genres of natural philosophy, prose fiction, and plays. Within *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, rather than using poetry to permit her heroine, Travellia, a voice, Cavendish artfully uses the prose before and after interpolated poetry in the romance to

furnish Travellia with the tools of intellect and virtue that ultimately authorize herself into a role of leadership. Rather than moving away from other characters and inward as she composes poetry, as Wroth's heroine does, Cavendish's heroine asserts her philosophical and emotional perspectives to other characters in both the prose before and after interpolated poetry, as well as in the poems that follow. In fact, the silences that surround these moments come from other characters attempting to manipulate Travellia. However, Cavendish uses the prose and poetry in these scenes to undermine silences imposed upon Travellia by rewarding her intellect with leadership appointments directly after another character's attempt to silence and control her.

In this deployment of the experiential reveal, Cavendish demonstrates how a woman is not only capable of leading a nation through her intellectual prowess, but also how she can authorize herself into that role. Cavendish uses her position as the wife of an aristocrat to sanction herself as a writer. She carefully crafts an authorial persona that focuses on her station as a virtuous wife. Further, Cavendish uses Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* to promote the existence of female writers who are capable of instructing the nation into a better place. Cavendish's deployment of the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* presents an image of the woman writer that is balanced between the patriarchal bounds and the creative fancies that compel her to present her works to audiences outside her control through print publication.

Not long after Cavendish's works were published, more women gained access to writing and publishing as a profession. In fact, women absolutely dominated the prose fiction market until the 1740s and Richardson. Many women, including Penelope Aubin, Mary Davys, Catherine Trotter, and Elizabeth Rowe were in the "virtuous" or even "pious" category, while Aphra Behn, Delarivière Manley (who also published in the seventeenth century) and Eliza Haywood were in the "slut" category. Jane Barker wrote three novels about Galesia loosely

based on her own life and integrated with her own previously published poetry as her heroine's talented expression of thought, emotion, and desire. While Barker's romances mirror many conventions of the prose fiction of her contemporaries, her inclusion of such a high number of her own poetic exercises stands out because most writers did not integrate their own poetry into prose fiction to the extent that Sidney and Wroth did in their romances. Barker's Galesia romances utilize several forms, both traditional and innovative. Barker includes stories from her fellow women writers and is influenced by the continental, especially French, romances.⁷ Her use of poetry integrated into the prose narrative builds on the generic tradition established by *Arcadia*.

Barker's poems work throughout her novels, particularly *Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (1723), to establish Galesia as a credible poet; yet the tension and guilt in these poems reveal the anxiety Galesia has in finding a socially acceptable space as a single woman and professional poet. Galesia constantly struggles to overcome her mother's insistence that she put study and writing away in order to pursue courtship and marriage; although she gains writing spaces, her time in these spaces is interrupted as soon as she completes a poem; and while she gains an audience of scholars eager to read her poetry, they often disappoint her by focusing on her body rather than her mind. These types of silencing indicate the limitations women faced even in a period when they could choose the path of professional writer. Although Galesia is encouraged to write by male scholars, determined to write despite her mother's pressures, and compelled to locate a writing place, she is not respected, supported, or given the space that she

⁷ Around the time Barker published, Eliza Haywood had already written a "French" romance, *Love in Excess* (1719). Barker's own *Exilius* (1715) is clearly indebted to the French romances and she refers to these romances through characters in her St. Germain's garden settings, where romances are read aloud, in *Patchwork Screen* and *Love Intrigues*. Further, Wroth would have known the continental romances and Cavendish was immersed in the reading of romances at court in exile in France with Henrietta Maria.

desires. Barker's extensive use of her previously published poetry in these silences illustrates the social expectations that discourage women from pursuing a profession of writing – via the silences – and provides an alternative narrative that imagines a realized possibility for women to practice professional writing.⁸ In the experiential reveals of *Patch-Work Screen* we see a woman writer permitted to write and publish in the context of the increasing tension between domestic expectations and the growing print marketplace for women writers.

Although Cavendish and Barker likely did not read Wroth's epic romance, there is evidence that they read *Arcadia*. Therefore, all three women read Sidney's innovation to the form of prose fiction and integrated poems into their individual experiments with the genre of romance. But each did so in her own way and each reveals her experience as a woman writer; thereby permitting us insights into the ways early modern women writers saw themselves as members of a literary lineage, sought to add their opinions on the form of prose fiction to that lineage, and created narrative strategies to voice their experience as women writers that co-opted Sidney's model of poetry in prose fiction with patterns of their own invention. Consequently, women invent ways to express their individual experiences even when dominant discourses do not provide a language or form for their expression. While women continue to write in the prosimetrum form, I end with Barker not only because her use of the experiential reveal is similar to Wroth's and Cavendish's, but also because she used prosimetrum as a narrative form, reinvigorated it, and demonstrated its usefulness for a new generation of writers. These particular women, therefore, function as ideal representatives of the changing experience of the woman writer that is contingent upon the evolving place for the professional woman writer.

⁸ NB: not all the poems interpolated into her romances were previously published in her *Poetical Recreations* (1688); some were manuscript poems.

Sidney's *Arcadia* as a Paradigm

Romance is often treated politically as a Royalist genre. Recently, however, the genre's penchant for a turn inward has been recuperated as different from, but not entirely opposite from, classical epic. While the term has many meanings, I would like to use Anthony Welch's loose definition of romance,

as the literary genre or mode descending from sources as diverse as Homer's *Odyssey*, the Greek prose fiction of Heliodorus, and the chivalric *romans* of medieval Europe, its many strands tangled together and recast in the Renaissance as a special precinct of courtly love, recreative fancy, and, in some forms, pastoral escape.⁹

What is more, in the evolution of the genre, classical epic and European chivalric romance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries merged, while Authurian romance had "broken into the epic canon of the humanists."¹⁰ Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) turned the tide of the genre when it sought to reconcile the classical epic and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1532) with a structure of unity. While romance shapes itself with multiple plot structures, Tasso attempted a linear plot. This union of romance and epic permits a place of "renunciation and retreat."¹¹ Possibly, this attempt to find common ground between epic and romance freed poets from focusing on plot and encouraged them to begin experimenting with characters' inward passions, as opposed to heroic action.¹² Sidney's *Arcadia* picks up this experimentation through a focus not on knights errant, but on the inner motivations behind human behavior. Further, romance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was often treated as a space. That is, Spenser's "Bower

⁹ Anthony Welch, "Epic Romance, Royalist Retreat, and the English Civil War" *Modern Philology* 105.3 (February 2008): 577.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 579.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 582.

¹² *Ibid.*

of Bliss” in *The Faerie Queen* as a romance/space creates a cocoon away from the turmoil of life.¹³ Sidney’s *Arcadia*, likewise, functions as space. It follows, then, that women writers would turn to the romance structure of *Arcadia* in order to create space in which they might more freely push the bounds of what is socially acceptable.

The narrative tradition in which Sidney writes *Arcadia* permits us insights into why he became a paradigm for fiction writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. John Hoskins, a contemporary of Sidney, who wrote *Directions for speech and style* (c. 1599), expresses the Renaissance assumption that mastery of rhetoric is a mark of civilization. Throughout Hoskins’ work he uses examples from *Arcadia* to praise as superior examples of rhetoric. He believed that Sidney based his work on Heliodorus in Greek, Sannazaro’s *Arcadia* in Italian, and Montemayor’s *Diana* in Spanish.¹⁴ It is also likely that Sidney took much of his plot and chivalry from the popular late medieval French romance, *Amadís de Gaula*, a Greek romance, *Clitophon and Leucippe*, and from Heliodorus’ *Aethiopica*. Knowing where Sidney borrowed from is helpful in discerning the conventions in which Sidney was writing. From the Italian *Arcadia* and the Spanish *Diana*, two of the most influential works of Renaissance literature, Sidney took the combination of prose narrative and verse, which is particularly characteristic of his *Old Arcadia*.¹⁵ It is possible that early modern women would want to imitate Sidney because of this divide, as he emerged as the elite author who “never sought the name of an author as an

¹³ Ibid., 578.

¹⁴ Maurice Evans, “Introduction” in *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, edited by Maurice Evans (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 19.

¹⁵ Ibid.

end in itself.”¹⁶ They would want their works associated with the authority of Sidney, and because his name and the name of his prose fiction became symbolic of excellent literary invention, it is an ideal work to imitate for writers attempting to establish an authoritative place from which to write.

Although Sidney’s treatment of love and heroic adventure is more controlled and serious than any work that had existed before, even today there is much discussion about the precise genre to which *Arcadia* belongs. It has been called a pastoral romance, an Arcadian epic, a Greek romance, an heroic epic, and an heroic romance. Nevertheless, we can see that *Arcadia* has a set of conventions all its own. The range and flexibility of the above forms allows Sidney to create an ideal vehicle for the “delightful teaching” that he promotes in his *Defence*.¹⁷ Even though he inherits many plots from older romance traditions, such as shipwrecks, disguises, wanderings, and oracles, he complicates them with Renaissance questions of faith, reason, and human error.¹⁸ The literary form Sidney establishes carries strong symbolism of order even when all decorum seems lost in *Arcadia*.¹⁹

¹⁶ Lori Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romances in Early Modern England* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2002), 32.

¹⁷ At the time Sidney was writing there was debate over whether a single great action centered on a single hero as in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* was preferable to multiple interwoven actions and characters such as appear in *Orlando Furioso*. Sidney’s *Defence* was influenced by Cinthio’s *On Romances* (1554) defended the romance. In *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, however, Sidney appears to attempt a compromise between the Renaissance debate over plots and characters. The tradition from which Sidney works derives from Greek romances as well as Arthurian cycles of the Middle Ages. Evan, “Introduction,” 19-22.

¹⁸ Please see Steve Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England* for a more detailed discussion of Sidney’s humanist innovations to the plot structures of popular romances that preceded his work (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 73-103.

¹⁹ Evan, “Introduction,” 36.

The success of *Arcadia* made available the redirection of romance genres.²⁰ Sidney is an ideal point of origin for my investigation into how women use the prosimetrum form in their fictions. Indeed, *Arcadia* was so successful once printed, that a new genre of literature, “Arcadiaes,” emerged in the seventeenth century.²¹ For many of these writers, *Arcadia* provided a way into authorship through the authority of Sidney. That is, imitators of *Arcadia* could gain a readership because of the reputation and popularity of Sidney and his work, but could deviate enough from Sidney’s romance in order to advance their identity as authors.²² Such works became so popular that “Arcadia” and “Sidney” labels began signifying a specific set of generic and aesthetic conventions.²³ Some of the more popular early *Arcadia* inspired works were James Shirley’s *A Pastoral Called the Arcadia* (1640), Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher’s *Cupid’s Revenge* (1612), and Francis Quarles’ *Argalus and Parthenia* (1628). However, the only writer to imitate Sidney’s form of interpolated verse in prose was Mary Wroth in *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* (1621).

Women such as Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker use *Arcadia* not only because of its highly respected place in literary tradition, but also because the ways in which Sidney invented a form inherently provides spaces to question social expectations, experiment with new voices, and assert the personal. Sidney’s form draws several social issues into question in *Arcadia*, and his experimentation with a wide variety of voices is part of his innovation to the romance genre.

²⁰ *Arcadia* was immensely popular – reaching thirteen editions by 1674.

²¹ Stephen B. Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 63.

²² *Ibid.*, 71.

²³ *Ibid.*, 72. As Dobranski demonstrates, these labels signified not only generic and aesthetic conventions, but also, in some cases, political ones.

While characters' responses to one another are complex in *Arcadia*, Sidney focuses more on the interactions that cause such complexities than on one individual character's personal thoughts and emotions, whereas the three women writers in this project spend most of their narratives presenting the complex interior struggles of their heroines. While writers such as Christine de Pizan or Edmund Spenser might proffer available platforms from which women such as Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker could innovate fiction, Sidney's concentrated effort in using prosimetrum form to express complicated human emotion and behavior make him the most ideal writer to imitate.

The poems in *Arcadia* work with the prose to provide a sense of events, emotions, and motivations. *Arcadia* reflects Sidney's interest in the rhetorical powers of the poet, not only in the interpolated verse, but also in the prose narrative. Sidney is significant as well for his *Defence of Poesie* where he explains his theories on the moral and ethical purposes of poetry while he also makes a case for English poetry's importance relative to continental language-traditions. As such, Sidney attempts to create a space for the English-language poet as a figure for instruction and legitimate social utterance. In his *Defence*, Sidney argues that the poet has the power to create something that would,

move men to take that goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved – which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed.²⁴

As a writer, Sidney works with belief in the ability of individuals imbued with poetic faculties to confer upon not only their readers, but also on the movements of human progress all that is good

²⁴ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy* in *Sir Philip Sidney The Major Works*, edited by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 218. All future citations of Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy* will appear in-text as *Defence*.

and beautiful. Sidney understood his public personae to be that of poet, and his romance reflects this perspective.

Arcadia does not read as though poems were included as afterthoughts, or that a prose narrative was written to surround an established verse pattern. Rather, prose and poems work together throughout the work to present a coherent narrative. These two genres become integral in bringing forth opinions about society, politics, and literature. In an important moment early in *Arcadia*, in which we are introduced to one of the main characters, Sidney utilizes poetry to alert his audience to the reading of Mopsa that he wants us to remember for the entirety of the work. In the prose of *Arcadia* the reader is often left feeling a sense of sympathy for a character who lacks virtue.

In the first poem in *Arcadia*, Kalander, describing for Palladius the inhabitants of Arcadia, resorts to verse for the character of Mopsa. After introducing Dametas and Miso, Kalander says, “Between these two personages (who never agreed in any humour, but in disagreeing) is issued forth mistress Mopsa, a fit woman to participate of both their perfections: but because a pleasant fellow of my acquaintance set forth her praise in verse, I will only repeat them and spare mine own tongue, since she goes for a woman” (*Arcadia* 72). In this poem, the unnamed author endows Mopsa with qualities attributed to gods – yet, these characteristics are alien to the gods to whom they are attributed:

What length of verse can serve brave Mopsa’s good to show,
Whose virtues strange, and beauties such, as no man them may know?
Thus shrewdly burden’d then, how can my Muse escape?
The Gods must help, and precious things must serve to shew her shape:
Like great God Saturn fair, and like fair Venus chaste:
As smooth as Pan, as Juno mild, like Goddess Iris fast.
With Cupid she foresees, and goes God Vulcan’s pace:
And for a taste of all these gifts, she steals God Momus’ grace.
Her forehead Jacinth-like, her cheeks of Opal hue,
Her twinkling eyes bedeck’d with Pearl, her lips as Sapphire blue:

Her hair like Crapal stone, her mouth O heav'nly wide!
Her skin like burnished gold, her hands like silver ore untry'd.
As for her parts unknown, which hidden sure are best:
Happy be they which well believe, and never seek the rest. (*Arcadia* 72-73)

These verses direct the audience to the appropriate response of Mopsa's character. The form and content work together to present a Mopsa who is neither lovely nor loved. For instance, the rhymed couplets of hexameter and iambic heptameter in Mopsa's introductory poem illustrate why she is not to be imitated. Mopsa's qualities blunder along through the poem. Gods and their mismatched attributes work within rhyming but uneven lines to signal to the audience proper reading of Mopsa. The imbalance of the poem works with the prose to demonstrate the ways in which sympathy for Mopsa ought to be re-balanced in remembering these verses. Rather than creating a lyrical reflection of Mopsa as she perceives herself, this poem presents an outside perspective of the character that permits Sidney a use of the prosimetrum form that directs his readers into a specific understanding of Mopsa. The poem attempts to redeem Mopsa's character, but in doing so creates a mock blazon that reveals Mopsa as a foil to the virtuous Philoclea. In fact, Kalandar concludes his summary of the characters in *Arcadia* by imparting a thorough depiction of their behavior through this mixing of prose and poetry.

Because Sidney is concerned with human behavior, and because he believes in the power of the poet to reflect this behavior, his integration of poetry strikes a balance with the prose in order to present human motivations and behavior to the audience more precisely. This rhetorical balance is not always as obvious in writings by Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker. Rather than a coincidence of less talent than Sidney, I argue that they are imitating this balance, but through a less direct way in order to express experiences and opinions that their historical situation as women discouraged. By at once imitating Sidney, and simultaneously using his techniques to reveal the inequalities facing them as women writers, they are able to use their fictions both to

add their names to accepted literary lineage and maneuver their fictions into places of authority. Their co-opting of Sidney's rhetorical technique in this way provides for an understanding of how women writers use masculine constructs in literature to present female perspectives.

Silence

Employing silence theory as a methodology uncovers a new way of reading narrative discourses that take place in moments when poetry enters the prose. Silence theory works with the premise that silences speak. Silence presumably is the absence of voice, yet silence theory demonstrates that absence indicates a presence. Therefore, when we read silences, we are reading what appears to be absent, thus making it present. Cheryl Glenn examines how silence is a rhetorical art that is far undervalued and "under-understood."²⁵ Silence is often read as passivity, but is actually "expressive power."²⁶ Silence is purposeful language and "can reveal positive or negative abilities, fulfilling or withholding traits, harmony or disharmony, success or failure."²⁷ Glenn includes silences taken from the list compiled by Richard L. Johannesen. These silences center on individual's relationships with others. These silences include intentional and unintentional silence, but each one communicates something. Silence can denote agreement or disagreement, uncertainty, pondering, a rate of thinking, preoccupation, disturbance, punishment, anger, impoliteness, awe, fear, concern, isolation, independence, or emphatic exchange.²⁸

Silence theory is useful for this study because it provides an approach to reading narrative strategies by marginalized writers to express those thoughts and emotions that their social milieu

²⁵ Glenn, *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 2004), 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, xi.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 16

might consider taboo. Early modern women exist as a marginalized community because of the patriarchal structures in place that prohibit them from performing certain roles – such as print publishing – on equal footing with men. Early modern environs discipline women into a place of inequality with men through the social expectations that they remain discrete and in domestic spheres. While these expectations shift in shape and force, Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker each lived in historical periods that discouraged women to some degree from pursuing professional paths of writing. Therefore, when we read their fictions, we are able to trace silences that gesture toward the dissatisfaction with those prohibitions erected by social expectations working against their pursuit of print publication.

As Glenn’s list elucidates, silences fall into multiple categories and function in a variety of ways. I limit the scope of this project to the silences that occur in the moments of poetry within prose – the moment of experiential reveal – in fiction by Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker. These silences fall into categories of emotional silencing, misreading, and interruption. Emotional silencing occurs when the heroine desires to express inwardness, but finds herself unable to freely vent her thoughts and emotions until she gains a private space in which to do so; misreading is a term attached to readings of women’s writing that ignore subtle themes or messages, opting instead to focus on the female body that produced the writing; and interruption is, straightforwardly, when the heroine finds her thoughts or space intruded upon by other characters.²⁹

There are several modes of thought in silence theory that I engage in this dissertation. In her seminal work, *Silences* (1978), Tillie Olsen writes about the “unnatural” silences of women

²⁹ In 1983 Joanna Russ in her quirky but very real *How to Suppress Women’s Writing* creates a list of ways women are beaten away from writing and the ways that even when they write their voices are silenced.

writers.³⁰ Her arguments range from the ways women are discouraged from becoming writers, to the ways women are taken away from writing by social, economic, and domestic obligations. Olsen's work informs my reading of Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker as a motivation for uncovering lost voices. Olsen's theories of silence as a language are also a useful way to discuss the gestures Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker make toward the silencing they experienced as they attempted to carve out a place for themselves as professional writers. The silences before and after poems in the experiential reveal in their romances expose societal discouragement from writing and print publishing that these women experienced.

Recovery work is only the foundation of what I seek to do in this project. I look to those theorists who diverge from Olsen's *Silences* in order to use a methodology for reading strategies women writers implement to work both in and against dominant discourses. In order to clarify what I mean by "in and against," I will explain some of the foundational theories of silence that influence my theory of voices found when poetry appears in fiction by women.

In Hélène Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976), Cixous demonstrates how "women are beaten away from writing," but can transgress the "father tongue" by writing through the femaleness of her body.³¹ Cixous's work creates a branch of theory that examines how women are discouraged from writing because they are told it is not the "right" way to write. Her call to arms champions the idea of a women's language.³² Cixous's idea that women are

³⁰ Olsen, Tillie. *Silences*. New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 2003.

³¹ "The Laugh of the Medusa." In *Feminisms Redux: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, edited by Robyn Warhol and Diane Price (Rutgers University Press, 1975), 416–431. See also, "Coming to Writing" and *Other Essays* (Harvard University Press, 1992).

³² This line of theory follows the feminist theories about women's relationship to language as influenced by their proscribed roles in society. Theorists such as Cixous, Luce

discouraged from writing is a useful starting point. For early modern women such as Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker, they were not told that they wrote the wrong way, but were, rather, were dissuaded from writing at all because, as women, they lacked the same access to publication as men did for their romances. Nevertheless, they did need to invent a language to express their experiences as writers because they were working within patriarchal discourses.

Silence theory includes the need for recovery work for those voices lost and a demand to read silences present in texts already recovered. For, there are voices lost even in those works long canonized because of an adherence to prescriptive measures of reading.³³ For instance, Annette Kolodny says that literary history is a fiction; we are taught to engage paradigms, not texts, and we must reexamine critical methods that in part shape our aesthetic response. For instance, while we can still appreciate Miltonic style after Kolodny's assertion, we can also, importantly, note that Eve is left out. Through this example Kolodny hopes for an "altered reading attentiveness."³⁴ I build my methodology of reading prose fiction by early modern women on this hope for new ways of reading. By examining the sections of narratives by women writers creating their own poetry, I practice Kolodny's charge.

Building on Cixous, Claudine Herrmann says that women must create new meanings out of male language. One of the ways women do this is through the use of silence as a rhetorical

Irigaray, Laura Mulvey, and Cora Kaplan, women's lives cannot fit into these relationships without stripping her of her complete voice.

³³ In 1980 Barbara Christian in *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition* says that if we continue to ignore the voices of women writers who do not play by the rules of the dominant language then women writers and scholars may limit their own process until their voices no longer sound like women's (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980).

³⁴ Annette Kolodny, "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism," in E. Showalter, ed. *New Feminist Criticism* (1980), 35.

strategy.³⁵ As a rhetorical strategy, silence functions to create a voice within patriarchal literary structures. Audre Lorde writes about silence as generated from a place that demands the woman compose in her mother tongue. Both Lorde and Kolodny demand that if there are those who do not know how to read what the woman writer produces then we must demand a revision of how we read.³⁶ Therefore, I read silences in works by early modern women as a start to how women write a place for themselves within literary lineage. In order to write their way into patriarchal structures, women use silences as a voice. Gubar, in “The Blank Page” (1981) shows how silence is used even within the rules of dominant structures to speak a language uniquely its own.³⁷ Even in absence we can find marks of protest against the conformity expected of women. My reading of the gap between prose and poetry in fiction by women redirects these foundational theories to the blank on the page as possessing a relationship between the prose before, the poem between, and the prose after to contend that, when we read these elements working together, the silences gain new voices expressing experiences that we might not otherwise hear.

In order to clarify what I mean by the relationship between narrative elements that present a voice in the silences, I turn to feminist narratology. Susan Lanser makes clear the distinction between what feminist think of when they refer to voice and what narratologists think of when they refer to voice. The first is concerned with what voices have to say that are either

³⁵ *Tongue Snatchers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1991).

³⁶ In Lorde’s “Poetry is not a Luxury” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Random House Digital Inc., 2012) she posits that only the woman poet can create language from feeling (and that this in turn creates a freedom in language) but that the woman novelist cannot do so, because she must participate by the rules of the dominant discourse, those that create the rules of novelistic discourse.

³⁷ “The Blank Page and the Issues of Female Creativity.” In *Gender Studies: New Directions in Feminist Criticism*, edited by Judith Spector (Popular Press, 1986), 10–29.

silenced by the patriarchy or are rising against the patriarchy. The second is concerned with formal structures. However, Lanser makes the argument that these two modes of thinking provide fruitful counterpoints. Narrative structures and women's writing are not determined by isolated aesthetic properties, but by "complex and changing conventions" that are produced by "the relations of power that implicate writer, reader, and text."³⁸ Therefore, Lanser's theory allows us to link narrative form and social identity in order to read how the discursive authority of a voice is produced by rhetorical and social properties.

My chapters are organized chronologically to reflect the evolving genre of prose fiction from the framework created by Sidney through eighteenth-century experiments with what we now refer to as the novel. I choose these two moments in literary history as bookends for my project because they reflect, first, the initiation of poetry in prose fiction, with *Arcadia*, then, the standardization of incorporating poetry in romance. I do this in order to emphasize that each of these women use poetry in prose with silences to create an experiential reveal, yet do so in patterns that reflect their responses to the limitations inherent in their specific historical moment.

As the first to co-opt the form of *Arcadia*, Wroth functions ideally as the first chapter in this study. I illustrate the rhetorical technique of narrative shifts that occur when a female character seeks privacy in order to express her innermost thoughts and feelings, then demonstrate how the culmination into poetry that often occurs as the final shift in these moments reflects the tensions framing these moments in the narrative. Further, I discuss how this narrative act creates

³⁸ *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 5. See also, "Sexing Narratology: Toward a Gendered Poetics of Narrative Voice." In *Narrative Theory: Political Narratology*, edited by Mieke Bal, 123–138. Taylor and Francis, 2004.

a place for the woman writer in *Urania*, as well as how this place is silenced by interruption immediately after poetic production. In doing so, I illustrate female poetic production and reception as it is presented by Wroth's narrative act of creating a pattern of seeking privacy for personal expression. This reading allows further insight into how Wroth saw herself as a woman writer writing in, and adding to, literary traditions.

In this chapter, I explore the experiential reveal Wroth deploys each time Pamphilia writes a poem in the narrative. I show how Wroth's movement of Pamphilia outside of the confines of patriarchal structures, patriarchal structures such as bedchambers and gardens, reflects at once the nonexistent space for the woman writer and the ability for her to imagine, and move toward, a space beyond such restrictions. Furthermore, once outside those bounds, Pamphilia imagines an audience for her poetry despite living in a world where such imaginings are discouraged by expectations for female discretion. Wroth emphasizes the limitations of female discretion while simultaneously uplifting the power of the female poet to transmit emotions through her verse.

In my second chapter I shift to a study of Cavendish, who occupies a place in history as the first woman to publish a significant body of literature, including short romances and poetry. After Wroth's *Urania*, whose publication was almost immediately retracted, no woman writer attempted publication in print of such magnitude until Cavendish. Cavendish's romance, *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* does not have nearly as many poems as the romances written by Wroth and Barker but does follow many of the epic conventions present in their works. The experiential reveal differs from the pattern of heroine seeking private personal expression because many of the poems penned by Cavendish's protagonist, Travellia, are answered directly by other characters. However, these answers silence Travellia. Cavendish uses the poetically

silenced Travellia to portray the ways in which her intellect can surpass these silences. Once she does so, she is immediately rewarded in the narrative by being promoted to powerful leadership positions. In this narrative strategy, Cavendish demonstrates the capability for women to authorize themselves into positions of leadership through their intellect.

Among the several women who published prose fiction between 1700 and 1750, Barker used her own previously published poetry in her romances more than any other. Her *Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (1723) has over twenty of her own poems in its 143 pages. While her other Galesia novels, *The Amours of Bosvil and Galesia* (1713), *Lining of the Patch Work Screen* (1726), also demonstrate Barker's integration of many of the poems from *Poetical Recreations* (1688) into the narratives, there are more than twice as many in *Patch-Work Screen* than there are in either of the other two romances. For this reason, *Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* is the subject of my third chapter. In this chapter I look at how Barker deploys the experiential reveal to provide an alternative narrative to the conventional romance plot of courtship and marriage.

Barker's deployment of the experiential reveal differs from Wroth's and Cavendish's in that she exposes how even when women are given the opportunity to perform professionally as writers, they are discouraged from writing because of domestic obligations that consume their time, space, and energy. Galesia finds herself more actively discouraged from writing than Pamphilia. In the comparison of Wroth's and Barker's use of the experiential reveal, we can see that while women had gained access to the professional world of publishing, they were more actively pushed away from pursuing such paths. However, Barker's experiential reveal also imagines respect, support, and space for the woman writer, while Wroth's discloses that despite her talent, there is not place for the female poet in the current social constructs. While Pamphilia

must seek out a place to compose verse because the social strictures of her time demand she be discrete about venting her emotions, Galesia finds the space to write, but is pressured to stop writing by expectations that she spend her time finding a husband and pursuing other domestic obligations.

By organizing my study according to the evolution of genre over a history of approximately one hundred years, I am able to trace the changing adaptations of poetry in prose that women used to express their shifting situation as women writers. That is, in the following chapters, I investigate the differing ways women deploy the experiential reveal. By co-opting Sidney's work, women add themselves to a literary lineage. Through this comparative analysis, we can trace a shift in perspectives, as revealed in moments when poetry appears within the prose narrative, that exposes not only the situation of the woman writer in its limitations, but also a voice that expresses her power as a poet even within those constraints. As a result, we see how early modern women writers perceived their position within the changing face of literary history whether that place was affirmed by social expectations or not.

Chapter One

Spoken in Silence: The Early Modern Woman Poet in Mary Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*

The Countess of Montgomery's Urania begins by following Urania, a character from an unfinished story in Sidney's *Arcadia*.³⁹ The beautiful spring of a pastoral romance surrounds Urania and her flock of sheep, "But she regarding nothing, in comparison of her woe thus proceeded in her griefe."⁴⁰ As she arrives at the opposite end of the plain, she speaks the lines of a poem, which is interpolated into the text. Within the same sentence as this poem we are told that, "her very soule turn'd into mourning"⁴¹ (*Urania* 1). This confluence of movement into

³⁹ *Arcadia*'s Urania is a shepherdess who breaks the hearts of two young shepherds when she must leave their land upon learning that she was not born a shepherdess. Sidney interrupts his own story of Urania to say that it is much too long for space in *Arcadia*. Wroth's prose narrative therefore ties into *Arcadia* through the use of this character and her long unfinished story; yet, Wroth immediately focuses on Urania's inwardness, whereas Sidney's Urania is only spoken of, but never speaks herself.

⁴⁰ Lady Mary Wroth, *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, edited by Josephine A. Roberts (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 1. Further citations will appear in the text as *Urania*. The source of her misery, we soon learn, is the question of her parentage.

⁴¹ Lady Mary Wroth, *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1995), 1. All quotations from *Urania* will be included parenthetically within the text. Jacqueline T. Miller points out that in *Urania* and other early modern works, "discretion figures both the necessity of and resistance to constructions of social and linguistic distinctions," in "Ladies of the Oddest Passion: Early Modern Women and the Arts of Discretion," *Modern Philology* 103:4 (2006), 457.

privacy, the mind consumed with verse, and the soul personified via an expression of passion, work together in this moment to create a language for the deeply personal. This language culminates in a poem that fills Urania's mind as "her very soule turn'd into mourning." Directly after the interpolation of her poem, however, Urania's privacy is interrupted by the discovery of a sonnet written on paper resting on a table in a cave.⁴² This scene reveals how women cannot find a safe private space for poetic expression – a problem that Wroth herself would have experienced as an early modern woman writer. We see a discourse emerge within the very first page – a discourse that speaks to woman as poet through her movement into solitude to express her passions; a discourse that reveals the tension between woman as poet and her need for discretion; a discourse that imagines a space beyond the limitations of patriarchal constraints in which she can personify her soul in excellent verse; and a discourse that speaks at once to the silencing effects of interruption to the woman poet's solitude, and to the power she retains even within patriarchal constraints to rhetorically outmaneuver misreadings of her.

While interruptions are a convention of the epic genre – a convention Wroth certainly would have been deploying in *Urania* – these interruptions have a silencing effect on female characters. For a work in which themes of privacy proliferate, there are surprisingly few moments in which characters are actually alone. Even when they do find a moment of solitude, they most often are spied upon, stumbled upon, or interrupted. The silences that follow the interruptions into these women's private effusions speak to the lack of complete solitude

⁴² Immediately after the recognition of her own emotion in this new sonnet, she discovers the author of the sonnet, the miserable Perissus. From this moment forward Urania become a voice to motivate, comfort, and council other characters. Although this sonnet echoes Urania's sonnet in many ways, the discovery of this new poem ultimately overshadows her expression of emotion in the narrative. Although we receive knowledge of her sorrow throughout the prose of *Urania*, we do not receive this knowledge via any other private expressions of the deeply personal from Urania.

available to the female poet. In viewing these silences as a rhetorical technique, we can see how they function with the rest of the experiential reveal to provide a narrative discourse for the experience of writing. In the narrative punctuation of these poetic expressions with interruptions, not only do female characters find they are no longer in a place to express their innermost thoughts and feelings, but also they must gather themselves rather suddenly and behave according to social expectations.

Wroth manipulates this convention as a rhetorical strategy that works with the experiential reveal she deploys each time Pamphilia must seek privacy in order to express her passions. The narrative shifts that indicate her moves into deeper solitude as her mind turns to deeper emotions culminate in poetry, but then are silenced by the interruption of another character. While Wroth uses silences to several effects throughout the romance, her use of silence here serves as a narrative act that reveals not only what draws women away from writing, but also the link between these interruptions and those tensions that serve as the catalyst for an expression of passion in privacy. In this regard, the silencing interruption that occurs after poetry in the romance works as the second part of a frame narrative around these moments of private expression. These interruptions punctuate the woman writer's poetic assertions and create tension around those private expressions – thereby remarking not only on the lack of privacy, but also on the lack of a place for the female poet, even in the wilderness outside social strictures and artifices.

The theme of seeking privacy in order to find expression intertwines with heavy descriptions of natural scenery throughout *Urania*. While Urania speaks her misfortune in a soliloquy in the meadow, it is upon her arrival on the other side that she expresses herself in verse. This rhetorical move emphasizes the tension between Urania's desire to express her

sorrow and the knowledge that she must find privacy to do so. Urania, coming to the “foote of the rocks, speaking as she went these lines, her eies fixt upon the ground, her very soule turn’d into mourning” (*Urania* 1). The tension created within the first page of *Urania* with Urania’s movement from meadow to rocks reflects the problem of a female poet who desires publication – a public act whether in manuscript or print – when she must keep her emotions private. Her body and words work together in this moment as she distances herself from others and finally finds herself secluded enough to begin voicing her inner thoughts. Notably, she does not express her thoughts and emotions until she is no longer exposed in the openness of the meadow; the rocks represent the solitude she must attain before she can freely express herself. To conclude this melding of physical movement, poetry, and mourning with the personification of her soul through emotion directly before we receive the lines she speaks produces the effect that we cannot come close to a true representation of the interior without privacy and poetry working together. Just as Urania must seek solitude to express herself, so too must the early modern woman writer practice discretion in the presentation of her thoughts and feelings.

The experiential reveal in *Urania* is emphasized by the silences that occur before and after her poetry and exposes the limitations that the woman writer finds imposed upon her. The opening scene marks a pattern in *Urania*, one in which the characters, both men and women, must remove themselves from public spaces in order to express personal emotions. Opening *Urania* with the title character searching for privacy as the narrator describes with increasing personification the sorrow heavy in Urania’s soul, allows a work of such incredible length and detail to blossom from a position of tension between the woman seeking a place to express her innermost emotions and the world she lives in pressing in on her to silence those expressions. By focusing on these silences, the situation of the woman writer is exposed. That is, when the

female poet moves into silence in order to express herself in verse, we see the lack of space permitted early seventeenth-century women writers.

While Urania's movement initially indicates that her search for solitude is somehow related to a desire for relief, her increased sorrow in the shadows of the forest that surround her provides an opportunity to read Urania's escape from the fields of sheep and shepherds as her overwhelming desire to seek privacy in order to express, not soothe, herself. That is, her movement away from fellow shepherds stems from the necessity to locate a private place for emotional expression. What is more, the silencing interruption that occurs after she expresses herself in verse further highlights the tension felt between the female poet desiring expression and others taking her away from the space of writing. In these silences we gain insight into the experience of the early modern woman writer. The insights we gain demonstrate the struggle for women such as Wroth to find a place to write, to present expressions of emotion despite the demand for discretion, and to imagine a public audience for her writing.

Co-opting Sidney's Romance

Sidney's *Defense* provides a platform for Wroth to assert authority over poetry. In Sidney's *Defense*, poetry plays a role in the construction of the self. Sidney argues that poetry refines the sentiments within audiences by enlarging sympathy, "for that feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example (for as for to move, it is clear, since the feigned may be tuned to the highest key of passion)," poets imitate and from imitating they identify with these refined sentiments (*Defence* 224). Therefore, the poet has the power to transform societies for the better. For Sidney, the role of poetry in the construction of the self hinges on the ability of the art to instruct through moving of passions. While Sidney emphasizes the power of epic and heroic modes of poetry over love poetry, Wroth reappropriates Sidney's argument regarding poetry's

role in the construction of the self to love poetry throughout her romance as a means by which to give voice to the experience of love for the female poet.

Through this reappropriation, Wroth unites love poetry with Sidney's assertion that poetry is a noble as well as an introspective art. Wroth picks up this argument in order to transform Pamphilia into a poet who possesses the ability to transmute female experiences through her poetry. In the transference of these experiences into poetry, Pamphilia voices the hope that others who encounter her poetry will learn from her emotional register. While Sidney discusses fitting subjects of poetry as those that are both delightful and instructive, Wroth works from within this belief in order to present Pamphilia's poetry as authoritative. Pamphilia's authority over her emotions as she composes her verses asserts a desire for any readers of her poetic output to learn from her experiences. Pamphilia's poetry reflects Sidney's assertion that poetry is a noble as well as an introspective art. In this sense, Wroth uses Pamphilia's poetry to affirm the place of the female poet in changing society for the better through her introspective take on female experience.

Although Wroth uses her uncle's *Defense* in order to ground her poetry in authority, her work imitates his epic romance, *Arcadia*. As Margaret Hannay notes, in writing *Urania*, Wroth's primary materials "were two romances she had inhabited since childhood, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* and Spenser's *Faerie Queen*."⁴³ What Wroth does with genre in *Urania* works within and against the conventions established by *Arcadia*. The very title itself, *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* recalls Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*.⁴⁴ Indeed, *Urania's*

⁴³ Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 209.

⁴⁴ Susan, Countess of Montgomery was a close friend of Wroth's and one of several women that Hannay suggests may have shared writing with Wroth (Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, 135).

eponymous character is picked out of *Arcadia* and placed in the opening pages of Wroth's romance. Paul Salzman remarks of *Urania* that it can be seen as a romance that enters into a dialogical relationship with *Arcadia*, "interrogating some of Sidney's assumptions about the nature of romance, particularly in relation to issues of gender and sexuality."⁴⁵ Wroth's use of the Arcadian romance genre provides her a place for female intervention into the literary world.⁴⁶ While Salzman prefers to read *Urania* as a romance that deliberately unsettles the audience in order to question the categories that create power structures, other readers of Wroth's epic work choose to read it as an amalgamation of genres, each of which Wroth manipulates to best suit her purposes. Ann Rosalind Jones sees the difference between Wroth and Sidney in their endings, remarking that Sidney "writes himself into a corner," by defending inconstancy, while Wroth searches for transcendent love.⁴⁷ And while *Arcadia* itself is a medley of genres working together in true Sidnean harmony, by the time Wroth is writing, she has certainly absorbed *Arcadia* not only from a position of familial admiration, but also from a position of literary respect. That is, her knowledge of Sidney's romance is not simply familiarity; rather, Wroth would have seen *Arcadia* as a literary text utilizing and creating conventional literary standards.

⁴⁵ "The Strang[e] Constructions of Mary Wroth's *Urania*: Arcadian Romance and the Public Realm" in *English Renaissance Prose: History, Language, and Prose*, edited by Neil Rhodes (Tempe: MRTS, 1997), 110. For discussions of the literary family of the Sidneys and their potential influences upon Wroth and her writing of the *Urania*, please also see Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); P.J. Croft, ed., *The Poems of Robert Sidney* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Gary Waller, "The Countess of Pembroke and Gendered Reading," in *The Renaissance Englishwoman In Print*, edited by Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 334.

⁴⁶ Salzman, "The Strang[e] Constructions of Mary Wroth's *Urania*," 116.

⁴⁷ Ann Rosalind Jones, "Mary Wroth's Contest with Robert and Philip Sidney: A Corrective Corona" *Sidney Journal* 25 (2007): 187.

Therefore, when Wroth creates *Urania* out of the tradition begun by *Arcadia* she is not merely reappropriating an established genre, but also adding to the literary tradition of epic romance in her own way. However, Wroth worked in the shadow of her uncle because of the problem of readership. Although Wroth published her work, she was soon pressured to retract it. Her readers expected a *roman à clef*, but when they did not receive a key, her work was attacked as too satirical of individual court members. However, the written assault we receive from Sir Edward Denny demonstrates that Wroth's work was attacked mainly on the grounds of her gender. When Denny calls Wroth "Hermaphrodite in show, in deed a monster" and ends his incursion by stating "Work o th' works, leave idle books alone,/ For wise & worthier women have writ none," he does not complain about his place in her romance, but, rather, focuses on her sex as a way to discipline her, and perhaps others, away from writing. Denny's attack supports the seventeenth-century belief that women who wished to publish ought to remain firmly within the realm of devotional and religious. While writers such as Isabella Whitney published secular poetry, Whitney stands in literary history as an anomaly until the romance poetry interpolated in *Urania*. Even with Whitney's poetry, there was no precedent for a woman to publish secular prose.

However, women did publish in both print and manuscript. In addition to religious and devotional works, women writers during Wroth's time were also translators – including Mary Sidney. Wroth would certainly have been influenced by women such as her aunt and her decision to append her sonnet sequence to *Urania* suggests that she understood the influence of her connection to established women writers. There are a number of anonymous manuscript poems that testify to Wroth's literary activities prior to the publication of *Urania*. As early as 1613

Wroth's poems were being circulated in manuscript by friends.⁴⁸ *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* is the first sonnet sequence written by a woman. Many of the poems are included in *Urania*, but differ in selection and order. It is important to note, first, that Wroth's poetry was known and enjoyed before the publication of *Urania*, and second that her confidence in these sonnets about Pamphilia's inner emotions and thoughts regarding Amphilanthus became an integral part of *Urania*. Despite the confidence that Wroth may have possessed in print-publishing *Urania*, once Denny retaliated, she sought the help of friends such as William Feilding, first Earl of Denbigh, that they might influence James I that Wroth meant no harm by publishing her work.⁴⁹

Although Wroth's work was retracted, some copies survived, and her pride in her work is apparent in her response to Denny. *Urania's* narratives of women's writing conflate textual and physical transgression into the locus of literary production, perhaps allowing Wroth to comment on "the sacrificial nature of the punishments imposed onto women who exceeded the bounds of silence."⁵⁰ The backlash that Wroth experienced in her attempt to present *Urania* as an innovation to the literary tradition established by her uncle illustrates the inherent difference in the experiences of male and female writers in early modern England.

⁴⁸ Josephine A. Roberts, "Introduction" in *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 44.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁰ Shannon Miller, "Textual Crimes and Punishment in Mary Wroth's *Urania*" *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35 (2005): 420. In this article Shannon Miller discusses how accounts of women writers in *Urania* share traits and rhetoric of early modern accounts of infanticide, witchcraft, and dissection to discuss how Wroth presents the experience of the woman writer. Carolyn Ruth Swift maintains that *Urania* shows women alienated from themselves by the discourse and demands of their society. Carolyn Ruth Swift, "Feminine Identity in Lady Mary Wroth's Romance *Urania*" *ELR* 14 (1984): 346.

While other early modern works of fiction restrict female speech, Wroth's departure from conventional use of genres such as romance allows her to give voice to female experience through her female characters.⁵¹ In her romance, "like any fiction writer, she combined elements from her own experiences, events and people she had observed, and her reading, transmuting them into an original narrative."⁵² Wroth uses the genre of the romance, combined with the ambiguity of experience to empower female narrators.⁵³ Wroth also validates works of autobiography and social history turned into art by appropriating Sidney's model of poesy.⁵⁴ In Sidney's *Defence* he says that "poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all it represents." Wroth's epic romance follows this model of fiction by writing about the domestic through the imagined. "Wroth recasts her uncle's Arcadian romance and rewrites key episodes of *The Faerie Queene*" as a way to use romance and poetic genres to revise gender roles.⁵⁵ While allusions and

⁵¹ Naomi J. Miller, "Engendering Discourse: Women's Voices in Wroth's *Urania* and Shakespeare's Plays" in *Reading Mary Wroth: Representing Alternatives in Early Modern England*, edited by Naomi J. Miller and Gary Waller (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 154.

⁵² Mary Ellen Lamb, "Women Readers in Mary Wroth's *Urania*," in *Reading Mary Wroth: Representing Alternatives in Early Modern England*, edited by Naomi J. Miller and Gary Waller (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 209. John Barclay's *Argenis* (1621) included a Clavis and readers expected the same for *Urania* as well. While calling *Urania* a *roman a clef* is not entirely wrong, "Wroth's relationship of fact and fiction is far more complex than the fairly straightforward parallels in *Argenis*" (Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, 234).

⁵³ Jennifer Lee Carrell, "A Pack of Lies in a Looking Glass: Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania* and the Magic Mirror of Romance" *SEL* 34 (1994): 79-107.

⁵⁴ Christina Luckyj, "The Politics of Genre in Early Women's Writing: The Case of Lady Mary Wroth" *English Studies in Canada* 27 (2001): 254.

⁵⁵ Quilligan, "Feminine Endings: The Sexual Politics of Sidney's and Spenser's Rhyming" in *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*,

alteration to literary traditions familiar to her audience provide Wroth a more protected place from which to write her romance, her alterations also place her in an authoritative position as a writer. Because Sidney asserts that fiction represents truth through imagination, and because Wroth imitates Sidney, she monopolizes on his reputation to protect her romance.

Her interventions into respected genres simultaneously create a safer place for her to write as an early modern woman and establish her as an innovative contributor to these traditions. Her gender drew attention to her as a female writer because she did not have a precedent apart from of her uncle's *Arcadia* for publishing an epic romance. Authorship provided some women with an opportunity to create discourse; that is to say, they made it possible that the gender of the subject could make a difference.⁵⁶ Elaine Beilin argues that Wroth

edited by Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 321. Use of Spenser's generic and authorial precedents by women writers in the early modern period created a space for female authorship. Spenser's influence upon seventeenth-century women writers suggests the "productive interplay of literary influence and gender" (321). Shannon Miller says that Mary Wroth's use of Spenser's epic poem argues against isolated women's writing and in this interplay meaning is produced between the imitated text and the new text, in "'Mirrours More then One': Edmund Spenser and Female Authority in the Seventeenth-Century" in *Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early Modern Age*, edited by Patrick Cheney and Lauren Silberman (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky), 125. Shannon Miller discusses how Wroth enters the romance tradition, "reconfiguring it and its possibilities for grating authority to a woman writer" ("'Mirrours More then One'," 144). Wroth moved beyond the space designated for women writers, through the traditions set in place by Sidney and Spenser, and actively reconfigured literary genre. For instance, in Wroth's final clause, as Colleen Ruth Rosenfeld points out, she pulls together "Sidnean incompleteness and Spenserian endlessness in a break that points to its own mending as superfluous continuation" in "Wroth's Clause" *ELH* 76:4 (Winter 2009): 1050. Perhaps, as Rebecca Laroche argues, "Mary Wroth anticipated the confining categories of gender and family and represented them in her work, both in co-existing echoes of Sidney and Shakespeare and in allegorical figures of writing" in "Pamphilia Across a Crowded Room: Mary Wroth's Entry into Literary History" *Genre* 30 (Winter 1997): 286.

⁵⁶ Naomi J. Miller, *Changing the Subject: Figurations of Gender in Early Modern England* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 143-144.

acts as an authoritative historian “a role conventionally belonging to male writers.”⁵⁷ In this instance, Wroth pushes the bounds of women’s writing by assigning the role of historian to herself as narrator of *Urania*. Wroth’s authorial voice comes through the text at every turn despite the patriarchal language and literary culture in which she works perhaps because, as Salzman argues, early modern England lacked the epistemology to understand pioneering fiction.⁵⁸ Wroth is free to present a work that contains many incidents of female authorship because the conventional expectations of romance necessarily mark all activities within the genre as fictional.⁵⁹ Remarkable of Wroth’s work is the multi-faceted female perspectives offered in *Urania*. Even more brilliant are her rhetorical manipulations of genre conventions in order to present these perspectives. While Sidney’s work focuses on male perspectives, Wroth is able to provide a “kaleidoscope” of experiences.⁶⁰ At times in *Urania* female voices perform in unison and at times they perform individually. What is important in this multifaceted female perspective is Wroth’s creation of a space for female expression in the narrative pattern of the experiential reveal. The pattern set forth by the opening and picked up in our first introduction to Pamphilia provides for a reading of the experience of the woman writer.

Completing Male Thought

⁵⁷ Elaine Beilin, “‘The Onely Perfect Vertue’: Constancy in Mary Wroth’s *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*” *Spenser Studies* 2 (1981): 5.

⁵⁸ Paul Salzman, “Talking/Listening: Anecdotal Style in Recent Australian Women’s Fiction” *Southerly: A Review of Australian Literature* 4 (1989): 545. Salzman further remarks that “Paradoxically, only now can it be re-read as resistance to the very reception that greeted it” (Salzman, “Talking/Listening,” 545).

⁵⁹ Helen Hackett, “‘Yet Tell Me Some Such Fiction’: Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania* and the ‘Femininity’ of Romance” in *Early Modern Women Writers: 1600-1720* edited by Anita Pacheco (London: Longman, 1998), 46.

⁶⁰ Hannay, xii.

The differences in the narrative between interruptions experienced by male characters versus those experienced by female characters demonstrate the disparities between how female and male poets are received. Those moments in which male characters move into privacy to express their passions take on a distinctly different rhetorical tone. The prose more swiftly moves them into privacy, the tension does not have time to build, and their poetic output often provides a more fulfilling sense of expression for them than for female characters.

In a scene in which the four knights, Amphilanthus, Steriamus, Ollorandus, and Dolorindus have adventures throughout the islands in the Aegean Sea, one particular island urges “the foure Knights all amorous, and yet in severall kindes to express their passions severall waies” (*Urania* 132). In this section of the narrative Wroth immediately alerts her reader that they now will hear the knights’ passions in poetry. There is no building up to the reception of passion through a series of narrative shifts denoting the tension within the character that will result in emotional expression the way Wroth constructs the narrative before a female character expresses inwardness. Rather than building tension in prose before a poetic release, as Wroth does with her female poets, male poets simply slide into poetry with a quick explanation of their motivations as poets do in Sidney’s *Arcadia*. What is more, the knights are on an island, a clear motif for the isolation and seclusion these men need to find a space in which to write without interruption.

The four knights quickly split up to express themselves privately – each going to the corner of the island that best suits his character type. In this moment, there is not nearly the amount of lyrical energy spent in describing where these men are going that there is for Pamphilia. We are informed where they are going in a swift and straightforward manner. Whereas *Urania* and *Pamphilia* withdraw through a complicated process of movement into

privacy, the rhetoric that tells us of the knights withdrawing is swift, simple, and uncomplicated. This difference reflects the inequality between female and male poets. That is, the tension female poets feel as they seek privacy to express themselves in verse, set in contrast with the easy retirement into isolation of male poets, exposes the lack of easily available space for female poets in early modern society.

Of the four knights, Dolorindus' surroundings are described with more detail than the surroundings of the other men. The narrator tells us that his surroundings "afflicted him, and moved so much in him, as hee could not but frame some verses in his imagination, which after were given to Amphilanthus, and his other companions" (*Urania* 133). It is important to note that Wroth reverses the narrative construction that she creates for female inwardness. That is, Dolorindus' surroundings motivate his emotions, rather than reflect his emotions. Furthermore, Dolorindus is not interrupted after his poetic production. Rather, there is a smooth integration of his creation of verse and the sharing of his poem with the other knights. This rhetorical technique lessens the sense that these men are isolated in their expression of emotion. In fact, it seems that male characters often stumble upon each other and share their verses as well as their woeful tales with less restraint than female characters.⁶¹ They are supported by each other in their poetic output, encouraged to express themselves publically in verse, whereas female poets not only hide their poetic expressions, but also struggle to even find a place to write.

Although male characters readily share their poetry, the narrative must first place these characters in solitude before they express their passions. While the experiential reveal that moves female characters into a place to vent their passions provides a series of narrative shifts that takes

⁶¹ Dolorindus' poem reads more like a public production of verse than a private expression of emotion.

us ever deeper into their inwardness, the narrative, at times, provides what could be read as a mocking tone for those moments when Amphilanthus seeks privacy to express his passions. Alone after Dolorindus shares his poem, Amphilanthus finds himself with the necessary solitude to begin processing his thoughts and emotions, “and so the abler to be bold in speech, began thus” (*Urania* 135). The narrative here draws attention to the ease with which Amphilanthus retires into solitude. Amphilanthus pleasantly moves into nature, finally coming across a fountain that he says justly represents his “woes increasing” faster than his “paines find ease” (*Urania* 136). Here the narrator tells us that Amphilanthus “having enough, as hee thought, given liberty to his speech, he put the rest of his thought into excellent verse” (*Urania* 136).⁶² Mockingly, Wroth alerts her readers to the easy completion of Amphilanthus’ expressions of passion. Amphilanthus, unlike Pamphilia, moves easily into a private space, he exhibits no tension in a search to express himself, and while we do not receive the poem he writes, we are told repeatedly that he is the most esteemed prince in the way of poetry. While Amphilanthus is a respected poet in *Urania*, the focus on him as a poet resides in his excellence as a prince. That is, his poetry is part of the evidence for his rank in the romance, rather than his emotional expressions of inwardness.

Once Amphilanthus finds his solitude in this scene, the narrator then tells us, in one of the few direct interventions in the romance, “Many more, and far more excellent discourses, had he with himselfe, and such as I am altogether unable to set down” (*Urania* 136). While the narrative intervention here moves the epic into the next adventure, Wroth’s narrator nevertheless interrupts

⁶² The use of liberty here recalls the first scene with Pamphilia expressing her passions, “Being heavie, she went into her bed, but not with hope of rest, but to get more libertie to express her woe” (62). However, the use of liberty in Pamphilia’s case reveals her lack of liberty, whereas Amphilanthus is free to give complete liberty to his thoughts before turning to poetic composition.

Amphilanthus' private musings in this moment. Although Amphilanthus' musings are interrupted by the narrator, because the narrative has already informed us that Amphilanthus has fulfilled his need to vent his thoughts and emotions, the narrator's interruption here takes an ironic tone. Amphilanthus has the time and space to continue his musings, to fully vent his passions, and to compose poetic reflection of those emotions – so much time and space that the narrator needs to intervene in the romance in order to move the epic beyond Amphilanthus and his private, liberal speeches. Even in the instance of the narrator's inability to “set down” all his musings, we see female expression thwarted. In his solitude, Amphilanthus has the freedom to vent his thoughts. However, his liberal speeches stand in contrast to Pamphilia's tense expressions of emotion that are intruded upon time and again. This contrast underscores the parallel between the male poets in *Urania* and the male poets in early modern England – the ease with which they find seclusion, the public audience ready to affirm their poetic output, the space to complete their vent of thought. Along with this parallel is one revealed between the experience of Pamphilia as poet and Wroth as poet – the tension involved in poetic expression, the demand for discretion, and difficulty in obtaining privacy.

Poetic Pamphilia

Just as Urania's movement into privacy accompanies her poetry, so too do Pamphilia's private expressions of emotion often find poetic production — either written or called to mind in the moment of private expression. While Urania is the prototype for the female poet, Pamphilia is the focus for the rest of the epic romance. The narrative technique of interweaving poetry in prose transmits the experience of an early modern woman writer in its appearance in a pattern begun on the first page of *Urania*, picked up in our first meeting of Pamphilia, and continued throughout the romance. This experiential reveal begins with a clear expression of tension

between a female character's public mask and private emotions; as the character moves into private spaces, Wroth conflates the rhetoric of this physical movement with an expression of the soul personified and a culmination into poetry that conveys inwardness. Finally, immediately after the appearance of the poem in the prose setting, a silencing interruption occurs, often in the form of another character intruding upon Pamphilia's private space. While interruptions are certainly a convention of the epic romance genre, the interruptions that occur after female characters seek private expressions of inwardness draw attention to the differences in poetic production and reception for men and women in early modern England.

Wroth places her poems into the hands of Pamphilia more than any other character in *Urania*. These poems are integrated into the plot as Pamphilia's inner expressions of emotion, thought, and feeling – often about her love, Amphilanthus. Each of Pamphilia's poems occurs after she seeks solitude to escape the tension created by the demand to hide emotional responses in public. With our first introduction to Pamphilia we see the experiential reveal – that pattern of tension, movement into privacy, personification of the soul, culmination in poetry, and silencing interruption.⁶³ The experiential reveal strengthens the stage set wherein Pamphilia struggles between her constant love for Amphilanthus and her masked emotions in public. What is more, this pattern provides an avenue from which Wroth can expand on traditional literary genres such as *Arcadia*. This situation marks a difference in production and reception for male and female poets as expressed in the use of silences in the pattern.

Within Pamphilia's first entrance into the narrative we are made aware of a similar experiential reveal as the one opening *Urania*. Before we receive the narrative pattern of Pamphilia's movement into privacy we are told that Pamphilia is “generally the most silent and

⁶³ I will refer to this pattern as the “experiential reveal” throughout this chapter.

discreetly retir'd of any Princesse" (*Urania* 61). The solitude Pamphilia seeks each time she wishes to vent her passion signifies her modesty as a woman while simultaneously presenting her in the tradition of powerful poets and thinkers. Pamphilia and the court have retired to the sea when this scene takes place. Her situation here suggests a layering of references to the solitude Pamphilia enjoys. There is a layering of retired allusions, and yet even in that retirement, she must mask her feelings.⁶⁴

Our first introduction to Pamphilia highlights her as silent and discrete; while these terms point to early modern definitions of a virtuous woman, Wroth picks them up later to define Pamphilia as a poet who seeks privacy to express inwardness. However, Pamphilia's privacy is complicated by the arrival of Amphilanthus and Antissia. While Pamphilia receives Amphilanthus' conversation "with much respect," it is here that Wroth allows her readers to see a faint glimpse of Pamphilia's true feelings for Amphilanthus. When the conversation turns to the beauty of the ladies, and in Antissia's brief absence Amphilanthus commends her exceedingly, Pamphilia's response to his commendations of Antissia betrays her love for him. In this moment, the tension between what Pamphilia masks and what she feels finds some relief. However, in the jesting that follows, Pamphilia is silenced and regretful of her moment of affection. This scene reveals the silencing Pamphilia experiences when she is not discrete. Just as Pamphilia must keep her emotions secreted away from Amphilanthus, so too must she keep her poetry to herself.

Although Wroth presents Pamphilia's jealousy in a comic manner, this moment of Pamphilia's envy, coupled with Amphilanthus' surprise over her response, immediately imparts

⁶⁴ Much later in the romance, Pamphilia remarks of her need to exert self-governance because of her status as Queen that "She lost not her self; for her government continued just and brave" (*Urania* 411).

the image of a Pamphilia who constantly keeps her true thoughts and feelings in check around others. The juxtaposition of a silent, discrete, retired Pamphilia, a Pamphilia who seemingly prefers solitude to sharing, with a Pamphilia sharing conversation in her private chamber with the man she loves and his most recent conquest of the heart begins to reveal the emotional tension Pamphilia must struggle with throughout *Urania*. That is, what Pamphilia is known for, being quiet and alone, runs throughout the background of the current narrative in which Pamphilia finds herself unable to enjoy that privacy which she loves, because she loves the company of Amphilanthus. Even in her least reserved moment, the mask Pamphilia must wear around others is vastly different from the emotions she expresses in her solitude. This tension often drives Pamphilia to seek seclusion in order to express the passions that build from her overwhelming desire to love Amphilanthus freely – and have him love her constantly in return. The connection between writing and solitude Wroth creates in moments such as these legitimizes her writing.⁶⁵ There is an interesting relationship between the “silently discrete” woman who must seek privacy in order to express and the great thinker who must retire into solitude in order to write. Pamphilia is discouraged from expressing herself publically, yet the act of retiring in order to write her emotions into verse shifts Pamphilia into the role of poet.

Before she produces poetry, however, the narrative moves Pamphilia into privacy through tense shifts in the prose. Pamphilia, goaded by Amphilianthus into revealing her feelings for him through an admission of jealousy toward Antissia, “breath[es] out her passions” more fully once alone in her chambers (*Urania* 62). While she cannot fully express herself around

⁶⁵ Hannay, 267. See also, Helen Hackett who says that Pamphilia’s heroic melancholy creates a discourse by which Pamphilia’s silence becomes a source of power, in “‘A Book, and Solitariness’: Melancholia, Gender and Literary Subjectivity in Mary Wroth’s *Urania*,” in *Renaissance Configurations: Voices/Bodies/Spaces, 1580-1690*, edited by Gordon McMullan (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 68.

others, she comes closer to completely venting and exploring her emotions once alone. After the conversation in which Amphilanthus goads Pamphilia, Antissia interrupts and the two of them soon leave Pamphilia alone. Immediately after they depart, we are alerted that “they gone, Pamphilia alone began to breath out her passions, which to none she would discover, resolving rather so to perish, then that any third should know she could be subject to affection” (*Urania* 62). While her solitude allows her to “breath out her passions,” the focus of this sentence transitions her driving motivation to discretion, so that no one else know “she could be subject to affection.” This need for discretion over affection continues throughout *Urania* as the tension surrounding the constant Pamphilia and the inconstant Amphilanthus is heightened.⁶⁶ This tension provides Wroth a space in which to assert Pamphilia’s superiority as a poet. That is, Pamphilia stands out in *Urania* as masterful of her emotions – a character marked by her romantic constancy in a work filled with characters who fall in love more than once. Furthermore, Pamphilia demonstrates the power to translate her emotions into poetry.⁶⁷

Pamphilia’s utter determination to keep her affections hidden runs through *Urania*.⁶⁸

However, it is her movement into privacy that highlights the tension between public and private

⁶⁶ Affection in Wroth’s milieu often created a negative context. Mary Fitton, recast in *Urania* as Antissia, had a scandalous and unsuccessful affair with the young Earl of Pembroke, shadowed as Amphilanthus. Whyte writes of Mary Fitton that she was celebrated at court for her wit. Once, during a mask, “wooded [Queen Elizabeth I] to dance” by saying she was “Affection” to which the Queen responded, “ ‘Affection?’ ... ‘Affection is false’.” Wroth perhaps would have known of such anecdotes about Fitton and other women. The cultural belief shown in this anecdote is that affection is not only false but also dangerous (Fitton became impregnated by Pembroke and abandoned). This, perhaps, informs the need for Pamphilia to seek privacy in order to express her affections (Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, 79).

⁶⁷ This skill is one that Sidney highlights as a talent in the best of poets.

⁶⁸ The burning of Amphilanthus’ lock of hair on the day of her wedding in *The Second Part of The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* is a quintessential example of Pamphilia’s private expressions of passion. The text in this moment uses the word “passions” twice to justify her

for Pamphilia. I would like to focus here not on the sudden movement into privacy, but on the movement thereafter. That is, in the narrative in which Pamphilia is finally alone we receive increasing levels of privacy as we receive increasing levels of personal expression. Pamphilia's desire that no one know her true feelings becomes progressively palpable as the narrative shifts to Pamphilia finally in the privacy of her chambers without Amphilanthus or Antissia. From her determination that no one know her true feelings, Pamphilia launches into expressing anger through weeping and questioning: "'Alas', would she say (weeping to herself), 'what have I deserved to be thus tyrannically tortured by love?'" (*Urania* 62). The use of the word "would" suggests that this effusion of emotion in privacy is not a one-time occurrence. This implies that what follows is both in response to the scene immediately prior and a continuous reaction to the torment she experiences. Her emotions do not occur in a vacuum of Amphilanthus' teasing about her "Womanish disposition." Rather, we receive the narrative hint that whenever she is alone she weeps to herself about the tyrant love and the affection it forces in her. The experiential reveal occurs in the following section of *Urania* in which Pamphilia is finally alone to "breath out her passions." Here, we see Wroth's heroine-avatar gesturing toward poetry as the best means by which to understand herself. This echoes Sidney's *Defence* in that poetry is the most appropriate method to understand the human spirit. The pattern that emerges in this moment is marked by discernible shifts in the narrative. In what follows, I draw attention to these shifts in order to highlight the experiential reveal in *Urania* each time a female character seeks solitude in order to express inwardness.

retreating from the queen of Naples into the privacy of her chamber to throw the burned hair into her fire. This scene is mirrored in an earlier scene in *The First Part of Urania* as the climactic moment in Belamira's story (Belamira is one of Pamphilia's avatars).

The experiential reveal becomes increasingly apparent as Pamphilia's evening continues into night. Soon after we learn that Pamphilia weeps over the tyrannical torture of love, the narrative shifts again: "Being heavie, she went into her bed, but not with hope of rest, but to get more libertie to express her woe" (*Urania* 62). Pamphilia wants to express her passions, but even after her expression of anger toward the tyrant love, she is heavy with emotion. This further retreat into privacy by going to bed intertwines with the narrative movement deeper into Pamphilia's inner thoughts and emotions. Only with Pamphilia's retirement to bed do her servants leave her alone. These levels of physical privacy – first with the removal of Amphilanthus and Antissia, and then with the dismissal of her servants – highlight the narrative shifts deeper into Pamphilia's inwardness. It is important to note that her movement into complete solitude is not immediate. Each shift in the narrative marks not only a shift in Pamphilia's mind into deeper personal thoughts and feelings, but also a shift into increasingly private spaces.

It is in the narrative following the departure of Pamphilia's servants that we move into the personification of her soul. Pamphilia's soul is personified at the same moment in which she is finally completely alone. This intertwining of shifts allows Wroth to conflate the physical experience of solitude with the emotional effusion of privacy, "At last, her servants gone, and all things quiet, but her ceaselesse mourning soul" (*Urania* 62).⁶⁹ The personification of her soul in this part of the experiential reveal intertwines with her solitude, her thoughts, and her sorrow in order to reach a depth of personal expression that contrasts sharply with the Pamphilia in the

⁶⁹ Early modern understandings of "soul" vary widely. In my reading of the experiential reveal in *Urania*, "soul" rhetorically signals the inner passions that Pamphilia seeks to express, but finds she cannot fully access these emotions until she is beyond patriarchal bounds and has the space to compose poetry.

narrative preceding her seclusion. The personification of Pamphilia's mourning soul reaches greater depths through the invocation of the goddess Diana. Finally completely alone, "but her ceaselessly mourning soul, she softly rose out of her bed, going to her window, and looking out beheld the Moone, who was then faire and bright in her selfe, being almost at the full, but rounded about with blacke, and broken clouds" (*Urania* 62). The description of nature intertwined with the personification of Pamphilia's soul produces a rhetorical effect here. Diana, often portrayed in art alongside a stag, is the goddess of hunting, the sister of Apollo (aligned with knowledge and poetry), and one of the goddesses that swore off marriage.⁷⁰ By invoking Apollo's sister, Pamphilia aligns herself with the female relation to the god of poetry. Pamphilia muses aloud to Diana as a means by which to express thoughts and feelings, but eventually turns to poetry as a more effective vehicle for her emotional outpouring. This turn toward Diana is a poetic convention, but Pamphilia focuses on Diana as symbolic of her desire to express herself in verse. That is, rather than Diana acting as a muse for Pamphilia, Pamphilia identifies herself with the goddess. In this rhetorical move, the female poet is characterized as independent, knowledgeable, and inspired.⁷¹

In Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, a work heavily influential on *Urania*, Diana is portrayed as a goddess notable for her love of privacy, chastity, and violence. She is introduced in Ovid's story through a description of her home,

There was a valley clothed in hanging woods
Of pine and cypress, named Gargaphine,

⁷⁰ Barker too invokes in *Patchwork Screen* in her first poems interpolated into the narrative – "The Grove" -- not only in the title, but also in the content, which provides a vision of a grove reminiscent of those associated with the goddess.

⁷¹ Although she is one of the goddesses who had sworn off marriage, Diana had an unrequited love with Endymion – another parallel to Queen Pamphilia.

Sacred to chaste Diana, huntress queen.
Deep in its farthest combe, framed by the woods,
A cave lay hid, not fashioned by man's art,
But nature's talent copied artistry.⁷²

Just as Pamphilia later moves into natural spaces whose description combines nature and art to give her solitude, so too does the independent Diana live in nature's, not man's, art. Personifying Pamphilia's soul in this way and in this moment aligns her with images of an independent female symbol. Further, Diana exists outside of the patriarchal constraints of Pamphilia's chamber. This allusion, therefore, moves Pamphilia as female poet to a place of privacy beyond patriarchal expectations. The rhetorical strategy of creating a narrative shift that intertwines Pamphilia's complete privacy with the personification of her soul by aligning her with Diana allows Wroth to alter the image of Pamphilia as a love-wracked queen to a self-empowered creator before presenting poetry in the prose.

Pamphilia addresses Diana for as long as her patience will allow her, but then she becomes restless with the desire to turn to verse. Even after weeping, venting anger, dismissing her servants, and conversing with Diana, Pamphilia still does not seem to have relief from her emotions. Here, the experiential reveal culminates in poetry. This shift takes us into an even further private space, that of Pamphilia's "little Cabinet" filled with papers: "When she has (as long as her impatient desires would permit her) beheld the chaste Goddess, she went to her bed againe, taking a little Cabinet with her, wherein she had many papers, and setting a light by her,

⁷² Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, translated by Arthur Golding (London: W. Seres, 1567). According to A.D. Melville in his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the conclusion of the tale focuses on Diana's chastity and violence, "As the tale spread views varied; some believed Diana's violence unjust; some praised it, As proper to her chaste virginity. Both sides found reason for their point of view" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 58. Pamphilia herself finds other characters uncertain whether to see her as a quietly passive queen, or as a queen that actively rules.

began to reade them, but few of them pleasing her, she took pen and paper, and being excellent in writing, writ these verses following” (*Urania* 62),

Heart drops distilling like a new cut-vine
Weepe for the paines that doe my soule oppresse,
Eyes doe no lesse
For if you weepe not, be not mine,
Silly woes that cannot twine
An equall grieffe in such excesse.

You first in sorrow did begin the act,
You saw and were the instruments of woe,
To let me know
That parting would procure the fact
Wherewith young hopes in bud are wrackt,
Yet deerer eyes the rock must show.

Which never weepe, but killingly disclose
Plagues, famine, murder in the fullest store,
But threaten more.
This knowledge cloyes my breast with woes
T’avoid offence my heart still chose
Yet faild, and pity doth implore. (*Urania* 62-63)

Pamphilia, in the depths of her inner thoughts, in the most private space possible, finds that her personal thought in her personal space is not enough to express her emotions in the moment, and so she turns to verse. Within this verse, Pamphilia pours out her passions for Amphilanthus. These stanzas here demonstrate the torture Pamphilia experiences as she loves, but cannot outwardly present that love, and so must harbor inwardly all the uncertainty, conflict, and unrequited constancy that accompanies her feelings for Amphilanthus.

Before Pamphilia’s verse appears in the narrative, the narrator lets us know that Pamphilia “being excellent in writing, writ these verses following” (*Urania* 62). Through the experiential reveal, which takes us deeper and deeper into Pamphilia’s solitude, we receive allusions to Pamphilia as a poet. Her love of solitude, her alignment with Diana, and her restless desire to “breathe out her passions” all function as markers of Pamphilia as poet. These markers

culminate in a poem, and, before the poem, a narrative direction that we are to believe Pamphilia is not only a poet, but also an excellent one.⁷³ Pamphilia's power as a female poet is soon interrupted, however. Even after producing this poem, Pamphilia still does not have complete relief. This is, perhaps, a narrative convention to keep tension throughout the narrative.

However, what is notable in this moment is the interruption of Pamphilia's privacy at a place when the narrative focuses on her dissatisfaction over the expression of her emotions, "Thus did the love wounded Princesse passe that night, or the greater part of it; convenient time for sports in the morning being come, the king sent for her to attend him and the Queene, to see a match which was made at the Justs onely partly to please the king, but most to welcome Amphilanthus" (*Urania* 63). Pamphilia is not yet fully satisfied with her verses before she finds herself taken away from self-reflection and her attention is redirected to Amphilanthus. In this moment we see the female poet silenced. Although she gains space to express herself in verse, this space is intruded upon by her obligations. The immediate contrast between a Pamphilia dissatisfied about her feelings and chivalric games in Amphilanthus' honor reveals the precarious situation of the female poet. Not only is the poet silenced by being taken away from writing, she

⁷³ Maureen Quilligan in "Lady Mary Wroth: Female Authority and the Family Romance" remarks of Wroth's use of Pamphilia as poet throughout *Urania* that "Like Amphilanthus, Pamphilia is famous for her poetry within the fiction of the romance; she complains of his infidelity and insists in poem after poem on her own constancy. Pamphilia gains her authority from her refusal to respond to the fluctuating demands of the social situation. It is an active desire that looks like paralyzed stasis. She will not budge, even when – possibly because – her desire is not fulfilled. She fills the social emptiness with poems. Wroth has reformulated a potentially transgressive active female desire but dressed it up in a former female virtue, patient constancy. Out of this maneuver, she creates Pamphilia's authority, institutionalized in the poems of the sonnet cycle appended to the *Urania*, in *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance*, edited by George M. Logan and Gordon Teskey (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 273-274.

must now behave with discretion in the public sphere of the games, and, in the face of the man she loves, must behave without emotion.

Poetic Passion and Discretion

Many characters in *Urania* desire privacy before they allow themselves to vent their passions. Often these passions culminate in poetic production, meditation, or recitation. Although we do not always receive a poem that the prose tells us the character is musing upon, whether it is a male character or female character seeking the space to vent his or her passions, characters always move into privacy before engaging in poetry. However, for female characters seeking privacy, Wroth creates shifts in the narrative that gesture toward the tension between what can and cannot be expressed in public.⁷⁴ This rhetorical anxiety, in turn, gestures toward the pressure that Wroth experienced as an early modern woman writer to remain outside the sphere of publishing her fictions and love poetry.⁷⁵ That is, the tension that builds as the narrative shifts further into privacy, while simultaneously revealing layers of inwardness for female characters, draws attention to the tension Wroth would have felt as a talented woman writer who desired to publish her fictions with no female precedent for such publications.

⁷⁴ As Helen Wilcox points out in “‘First Fruits of a Woman’s Wit’: Authorial Self-Construction of English Renaissance Women Poets,” “the argument of privacy is a very important one in the construction of early women’s authorship. Like all writers of the Renaissance period, women poets were working at that moment of transition from the limited circulation of manuscript culture to the unknown public encountered through publishing in print. For women to emerge in the public arena, however, even if only through their writings, was potentially a far more scandalous undertaking than for their male equivalents,” in *Write or Be Written: Early Modern Women Poets and Cultural Constraints*, edited by Barbara Smith and Ursula Appelt (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2001), 208.

⁷⁵ The clearest example of the tension Wroth felt as a woman writer comes from the attack she received from Sir Edward Denny who created a satirical dual against her when he became offended by a presumed example of him in *Urania*. Although Wroth protested that she never meant to have the book printed (an assertion questioned by critics today), Denny begins his poetic libel with gender, calling Wroth “Hermaphrodite in show, in deed a monster.”

Wroth manipulates discretion in *Urania* in order to provide a voice for female expression of passion – such as romantic desire and depths of sorrow. Passion and discretion work both together and in tension with one another in *Urania* because of “the threat passions pose to the containment of the self.”⁷⁶ Desire for privacy before giving way to vent emotions – whether in verse or otherwise – is tightly bound with expectations for female discretion. Discretion was important for early modern discussions of propriety and behavior in speech and typically involves “some extent of constraint on the free expression of the individual and often become associated with secrecy or hiddenness.”⁷⁷ As a woman writer in the early modern period Wroth must work within a world where the containment of the self is valued, yet she is free to use her fiction to explore female inwardness through the tension between passion and discretion.

We are told repeatedly in *Urania* that Pamphilia excels in passion and poetry, yet other characters commonly misinterpret her superior poetry as counterfeit passion. Pamphilia’s outward discretion directs these characters to believe her passion is not real. However, she is neither counterfeiting passion nor ruling it with discretion, “hence Pamphilia’s discretion facilitates the open expression of her passions, even as it, paradoxically, remains undiscovered

⁷⁶ Miller, *Ladies of the Oddest Passion*, 460. Interesting studies on representations of the female writer in Wroth’s “A Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love” include Helen Wilcox’s which observes that the frame of the sonnets explore passion by creating a complex maze, in “‘Free and Easy as ones discourse’?: Genre and Self-Expression in the Poems and Letters of Early Modern Englishwomen,” in Michelle M. Dowd and Julie A. Eckerle, *Genre and Women’s Life Writing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 20-21; and Mary Moore suggests that the sonnets use the labyrinthine qualities of “enclosure and complexity” to express problems of “female self-representation,” in *Desiring Voices: Women Sonneteers and Petrarchism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 125.

⁷⁷ Miller, *Ladies of the Oddest Passion*, 459.

and undisclosed.”⁷⁸ Complicating the reading of Pamphilia as appropriately discrete and therefore feigning passion is Sidney’s argument that the talented poet can imitate passions. Pamphilia conceals her passion by defending her poetic outputs with Sidney’s assertion that the poet “giveth a perfect picture of it in someone by whom he presupposeth it was done, so as he couplet the general notion with the particular example” (*Defence* 221). Pamphilia’s emotions are presented as poetry that represents her heart, yet discretion calls for her to hide her passion behind the mask of poetic imitation.

Pamphilia’s emotions are read as neither appropriately discrete nor appropriately mimetic. Pamphilia cannot act as poet or as woman when other characters attempt to read her expressions of emotion. The way in which Wroth uses discretion and passion in those narrative patterns gestures toward the demand for the woman writer’s silence, and her subversion of that demand. Pamphilia’s discretion in front of Amphilanthus, and her distress when she is honest with him about her feelings, juxtaposed with her commencement of releasing her emotions once she is alone, allows the experiential reveal in *Urania* to present women in tension with what they must perform in public versus what they actually feel. Pamphilia must remain completely

⁷⁸ Miller, *Ladies of the Oddest Passion*, 465. The permutations of discretion in early modern English debates suggest “a vigorous and ongoing dialectic of self and society, self-expression and restraint, and, finally, passion and judgment in early modern discourses of identity” (472). While discretion works with cultural codes, often associated with silence, discretion also “both defines a woman’s role in society and creates the possibility of maintaining an identity separate from it” (461). Silence, then, is used as a way to protect a woman from betraying affection. In *The English Gentlewoman* (1630), by Richard Brathwait, refers to the common joke that women are a “woe to men” – a concept Wroth overturns in her play on “woeman” in *Urania*, which, as Josephine Roberts illuminates, demonstrates that “Although lacking the explicit distinction between sex and gender, Wroth repeatedly reminds her readers that both sexes are capable of virtue,” in “Introduction,” lvii. As Miller points out, in early modern works such as *The English Gentlewoman* we can see discretion figuring “both the necessity of and resistance to constructions of social and linguistic distinctions in ‘the realm of England’” (*Ladies of the Oddest Passion*, 457).

discrete with her emotions around others, and is only allowed true expression when she finally locates complete solitude. However, as I discuss later, characters rarely find themselves completely alone.

Poetic Space

Wroth's inclusion of poems into the narrative of her prose is significant.⁷⁹ While *Arcadia* is notable for its insertion of poems throughout the prose narrative, Wroth includes the majority of her poems produced by her heroine. What is more, we can see from manuscript pages of *Urania* that Wroth left room for her poems in the fiction.⁸⁰ The self-conscious act of including her own poetry in her long prose fiction attests not only to Wroth's belief in herself as poet, but also to her intervention in the newly developing genre initiated by *Arcadia*.⁸¹ Rather than including poems in which the speaker retains a self-centered perspective, Wroth distinguishes her works from those of Sidney by affirming a love-centered perspective.⁸² This alteration is accomplished largely through her use of Pamphilia as writer. From the very beginning of the romance, Pamphilia asserts her place as poet. Throughout *Urania* characters comment on Pamphilia's ability to excel in the art of poetry. However, Pamphilia always creates poems with

⁷⁹ There are many categories of poets and poetry in *Urania*. This variety reveals just how important poetry is in this work, as well as the many levels of poets that exist, and the vast uses of poetry.

⁸⁰ This means that she knew where she wanted to include poems, along with the approximate length of the poem, before necessarily knowing which of her poems she would place in particular moments in the narrative.

⁸¹ By "newly developing genre" I am referring to the genre of prose fiction that becomes the novel genre.

⁸² That is, Wroth's sonnets focus on the interior struggle of an individual in the face of unrequited love. Naomi J. Miller, "Rewriting Lyric Fictions," 301; see also her *Changing the Subject* 42-44, 82-87, 156-60, 195, for discussions on the reversal of constancy Wroth initiates in her sonnets.

discretion – seeking privacy before expressing her passions in writing. Rather than writing poems reflective of the self-centered ones that appear in *Arcadia* when characters wish to express themselves, Pamphilia’s poems are love-centered. The love-centered poems focus on the experience of love through a female perspective. In this modification of Sidney’s work Wroth writes female experience into the epic romance genre.

Each time Pamphilia writes a poem, we are led into her composition through the experiential reveal. While seeing Pamphilia as Wroth’s avatar certainly presents some challenges, as Hannay notes, “Pamphilia’s reticence may be used to justify Wroth’s own circulation of her poems.”⁸³ Pamphilia’s discretion may have been included to protect Wroth’s reputation, but Pamphilia nevertheless writes poetry, critiques poetry, and asserts herself as a poet throughout the text in multiple ways. Therefore, the way Pamphilia is presented not only protects Wroth, but also places her as an authoritative poet. Women did not have a place of equality with men in the publishing world, but Wroth uses Pamphilia as a vehicle for presenting her poetry to an audience. That is, Wroth can present her own poetry via Pamphilia, a respected and talented poet in the fictional world of *Urania*.

One of the ways in which Pamphilia asserts herself in *Urania* as a poet is by secluding herself when she needs to vent her passions in order to, eventually, write, muse upon, or recite

⁸³ Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, 189. As Wendy Wall has noted, the presentation of *Pamphilia and Amphilanthus* sonnet sequence at the end of *Urania*, with its insistence upon the fictionality of Pamphilia as female poet distances Wroth from any potential scandal that would accompany Wroth as woman author who refuses to confine herself to devotional matters. *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 336-337. As Clare Kinney remarks, however, Wroth’s lyrics nevertheless articulate an anxiety about misrepresentation. As Kinney observes, in following with Petrarchan traditions, Wroth/Pamphilia produces poetry from “erotic frustration,” in “Mary Wroth’s Guilty ‘Secrett Art’: The Poetics of Jealousy in Pamphilia to Amphilanthus” in *Write or Be Written: Early Modern Women Poets and Cultural Constraints*, edited by Barbara Smith and Ursula Appelt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 70.

poetry. The poems in the moments in which female characters move into privacy work with the anxiety presented in the prose framing these moments. While these poems often reflect the tension that caused female characters, such as Pamphilia, to seek privacy in the first place, they reinforce the narrative shifts that indicate solitude in order to portray a sense of the process of poetic production. Wroth reveals the situation of the early modern woman writer through the movement of her heroine into privacy and the interruption that occurs on the other end of her solitude.⁸⁴ As Rebecca Laroche says of *Urania*, “many of Wroth’s characters enter enclosed spaces thinking that they have found private interiors only to discover that these spaces have already been claimed by others.”⁸⁵ This representation of over-crowding produces an “assault on our sense of inner space as something that should be a safe retreat.”⁸⁶ Viewed as a narrative strategy during those moments when Pamphilia seeks to vent her passions, this sense that inner space is not a safe retreat reveals the strain between discretion and writer. Even in the solitude that allows her to write, Pamphilia can be interrupted. This narrative technique works with Pamphilia’s discretion to offer her up as a poet most notably in the scene in which she carves a poem on an ash tree.

According to Amanda Flather, the inconsistencies in divisions of space for men and women in the early modern period allowed negotiation and circumvention of proscribed spatial

⁸⁴ Jorge Casanova asserts that “when the text presents a condition rather than a physical space, when seeking rather than as transgression is defined as an aspiration, then the physical, in dilution, gives pace to more discursive conceptions of the private,” in “‘Before Words’: Seeing and Privacy in Renaissance Poetry,” *SEDERI: Journal of the Spanish Society for English Renaissance Studies* 12 (2001): 143.

⁸⁵ Laroche, “Pamphilia Across a Crowded Room,” 268.

⁸⁶ Laroche, “Pamphilia Across a Crowded Room,” 269.

rules.⁸⁷ While rules of space were taken from classical models, their complexities opened interpretations that allowed for manipulation of the way meaning was given to space.⁸⁸ In the instance of domestic space, married women had significant authority, but were subordinate to men when disagreements over the governing of households arose.⁸⁹ The dynamic nature of this organization permitted women to assert authority at any given moment within this sphere. However, within public spaces, particularly work spaces, less attention was paid to rigid constructions of male and female space relations.⁹⁰ This leniency grew as a result of devotion to the practical over the hierarchical in spaces of work.⁹¹ When Pamphilia's frustration over lack of space to express herself arises in *Urania*, it perhaps reflects the ambiguous nature of spatial negotiations pushing against ideological constructions of women's space. That is, Pamphilia's search for writing space is not a result of direct disallowance of her private expressions within her chambers or the gardens, but from the ambiguity of where the lines of discretion and expression really exist for women.

The narrative shift that opens the ash tree scene immediately gestures to the tension between passion and discretion for the female poet. The narrative transition between updates on Perissus, Parselius, and Amphilanthus to Pamphilia occurs with a fluid correlation between the inconstant, love-troubled Parselius and the constant love-wearied Pamphilia: "Parselius in his

⁸⁷ Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (London: The Royal Historical Society, and The Boydell Press, 2007), 14.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 40-41.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 75-78.

⁹¹ Ibid.

journey travelled with great paine of mind, the like suffered Pamphilia, who all this while continued her Love, and life in Morea” (*Urania* 90). The fluidity of this transition from Parselius to Pamphilia, from one part of the globe to another, calls attention to the differing rhetorical strategies used to express Parselius’ and Pamphilia’s woe. For Parselius, we learn of his guilt in abandoning Urania through narrative dialogue with himself and others. For his sister, Pamphilia, the torture of her love for Amphilanthus finds its way into the narrative gradually, through shifting narrative discourses, finally culminating in her carving a poem on an ash tree, an act of permanency for the presentation of her poem.

As the narrative fluidly transitions to Pamphilia from Parselius, Wroth uses lyrically woven together prose sentences that alert us to Pamphilia’s abiding love, “Parselius in his journey travelled with great paine of mind, the like suffered Pamphilia, who all this while continued her Love, and life in Morea” (*Urania* 90). Immediately following this parallel structured sentence about the siblings, we are given a rapid relation of Pamphilia’s movements, “Quickly was she ready, and as soone left her Chamber, going into the Gardens, passing out of one into another, finding that all places are alike to Love, tedious” (*Urania* 90). Here we see a snapshot of that movement into increasingly private places. Her dissatisfaction with each space relates to her dissatisfaction with her emotional state.

For the female poet, finding privacy is required before writing. However, as the experiential reveal in this scene demonstrates, the female poet must move into solitude beyond patriarchal engineered privacy. Immediately following the description of Pamphilia’s movements out of the house and gardens, the narrative shifts into more lengthy illustrative sentences as Pamphilia discovers delightfully contrived walks “for although they were fram’d by Art, nevertheless they were so curiously counterfeited, as they appeard naturall” (*Urania* 90).

Pamphilia passes through these “curiously counterfeited” walks until she arrives at a grove of ash trees near a “purling, murmuring, sad Brooke, weeping away her sorrowes” (*Urania* 90). The shift from a simple direct sentence stating Pamphilia’s decision to wake early and leave the house alone, to a lengthy and lyrical description of a secluded place moves the experiential reveal to personification of Pamphilia’s soul. Here, Wroth uses nature to provide insight into Pamphilia’s interior. The prose does not jump into expressing Pamphilia’s thoughts and feelings. Rather than directly stating Pamphilia’s unhappiness as she did with Parselius, Wroth begins personifying Pamphilia’s soul with the sounds of a brook. This is a similar technique as the one she used in our introduction to Pamphilia with the moon goddess, Diana. By using nature to personify Pamphilia’s soul as the narrative shifts into further inwardness, Wroth signals to her readers that the privacy created artificially in chambers and gardens does not provide the solitude necessary for female poetic expression.

Although *Urania* creates a sense of place through gendered labor (the cultivated walks), the wild places (the thicket of ash), which are not marked male by the cultivating of land, draw attention to the processes of commiserating attention because they are free from societally constructed boundaries.⁹² “Wilderness” in *Urania* aligns with the Celtic origins of the word “self-willed land” or “self-willed place.”⁹³ As “self-willed,” the natural spaces beyond cultivated land provide a place for the female poet to gain agency. Pamphilia attempts to keep her encounters with wildness within “due bounds,” while characters who do not understand the “due

⁹² Sylvia Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies of Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004), 38.

⁹³ Bowerbank, 38.

bounds” of nature are doomed to misery in *Urania*.⁹⁴ Pamphilia and Diana are aligned as powerful and aware in nature. The forest groves represent a place that breaks free from “the silence about the toxic nature of love in a patriarchal society.”⁹⁵ These references to wilderness and the dual space Pamphilia inhabits as a woman in “due bounds” and poet in “self-willed land” reveal the very real space Wroth inhabited as a female writer in early modern England.

Mary Wroth spent much of her life at Loughton Hall. She and her husband did many renovations after they purchased the estate, including work on the expansive grounds and forest. The surrounding area had at least 1000 acres of forest and King James stayed with the Wroths to hunt in the area at least once in 1605. According to Hannay’s biography of Mary Wroth, the timber on the manor was surveyed on 4 October 1608, which gives us a sense of the numerous and varied trees and tree-lined walks that surrounded Loughton.⁹⁶ Wroth, perhaps, describes Loughton in *Urania* when she writes: “a fair house built on a Hill, at the foot whereof ran a River, over which was a bridge; from thence they passed through a delicate walk... and at the end of that, (which still ascended) was a garden, through which they came unto the House... with furniture fit for a Court” (*Urania The Second Part* 344). Wroth’s use of landscape and space

⁹⁴ Bowerbank, 44-45.

⁹⁵ Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature*, 49. Bowerbank points out that Pamphilia’s womanhood “requires obedience to that ‘nature’ as a condition of her good standing. On occasion, the text lets us hear the silenced threat that – should a woman forget her place and exhibit bad attitude (bad nature)—a fall from grace into mean, scant nature is ever a possibility” (31). The tension demonstrated between environment as protective and as dangerous offers a critique of Arcadian environmentalism; one that holds hope for the future (51).

⁹⁶ Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, 143-144.

would have come from an informed position as she and Robert Wroth renovated Loughton, its walks, and its gardens.⁹⁷

Each place in estate renovations, however, represents another space that is cultivated within the social standards and practices of early modern England. That is, the organization of a house, a garden, or a walk falls under the organizing principles of patriarchal society. Gardening and landscaping as a gendered practice in early modern England is discussed by Jennifer Munroe. Nature was seen as female, while art was gendered as male.⁹⁸ Despite elite women's elaborate and renowned gardening skills, the tension between gardening associated with men circumscribed women's involvement in some ways, but also offered new possibilities to assert agency. As Munroe describes, women writers could use gardens in poetry to draw attention to gender inequity. Wroth uses gardens to present the double-bind of creative outlet and limited mobility.⁹⁹ That is, when Pamphilia moves beyond the boundaries of cultivated land to create poetic expression, she at once demonstrates her ability to find a place to act as poet, and draws attention to how difficult it is to find those places – how limiting patriarchal confines are for female poetic expression when women are expected to act with discretion in any place within the patriarchal bounds.

⁹⁷ Penshurst was another such place to influence Wroth's imagination. There is currently much work being done to restore the original gardens.

⁹⁸ Munroe, *Gender and the Garden in Early Modern English Literature* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 11.

⁹⁹ Munroe, *Gender and the Garden in Early Modern English Literature*, 11-12. As Munroe also argues, "The various gardening, needlework, and writing images placed throughout the sequence tell us much about how a woman writer might imagine making space for herself and others like her in a man's world. Weaving these images together, Wroth draws on the experiences of early modern English women whose everyday domestic practices gave them opportunities for agency and establishes that women like Wroth might justify a claim to such agency in the print marketplace" (120).

In her fiction, when Wroth moves Pamphilia beyond the contrived walks and into the thickest part of an ash grove, Wroth positions her heroine in a place beyond the social constrictions of even the most private chamber, garden, walk, or wood.¹⁰⁰ Once Pamphilia moves through conventionally private spaces such as the gardens, and into this grove of ash trees that symbolize her own personal sense of privacy, Wroth begins using emotional language such as “sad” and “weeping away her sorrows,” because only when she is beyond the patriarchal confines can she express her emotions freely. Wroth’s personification of the brook through female pronouns links its sounds to Pamphilia’s feelings. That we receive these sounds from the brook before we receive them from Pamphilia in the narrative points to the frustrated feeling of not only being unable to express an emotional state, but also, and what is more, the reality of not even knowing where to begin processing emotions. In the part of the experiential reveal that follows the personification of Pamphilia’s soul, love is described by her as cruel, “not only over mindes, but on the best of mindes: and this felt the perplexed Pamphilia, who with a Booke in her hand, not that shee troubled it with reading, but for a colour of her solitarinesse, she walked beholding these pleasures, till grief brought this Issue” (*Urania* 90). The contrast between the natural beauty surrounding her and the agony in Pamphilia’s heart is off-set by the reiterated images of knowledge and writing. Wroth further sets her heroine up as an exceptional thinker and writer by connecting her with the image of the solitary poet alone to express her thoughts. Pamphilia, “the best of mindes,” represents the image of poet through her solitary walk in nature with book in hand. However, Wroth creates a space distinct from the comfortable natural setting

¹⁰⁰ Barker’s Galesia, too, uses an ash tree to carve her first poetic outpouring. Further, as I will discuss in Chapter Three, the content of Galesia’s poem and the experiential reveal surrounding it marks her as a poet who wants to impart her passions on readers in hopes of altering their perspectives on love.

in which male characters express themselves by emphasizing that this poet walks with grief until she finally issues forth her emotions in poetic form.

Poetic Production

Once the narrator moves Pamphilia into the ash grove, beyond the counterfeited walks, and into the depths of her poetic thoughts, Pamphilia writes her poetry. Her carved poem on an ash is, perhaps, the clearest example of Pamphilia as poet. This quintessential moment in which Pamphilia asserts herself as a poet with an imagined readership outside her choosing reflects not only the tension present in the prose previous to the poem, but also her relationship with poetry throughout *Urania*.

Beare part with me most straight and pleasant Tree,
And imitate the Torments of my smart
Which cruell Love doth send into my heart,
Keepe in thy skin this testament of me:

Which Love ingraven hath with miserie,
Cutting with grieve the unresisting part,
Which would with pleasure soone have learnd loves art
But wounds still curelesse, must my rulers bee.

Thy sap doth weepingly bewray thy paine,
My heart-blood drops with stormes it doth sustaine,
Love sencelesse, neither good nor mercy knows
Pitiles I doe wound thee, while that I
Unpitied, an dunthought on, wounded crie:
Then out-live me, and testifie my woes.

And on the rootes, whereon she had laid her head, serving (though hard) for a pillow at that time, to uphold the richest World of wisdom in her sex, she writ this.

My thoughts thou hast supported without rest,
My tyred body here hath laine opprest
With love, and feare: yet be thou ever blest;
Spring, prosper, last; I am alone unblest. (*Urania* 93)

The tree, in this moment of verse production is the canvas on which she writes, but as the words, sap, and Pamphilia's tears intermingle together, the tree and poetry become one. The audiences

of this poem are those readers who might stumble upon the grove later and read the ash tree. By carving on the tree, Pamphilia not only shuns the male-produced writing tools of pen and paper, but also the male-constructed invention of print publication.

This rhetorical strategy provides us with insight into the experience of poetic production. Allowing Pamphilia's private expressions of inwardness to culminate in a poem that she does not hide in her cabinet, muse upon silently, or destroy after writing offers up to Wroth's readers a view of the process the solitary thinker goes through before writing, the process of writing per se, and the intention to have an audience. After we receive the depths of Pamphilia's thoughts and feelings in the privacy of the thickest part of the ash grove, the narrative shifts once more to incorporate a sonnet. By choosing to carve this poem on an ash tree, Pamphilia performs at once a private and public act. Similar to the production of poetry for public consumption, Pamphilia composes in solitude, yet a poem carved into a tree represents an act of permanence. Pamphilia's self-isolation as a poet is seen in many sixteenth and seventeenth-century melancholic lovers who remove themselves from society. Pamphilia's poem symbolizes the dual layers of private and public poet. That her poem becomes public in this private act to an audience over which she will not have any control is notable. Although Pamphilia's withdrawal "denies public access to her private feelings," her carving on the ash tree in the space of this private grove leaves her verse for an audience of anyone who might come upon the grove.¹⁰¹

Pamphilia's poetic act becomes even more remarkable in her motivation for carving her poem on an ash tree. Immediately after a lengthy lyrical section in which the reclining Pamphilia questions aloud her lot with musings such as, "Am I the first unfortunate Woman that bashfulnesses hath undone? If so, I suffer for a virtue, yet gentle pitty were a sweeter lot. Sweet

¹⁰¹ Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, 273.

Land, and thou more sweet Love, pardon me, heare me, and commiserate my woe,” she rises “hastily” and drastically shifts her perspective. She vocalizes directly against her lyrical statement saying, “since I find no redresse, I will make others in part taste my paine, and make them dumbe partakers of my griefe” (*Urania* 92). This shift, one that sets us up for the culminating shift into expression through verse, provides a view of Pamphilia the poet that has run through a process of poetic thought.

Even more than writing, Pamphilia is inscribing verses that contain not only her emotions, but also her power as a poet. In the first narrative shift wherein Pamphilia recognizes the solitude she seeks, Wroth has indicated to us that her heroine is a great thinker and writer by including the image of Pamphilia with a book in hand. Pamphilia then becomes a representative poet when the pattern shifts into her lyrical love-worn complaints. When the experiential reveal culminates in poetry, Pamphilia the thinker and writer has shifted as well to a writer capable of making others – that is, readers – “dumbe partakers” of her grief. In this experiential reveal, Wroth has provided an image of Pamphilia that moves through being a thinker and culminates in her becoming a writer. Pamphilia’s carving on the ash tree stands as a type of publication – the only publication permitted her. While Pamphilia may not express her emotions publically, her search for solitude brings her to the quiet of an ash grove, a permitted space on which she can write. In the wild of the grove she is beyond patriarchal control – neither she, the tree, nor the readership of any who pass by must answer to patriarchal standards. The ash functions as her permanent record for anyone to read and be affected by these representations. The silent tree must accept her verse in the same way a passerby who reads these verses would be moved emotionally.

Wroth's choice of the ash tree as Pamphilia's public canvas offers up a wealth of symbolic power. The ash, an abundant tree in England, was used in early English history for spears. It is notable for its strength and elasticity. Shakespeare and Spenser reference the ash in their works as allusions to great battle.¹⁰² The ash grove symbolizes a place of wilderness and strength as the location in which Pamphilia discovers the complete privacy in which to express her inwardness. Indeed, the relationship between the ash and Pamphilia is complicated, as after the completion of the poem, Pamphilia, finding "passion had not yet allowed time for her quiet, wherefore rising, and giving as kind a farewell-looke to the tree, as one would doe to a trusty friend, she went to the brooke" (*Urania* 92). The ash tree, this "trusty friend," functions symbolically as the means by which others see her writing. We can see how Pamphilia, and therefore Wroth, views the poet as capable of carving her own poetry on the hearts of readers. That Wroth erases the connotations of ash as linked to destruction further empowers Pamphilia's choice in carving her poem here. This empowerment is strengthened by the enduring nature of her poem on this strong resilient tree set opposite Pamphilia's first poem, which she destroys. However, whether she carves her poem for a public audience or destroys it in a private chamber, each time she completes her poetic thoughts, Pamphilia's power as a poet is interrupted. These interruptions signal the lack of enduring space for the early modern woman writer. That is, while

¹⁰² "ash" n. *Oxford English Dictionary*. The ash was seen also as a common wild wood in sixteenth-century England. 1590 Spenser *Faerie Queene* i. i. sig. A4, The warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill. a1616 Shakespeare *Coriolanus* (1623) iv. v. 109 That body, where against My grained Ash an hundred times hath broke.

the space outside of patriarchal artifices of privacy (chambers and gardens) provides the woman writer the solitude to act as poet, she is never truly outside patriarchal society.¹⁰³

The content of the poem also reflects the relationship between Pamphilia as poet and the ash tree as vehicle for her poetic opinions. Each verse contains an intertwining of her pain and the pain the ash experiences as she carves her poem on it. “Beare part with me most straight and pleasant Tree” the sonnet begins (*Urania* 92).¹⁰⁴ Her linking of her pain with the ash further provides a place of privacy for her to express herself. However, underlying this symbolic link is a poem about poetry. The next line reads, “And imitate the Torments of my heart” – an allusion perhaps to the theories of imitation and poetry held by Renaissance poets. That is, the female poet, Pamphilia, writes poetry in order to transmit her emotional experience to any readers who might encounter this ash-poem. The content of the poem permits us insight into a woman writer contributing to poetic theories through her construction of a female poet responding to the emotions we see her encounter in the romance.

Transmuting Pain

Belief that the poet was capable of inscribing emotions onto readers was a widely discussed literary topic in seventeenth-century England. In his *Defence* Sidney argues that poetry

¹⁰³ Interestingly, Pamphilia does not use the mass-produced, male-designed paper for this poem, yet she does use a knife to carve into the tree, signaling both an escape from and a tie to patriarchal tools.

¹⁰⁴ As Jacqueline Miller illuminates in “The Passion Signified: Imitation and the Construction of Emotions in Sidney and Wroth,” “Wroth more than simply ‘imitates’ Sidney’s verse; she repeats it in a different context.” Miller uses the example of Antissia confronting Pamphilia after she has inscribed a sonnet on the ash, suggesting that “Wroth gestures toward more than the imitative act of writing poetry; she connotes an imitation taking place within a family ‘tree’,” in *Criticism* 43 (2001), 274.

draws people to truth and correct action. For Sidney, poetry uses the power or rhetoric to move emotions,

This purifying wit – this enriching memory, enabling of judgment, and enlarging of conceit – which commonly we call learning under what name soever it come forth, or to what immediate end soever be directed, the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of. (*Defence* 219)

Sidney asserts that poets have the power to recall in their readers those most refined of human experiences through emotion. Wroth presents her heroine-avatar as capable of being such a poet, thereby instilling in her readers the understanding that a female poet can be one of these creatures Sidney champions in his *Defence*. In choosing to carve her poem on the ash, Pamphilia enacts these beliefs by stating that she will “make others in part taste my paine.” Love has engraved pain on Pamphilia’s heart just as Pamphilia engraves on the ash. The poem, then, becomes an imitation of the real love that Pamphilia feels. However, in ordering the tree to function as an imitation of her passion, she becomes a poet.

In this scene, Wroth registers the vexed relationship between poetic imitation and truly felt passion. When Antissia reads Pamphilia’s poem, Pamphilia diverts Antissia’s attention away from any personal reading of the poem by claiming her status as poet. Once Antissia enters the narrative, Pamphilia must exert her energy convincing Antissia that she has no reason to be jealous. Antissia, seeing the poem carved on the ash, says, “Your owne hand in yonder faire Ash will witnes against you,” to which Pamphilia attests, “for many Poets write as well by imitation, as by sence of passion; therefore this is no prooffe against me” (*Urania* 94).¹⁰⁵ Here Wroth

¹⁰⁵ Snook in *Women, Reading, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern England* remarks of Antissia that “She does not understand the arts of poetry – of which Pamphilia reminds her when she suggests that poems can also be written in imitation” (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 156.

engages popular debates about poetry and the poet's ability to mimic passions. Sidney's *Defence* understands the poet as possessing the power to create verse that "feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching" (*Defence* 219). Antissia's reading of Pamphilia's poetry as evidence for Pamphilia's true feelings of love for Amphilanthus coupled with Pamphilia's response creates a dialogue about the position of the female poet.

As Pamphilia takes pains to point out, as a talented poet she is capable of imitating true passion. While Antissia's reading demonstrates the privilege of being "allowed to interpret the poem personally, to be granted access to knowledge of Pamphilia's passion," the female author, Pamphilia, acts as gatekeeper to meaning.¹⁰⁶ Although Antissia's interruption silences Pamphilia's solitude, Pamphilia moves from being a creator of poetry to becoming an arbitrator of poetic reading. As Sidney's *Defence* argues, "If poetry is not to move audience to vice, readers must recognize errors in the poetic work and in themselves."¹⁰⁷ As arbitrator of poetic reading, Pamphilia uses Antissia's silencing interruption to speak from a place of poetic authority. Pamphilia, and by extension Wroth, gains a place not only as powerful poet capable of imitating and inscribing emotions onto a public audience, but also as authoritative voice over the reading of her own work.¹⁰⁸ This places her in a powerful position as a woman writer writing in

¹⁰⁶ Edith Snook, *Women, Reading, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 156.

¹⁰⁷ Olmstead, *The Imperfect Friend*, 75.

¹⁰⁸ Edith Snook in *Women, Reading, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern England*, speaks about Wroth's reaction to Denny's attack by saying that it "presupposes that she [Wroth] is the sole determiner of the text's meaning," 164. That we can see this both in Wroth's use of Pamphilia and in her response to real life attacks against Wroth as a writer highly suggest not only that Wroth saw her position as a writer of fiction and love poetry, but also as an authoritative writer in these genres – capable of building on older genres, inventing her own discourses, and contributing to literary traditions with as much authority as her uncle.

a social context that does not support work outside of the bounds of devotional or religious writing.

Poetic Interruption

In the accusation against Antissia's misreading of poetry, there also is revealed a criticism of early modern reading and writing practices for women. While women reading and writing in privacy in *Urania* reflect reading and writing practices for women in early modern England, as Wroth illustrates in her romance through Pamphilia, writing is not always private.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the secrecy of ciphers in *Urania*, along with the constancy they communicate, enables a form of female agency.¹¹⁰ Pamphilia, Wroth's poet avatar, is the only female in the romance to write in ciphers. The need for ciphers and privacy, groves and cabinets, implies that "the social context is unfriendly to the revelation of female desire."¹¹¹ While Pamphilia exhibits discretion with expressions of her passion, "her cipher allows her to disclose, at least, that she can 'out-wit' these limitations by possessing desires beyond social control."¹¹² The interruptions that attempt to read these ciphers against Pamphilia gesture at once to her ability to "outwit" those intrusions to her poetic production, and to her ability to publically present her poetry. However, despite demonstrating how her avatar is able to function as poet against limitations created by social control, Wroth's deployment of the experiential reveal each time Pamphilia wishes to vent her passions in poetry – that is, the narrative pattern of movement into privacy, personification of the

¹⁰⁹ Snook, 145-146.

¹¹⁰ Snook, 152.

¹¹¹ Snook, 154.

¹¹² Snook, 154.

soul, culmination into poetry, and interruption of poetic thought – reveals the inequality amongst early modern female and male poets.¹¹³

The narrative shifts that have brought us to this point provide a uniquely private place that even Pamphilia's chamber and gardens could not. The narrative pattern combined with the placement of this poem in this space creates a discourse about the woman writer/poet and her poetry. This experiential reveal gestures toward the insistence for a woman writer to find her ash grove; that is, her uniquely private space. However, while Pamphilia must move through the narrative shifts that signal her complete privacy before she can reveal her inwardness, the poem carved on the ash is a symbol of her poetry as not only public, but also powerful. Pamphilia lets us know that she believes others will see her poetry, and in reading it will be "partakers of [her] griefe." Even though the narrative has moved her into complete privacy, it has also positioned her as the one poet in the entirety of the romance who has deliberately produced poetry for an audience outside her choosing.¹¹⁴

The dual position of the female poet, that of both discrete and expressive, functions throughout the romance to reveal the belief that such masking of the public female poet is not a norm, but an artificial constraint imposed upon women such as Wroth. While Pamphilia's poems receive a place of importance in *Urania*, the privacy Pamphilia seeks before writing is interrupted upon the completion of her verses. The interruptions that take place after Pamphilia's

¹¹³ Perhaps as Snook says, "Wroth is behaving much as Pamphilia does, situating herself as the arbiter of the text's significance. Like the poem by Pamphilia that Antissia read in the ash tree, Wroth's text is plainly not as innocent as she says" (163).

¹¹⁴ That is, when other poets produce and share a poem in the narrative it is always with characters that they are interacting with in that moment. Other poems that are found or overheard by characters are not meant to be shared in the way that Pamphilia imagines her ash tree poem will be shared.

private musings culminate in poetic production function as a part of the narrative pattern that occurs each time the heroine seeks solitude to express her passions.

One of the most obvious interruptions to Pamphilia's privacy occurs when Leandrus, who loves Pamphilia, finds "his passions more violently increasing to the height of discovering" (*Urania* 212). This increase in his emotions occurs when he sees Pamphilia alone in a garden "walking in such a manner, as he could hardly give it that title; for so stilly did she moove" (*Urania* 212). Meanwhile, the narrator fluidly moves the perspective from Leandrus to Pamphilia by saying "But while this quiet outwardly appear'd, her inward thoughts more busie were, and wrought, while this Song came into her mind" (*Urania* 212).

Gone is my joy, while here I mourne
In paines of absence, an dof care:
The heavens for my sad griefes doe turne
Their face to stormes, and shew despaire.

The dayes are darke, the nights opprest
With cloud'ly weeping for my paine,
Which in their acting seeme distrest,
Sighing like grieffe for absent gaine.

The Sunne gives place, and hides his face,
That day can now be hardly knowne;
Nor will the stares in night yield grace
To Sun-rob'd heaven by woe o'rethrowne.

Our light is fire in fearefull flames,
The ayre tempestuous blasts of wind:
For warmth, we have forgot the name,
Such blasts and stormes are us assin'd.

And still you blessed heavens remaine
Distempered, while this cursed power
Of absence rules, which brings my paine,
Let your care be more still to lower.

But when my Sunne doth back returne,
Call yours againe to lend his light,
That they in flames of joy may burne,

Both equall shining in our sight. (*Urania* 212).

The tension between the public Pamphilia and the private poet becomes evident as Leandrus interrupts Pamphilia. Even when she appears solitary and consumed with her private thoughts, he thinks only of his own desires in his decision to intrude upon her. What is more, he interrupts her poetic mind. Whether this song is one of her creation or she simply recites it, whether she does so aloud or silently, Wroth includes it here as a testament to the constantly troubled Pamphilia. Within this poem we see Pamphilia's inner struggle between discretion and expression of love. The play of light and dark, of a face clouded and revealed, of loneliness and companionship, betrays the distress consuming Pamphilia. We receive the song in her mind before Leandrus "now growne resolute, not to loose for want of attempting, would not let this opportunity passe, not let slip so pretious an advantage, went into the garden to her" (*Urania* 212-213). Similar to Perissus' poem interrupting Urania's private outpourings of personal emotion, Leandrus' immediate interruption of Pamphilia's reflections puts his passions ahead of hers.

What ensues after this interruption is a discussion between Leandrus and Pamphilia about discretion. Pamphilia answers Leandrus' question as to why she is alone without the love of a man to protect her that " 'Love is oft-times as slacke (being treacherous)... from assistance, thus are these walls more secure: and for strength I had rather have these, then ones power I could not love.'" To which Leandrus responds, "Such is your discretion... as to know, that love with discretion is the truest love; and therefore to a brave Princess, and especially you... but also a woman, and so to be matched with one fit for your estate, in birth and greatnesse, and so judgement will continue affection betweene you." Pamphilia, however, refutes Leandrus' demand that she follow social obligations by saying, " 'Discretion in love, I must confesse... as discretion in selfe is best: but if love come wholly to be governd by it that wil have so great a

power, as love will loose name, and rule'” (*Urania* 213). Wroth presents this discussion in a dialogue format, emphasizing the philosophical debate of the issues at stake here. Perhaps, as the dialogue between Pamphilia and Leandrus suggests, Pamphilia does pursue her own desires, “while outwardly observing the reticence collectively valued by her class” and refrains from affirming Leandrus’ idea of discretion defined only by social norms.¹¹⁵ This dialogue reveals Pamphilia’s belief, and by extension Wroth’s, that if social norms define discretion, then there is a public place for the woman writer who wishes to publish her works in print.

As the experiential reveal demonstrates throughout *Urania*, this place does not currently exist, and even in those moments when it is attained outside the patriarchal confines, it is consistently taken away through interruptions. For female poets, such as Pamphilia, interruptions do not occur in a space in which she feels her passions have been sufficiently expressed. The interruptions to Pamphilia’s private musings notably do not take place until after she has concluded her poems. However, because Pamphilia has finished writing, thinking, or reciting, but has not finished her expressions of passion, readers’ attention is drawn back to the tension that frames this narrative pattern. The tension that begins this narrative pattern occurs because Pamphilia must mask her emotions in public. Once the narrative takes her into privacy she may freely express her passions.

However, the experiential reveal takes her even further into privacy, indicating the lack of space for the female poet even in places designed for privacy, such as her chamber and gardens. Once she reaches a place beyond the constraints of patriarchal privacy, indicated by

¹¹⁵ Miller, “Ladies of the Oddest Passions,” 464. Miller also says that Pamphilia’s “claim to be both self-contained and self-sufficient has already implicitly met its counterargument in Leandrus's unsuspected intrusion into her solitary space and solitary reflections, and the ensuing discussion of love and discretion obliquely comments on the same issue as it announces love's mastery of both discretion and the one who loves” (465).

personification of her soul, Pamphilia produces, recites, or muses upon poetry. Immediately upon the presentation of her poetry, she is interrupted. These interruptions reveal the ways early modern women writers, such as Wroth, can carve out a place for themselves as writers, yet cannot fully possess that space in society. However, even when Pamphilia is interrupted, she does not remain silent. After each interruption the narrative presents poetic commentary. In the instance of Leandrus this commentary comes from Pamphilia's dialogue with Leandrus about discretion. In the instance of Antissia and the ash grove Pamphilia asserts her authority as poet through her commentary on imitation and poetic power. In our first meeting of Pamphilia, she looks back over her verses and comments on the art of love poetry.

In this refusal to be silent we see within our first introduction to Pamphilia a demonstration of her talent as a poet and assertion of her authority over poetry through critical poetic introspection. After she composes her first poem in *Urania*, but before she is interrupted by the chivalric games the next day, Pamphilia functions as critic in her first introduction to the romance. Once Pamphilia finds complete privacy to express her passions, after her expression of inwardness culminates in poetry, Pamphilia comments on her poem, then expands that commentary to a debate about love poetry in general:

When reading them over again; "Fie passion," said she, "how foolish canst thou make us? and when with much paine and businesse thou hast gain'd us, how dost thou then dispose us unto folly, making our choicest wits testimonies to our faces of our weaknesses, and, as at this time dost, bring my owne hands to witnesse against me, unblushingly showing my idlenesses to mee. Then tooke shee the new-writ lines, and as soone almost as shee had given them life, she likewise gave them burial. "And yet," said shee, "love must doe thus, and sure we love his force the better for these fansies."
(*Urania* 63)

Although Pamphilia appears to admonish her passions as well as the poetic expression motivated by these emotions, her "and yet" leaves us with an image of the "choicest wits" ability to love the force of love even better. This view of the power of the poet centers on Pamphilia and her

talent as a poet. What is more, despite her socially appropriate chastisement of a woman writing love poetry, the final message of Pamphilia's commentary creates a space for the female poet not only to write love poetry, but also to write it in such a way that heightens emotions in readers. This observation sets the stage for all poetic thought throughout the romance. The experiential reveal that opens *Urania* and carries into this first poetic production by Pamphilia marks the narrative pattern that occurs each time Pamphilia seeks to express her passions in privacy in poetry.¹¹⁶

Conclusion

One of the ways Wroth uses Sidney's romance form is to problematize the male poets' ability to compose poetry inside the narrative with a female poets' poetic abilities. Wroth also lengthens the narrative moments when women write poems. That she presents an experiential reveal for this alteration and adheres to it throughout the romance each time Pamphilia needs a private vent of her emotions demonstrates Wroth's skill as working in and building upon literary tradition in ways that present female experience. The rhetorical strategy of creating a narrative pattern for female expression opens the audience to a new awareness of female speech and narrative power.¹¹⁷ Wroth's narrative power in moments of experiential reveal creates a space for

¹¹⁶ Although the stage is set for this narrative pattern in the first page of Wroth's epic romance with Urania's movement into privacy, personification of the soul, culmination into poetry, and silencing interruptions, it is notable, as Quilligan in "Lady Mary Wroth" posits, that "as Wroth's representative of the self-possessed "poet," however, Pamphilia writes not only more self-consciously but more coherently than does Urania" (268).

¹¹⁷ Julie A. Eckerle discusses how contradictions occur between real conditions for women's speech in early modern England – and the prohibitions therein – and the verbal expressions of female characters in early modern literature, especially in romance because it is a "genre conducive to female speech because of its frequent use of the embedded narrative device," in "Urania's Example: The Female Storyteller in Early Modern English Romance" in *Oral Traditions and Gender in Early Modern Literary Texts*, edited by Mary Ellen Lamb and Karen Bamford (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 25. Naomi J. Miller writes of the bonds of female

expression of the experience of being an early modern woman writer. Sheila Cavanagh points out that focus on early modern women's reclamation of male forms of writing tends to divert attention away from seeing Wroth as an "exceptional thinker."¹¹⁸ The experiential reveal that appears in Wroth's work place her not as a woman writer who reclaimed the romance or epic genre, but as a writer who processed established literary forms in innovative ways. Reading the narrative discourse that comes out of new narrative patterns, such as the one examined in this chapter, affords us important insights into Wroth as an early modern woman writer, exceptional thinker, and literary inventor, who provides a voice for female expression. The prosimetrum form provides Wroth the platform on which to establish herself as a writer that can not only participate in the foundational discourses of her uncle and his predecessors, but also innovate from within those genres to create discourses for female experience.¹¹⁹

friendship, that "Wroth rewrites the conventions of gender relation which govern the romances of her predecessors," in "Not Much to Be Marked': Narrative of the Woman's Part in Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*" *SEL* 29.1 (Winter 1989): 130. Robin Farabaugh discusses *Urania*'s critique of early modern gender inequity as portrayed through the parallels between Wroth's characters and classical heroines. She suggests that *Urania* is able to integrate practical and metaphysical concerns, thereby presenting an alternative model for early modern women, in "Ariadne Venus and the Labyrinth: Classical Sources and the Thread of Instruction in Mary Wroth's Works" in *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800, Volume 139* (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2007), 279-289.

¹¹⁸ *Cherished Torment: The Emotional Geography of Lady Mary Wroth's Urania* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne UP, 2001), 16.

¹¹⁹ Lorna Hutson posits that, "in constructing a space for female authorship, Wroth represents the potential division, even dismemberment, of the female artist... The act of writing, the act of expressing a female self, can cause that very self to splinter. Wroth's attempts to create and express her position as an autonomous, speaking subject threaten to erase that very self constituted by the act of writing," in "The 'Double Voice' of Renaissance Equity and the Literary Voices of Women," in *Renaissance Equity and the Literary Voices of Women*, edited by Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (New York: St. Martin Press, 2000), 143.

Throughout the romance there is a marked rhetorical difference in the narrative discourse for women's expression of the deeply personal and expression of the parallel experiences by men. What is more, while both men and women often culminate their private moments of personal expression in the genre of the deeply personal, poetry, the narrative strategies surrounding these poems differ for women and men characters. The prose that surrounds the verse composed by women, such as Urania and Pamphilia, in contrast to those provided by men, such as Dolorindus and Amphilanthus, reveals that women writers must move beyond confines in order to gain a writing space only to be interrupted immediately after they compose a poem. By contrast, men easily gain the privacy to write and readily share their poems with their comrades upon completion without censure. However, regardless of these differences, Pamphilia's response to her interruptions indicates a refusal to censor herself.¹²⁰ In Pamphilia's refusal, we see Wroth's imagined world for the female poet – one in which her power functions without limitations, where she need not out-wit those who misread her and she is able to function publically as a poet, regardless of the genre in which she writes or the content she produces.

¹²⁰ Like Pamphilia, Wroth refuses to censor herself: "I shall with all cleernes and truth wittnes my innocency, and not now with words or submission (which I scorne) goe about to give my satisfaction, but [with] true and loyall faith prove and justifie what I have said." This quote come from a letter Wroth wrote to Denny after his accusations against her, "Lady Wroth to Sir Edward Denny" February 27, 1621. Attention to this section of the letter can be found in Josephine A. Roberts, *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, 2nd edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 240.

Chapter Two

Reconfigured Authority: Margaret Cavendish's *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* and Publically Acclaimed Woman Poets

In 1667 Margaret Cavendish, dressed extravagantly, and adorned with masculine knee-length juste-au-corps and a cavalier hat, visited a meeting of the Royal Society.¹²¹ Cavendish's male garb juxtaposed with six waiting women to carry her long eight-foot train delightfully illustrates a woman entering a male space with deliberate attention to her public role as invited spectator. The spectacle of Cavendish's visit was created not only on her side, but also on the part of the Royal Society because the planned visit was anticipated by all as extraordinary.¹²²

Not only did the knowledge of this planned event draw a large crowd, including the renowned diarist Samuel Pepys, but also a delegation of aristocratic fellows of the society ushered Cavendish into Arundel House. She was then greeted at the door by the president, Lord

¹²¹ As Katie Whitaker says in *Mad Madge: The Extraordinary Life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, the First Woman to Live by Her Pen*, on of the members at attendance, John Evelyn, took her for "a cavalier, but that she had no beard" (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 299.

¹²² As Hillary Rose details, another woman would not cross the threshold of this society as a member until 1945 (and then only because of legal pressure), in *Love, Power, and Knowledge: Towards a Feminist Transformation of Sciences* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 114-116. However, when the Royal Astronomical Society split from the Royal Society in 1820, formed by John Herschel and Charles Babbage, their first honorary member was Caroline Herschel and the Society's second Honorary Member was to be Mary Somerville. See Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror in Science* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 407.

Brouncker, with the society's large golden mace held before him in a ceremony designed especially for her visit.¹²³ The spectacle generated by the production created by the Royal Society betrays the public limitation for a woman even as unique as Margaret Cavendish. That is, although Cavendish participated in scientific conversations in print, the occasion of a woman visiting the physical space of scientific proceedings was not viewed as natural. While the ceremony attached to Cavendish's visit created a sense of proper space for an aristocratic woman, the spectacle of such a ceremony simultaneously draws attention to the public sense that her participation in a Royal Society meeting was an oddity that warranted an exhibition.

Although Cavendish engaged these men in natural philosophy debates in print, her status as woman was inescapable once she entered the masculine space of a meeting. Jo Wallwork provides an excellent analysis of this visit, noting the disparity between a woman universally famous for attacking philosophers present at this meeting, such as Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, and Henry More, in her printed works, and a visitor-as-spectacle who, to the disappointment of all present, only commented on each experiment done for her benefit that she was "full of admiration, all admiration."¹²⁴ Pepys and the Royal Society members expected the woman without a shortage of words in her published works to have more comments than "admiration."

The disparity between their expectations and her performance draws attention to the tenuous position Cavendish held as a public woman intellectual figure. She carved out a space for herself as a public figure in her writings, yet performed the role of spectacle when in the same physical space as the men she engaged in print. Wallwork examines the ways in which

¹²³ For further details of the visit, please see Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 299-300.

¹²⁴ Samuel Pepys, *The Shorter Pepys*, edited by Robert Latham (London: Guild Publishing, 1986), 780.

Cavendish's visit raises essential issues regarding the exclusionary practices of the early modern scientific community in England. Wallwork argues that Cavendish's public persona was a textual one, thereby drawing attention to the dual space that Cavendish inhabited as a seventeenth-century woman writer – at once famous for participating in and furthering scientific discussions, and simultaneously prohibited from full acceptance into such communities because of her sex.¹²⁵ The disappointment recorded in the reaction to her “admiration” of the experiments attests to exclusionary practices attendant on seventeenth-century women. Although Cavendish participates in scientific discourse in print, she cannot circumvent the social expectations that she perform with discretion in person.

I open with this anecdote because it succinctly illustrates Cavendish as both excluded and included in the “masculine” space of intellectual pursuit. The duality of such intellectual exclusion and inclusion based on space provides an excellent example of the issues at hand in this chapter. I examine the importance of how Cavendish both represents and negotiates intellectual exclusion and inclusion for women in order to obtain a place of public authority. Cavendish strove for fame as an aristocratic intellectual, avant-garde of literature, and natural philosopher, all the while marking her awareness of exclusions based on her gender. While many scholars have brought attention of the boundaries this remarkable woman surpassed, I wish to

¹²⁵ Jo Wallwork, “Disruptive Behaviour in the Making of Science: Cavendish and the Community of Seventeenth-Century Science” in *Early Modern Englishwomen Testing Ideas*, edited by Jo Wallwork and Paul Salzman (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 45. Also see Eva Keller, “Producing Petty Gods: Margaret Cavendish's Critique of Experimental Science” *English Literary History* 64 (1997): 441-471; Lisa Sarasohn, “A Science Turned Upside Down: Feminism and the Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 47, 1984; Lisa Forman Cody, “Engendering Science” *Journal of Women's History* 22.3 (Fall 2010): 214-223; and Francisc Szekely “Unreliable Observers, Flawed Instruments, ‘Disciplined Viewings’: Handling Specimens in Early Modern Microscopy” *Parergon* 28.1 (2011): 155-176 for a discussion of Cavendish's contributions to scientific endeavors.

add to this body of scholarship by examining how Cavendish uses poetry in her romance novella, *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, in order to draw attention first to her construction of an authoritative authorial person, then to her participation in literary, intellectual, and social contributions for a nation in extreme flux, and, finally, to her ability to create that space without completely breaking with literary, intellectual, or social convention.

Margaret Cavendish's prose romance, *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, contained in *Natures Picture Drawn by Fancies Pencil To the Life* (1656),¹²⁶ and the experiential reveal as I read it therein, functions as an out-group in this dissertation. In a study of how early modern women writers used their own poetry in their prose fictions to reveal the experience of the woman writer, Cavendish's text appears at first an unlikely candidate. *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* contains more poems than *The Contract*, which appears directly before *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* in *Natures Picture*. Only eight of these poems, however, are longer than a couplet. So, why does this work function as an important link between Wroth's *Urania* and the early eighteenth century in a study of how women created a voice for their experience as writers? Because Cavendish, the first English woman to publish prolifically, the first English woman to publish (without retraction) prose fiction, and the first English woman to assert her right to

¹²⁶ The full title is: *Natures Picture Drawn by Fancies Pencil To the Life, Being Several Feigned Stories, Comical, Tragical, Tragi-comical, Poetical, Romancical, Philosophical, Historical, and Moral: Some in Verse, some in Prose; some Mixt, and some by Dialogues, Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and most Excellent Princess, The Duchess of Newcastle*. This work was slightly revised and republished in a second edition in 1671. The original frontispiece focused on the Cavendish family gathered around a table as if captured in the midst of casual conversation, while the 1671 edition shows Margaret in stately poetic garb, standing in a recess, framed by statue guards as if she herself was a statue. Underneath this depiction of the powerful woman writer are a set of six couplets directing the reader not to gaze too long on her beauty before moving into the beauty that her book hold in it wit and fancy.

commit such a socially indecent act as secular publishing for public consumption, used the conventions of romance novella, within her unconventional *Natures Pictures*, to gesture toward what she saw as an already existent place for women to publish with acceptance and respect within the patriarchal confines of her period. The experiential reveal working within this framework shows how the nation already contains a place for women writers by using them, as Sidney suggests in his *Defence* that the poet be used, to lead humans to virtuous action.

The experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* provides a space for women writers within patriarchal conventions before such a place existed and without alterations to the current expectations for women. Different from the experiential reveal in *Urania* and those occurring in eighteenth-century novels, the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* does not adhere to a tidy pattern we can trace as the heroine struggles to find a space for poetic expression. In this chapter I assert that, while the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* is unlike the narrative patterns created by Wroth and Barker, it does perform rhetorical strategies that parallel Cavendish's perspective into what she saw as an existent public space for the woman writer. While Wroth wrote from within the place of the Sidney literary circle (and still found her prose fiction immediately censured after publication) and while Barker (even as a professional writer) marks the pressure for women to abandon writing in favor of marriage expectations, Cavendish openly asserts a place for women writers from within the conventions of patriarchal seventeenth-century England. Cavendish's *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* betrays no real sense of tension regarding the construction of authority for the heroine. That the interpolated poems are, predominantly, *about* her, creates an experiential reveal that grants Cavendish's heroine, and therefore, by extension, Cavendish herself, respect, authority, and the power to lead. In turn, this narrative strategy provides Cavendish with a venue to present her

perspective on women writers – that they, like she, are capable of contributing to intellectual, literary, and social progress within the current patriarchal social structure.

The experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* is not one of struggle and tension, but of power and authority earned. This parallels Cavendish's own construction of authorship. Many scholars have demonstrated ways in which Cavendish's resolve to create an accepted and respected place for herself in print possibly extends to her belief that any woman with the compulsion to write ought to find no backlash for publishing her works in any genre. In her preface to her first publication, *Poems and Fancies* (1653), Cavendish protests that men "hold *Books* as the *Crowne*, and the *Sword* as their *Scepter*, by which they rule, and governe. And very like they will say to me, as the Lady that wrote the *Romancy*,

*Work Lady, work, let writing Books alone,
For surely wiser Women nere wrote one.*"

Here, Cavendish criticizes the implication in Denny's censure of Wroth that she should spend her time in "women's work," that is, needlework, and leave writing books to men. Cavendish certainly disagrees with such a censure. Discussions of Cavendish's "feminism" vary from Deborah Boyle's vehement assertion that Cavendish in no way exhibits proto-feminist ideas in her philosophical writings, to Nicole Pohl's exploration of how Cavendish criticized poetic style and language and transgressed the rules of the Royal Society.¹²⁷ While I do not wish to engage in debates on whether or not Cavendish was a proto-feminist, it is impossible to investigate the

¹²⁷ Deborah Boyle, "Fame, Virtue, and Government: Margaret Cavendish on Ethics and Politics" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67.2 (April 2006): 265, and Boyle, "Margaret Cavendish's Nonfeminist Natural Philosophy" *Configurations* (2004) 12: 196; Nicole Pohl, "'Of Mixt Natures': Questions of Genre in Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*," in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, edited by Stephen Clucas (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 57-60.

rhetorical strategies in her prose fiction without suggesting that the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* offers up a critique of practices that discourage women away from print publishing. In my reading of the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, I see a vision of the woman writer emerge as a social agent through her literary contributions.

Several critics come to conclusions similar to my own regarding Cavendish's paradoxical construction of the freedom for female cognition within patriarchal paradigms. This scholarship largely looks at the rhetorical practices of early modern women. More specifically regarding Cavendish, critics examine the curiosity that is Cavendish's open quest for fame – a public act in an era when female discretion and privacy were valued. Cavendish's engagement with scientific discourse is particularly useful to scholars because it was, perhaps, her clearest foray into the public/masculine arena since other scientific philosophers publically engaged her ideas in their own discussions. However, while women such as Anne Finch with her *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (1692), Aphra Behn who translated *A Discovery of New Worlds* (1688), and Robert Boyle's sister, Katherine Ranelagh, among others, worked in the background of scientific conversation without recognition for their achievements, "Margaret Cavendish not only challenged the monopoly of male authorship in general but also its domination of scientific knowledge and truth."¹²⁸ Other scholars read Cavendish's front matter as her way of situating herself in a culture of writers and philosophers.¹²⁹ Reading such paratexts

¹²⁸ Pohl, " 'Of Mixt Natures': Questions of Genre in Margaret Cavendish' *The Blazing World*," 57. By advocating the discourse of multiplicity, "Cavendish consciously deconstructs contemporary notions of binary opposition in gender, politics, science and literature" (Pohl " 'Of Mixt Natures'" 54).

¹²⁹ For instance, Yaakov Mascetti, in a " A 'World of Nothing, but Pure Wit': Margaret Cavendish and the Gendering of the Imaginary" argues that Cavendish "forged an

gives further insights and evidence to her “unapologetic approach to publishing and her self-presentation as a woman author.”¹³⁰ Reading these rhetorical strategies provides us insight into Cavendish’s perspective on publishing as a woman. Importantly, her perspectives on writing can be documented through literary maneuvers within her texts as well.

Certainly, Cavendish’s perspectives on publishing and authorial practices reflect her experience as an exile. Scholars such as Emma Rees recognize Cavendish’s play with genre as reflective of an authorial construction influenced by her personal experiences.¹³¹ The experience of political exile is related to the experience of writing as a woman. Rees argues that Cavendish’s exile experience as a royalist and as a writing woman found its way into her writing as a means by which to process and work against those forces that pushed her away from not only her homeland but also her yearning for knowledge and public fame through her writing.¹³² Further conversations about the intersection of Cavendish’s personal experiences and her perspectives on

epistemological system which was intended not to *oppose* this ‘patriarchal’ system but to delineate the traits of a fanciful and witty dimension parallel to the masculine dominion of objectivity, where she manifested and realized the inalienable right of a woman to think within the intimacy of her mind and her house. The private of her ‘solitary mind’ was not a prison but the independent locus of feminine cognition and enfranchisement.” *Partial Answers* 6.1 (January 2008): 2. Please also see Jonathan Goldberg, “Margaret Cavendish, Scribe,” *GQL* (2004): 433-452.

¹³⁰ Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, “Front Matters: Margaret Cavendish’s Prefaces and the Margins of Sociable Criticism” *Sociable Criticism 1625-1725* (Cranbury: Rosemont, 2007): 64.

¹³¹ Emma Rees “Triply Bound: Genre and the Exilic Self,” in *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish*, edited by Line Cottagnies and Nancy Weitz (London: Associated University Press, 2003), 23-39; *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003). I also use both paratexts, meaning the text surrounding the main text, and peritexts, meaning textual elements secondary to the main body of the text.

¹³² *Ibid.*

women publishing often take place over the landscape of Cavendish' philosophical and dramatic works.¹³³ Passions and emotions have "public implications in that they generate and direct people's actions" in the early modern period.¹³⁴ Therefore, passions can intermingle with politics. As a writer in exile, Cavendish likely wished for fame not only as a personal desire, but also as a political one. That is, as a Royalist who had members of her family killed in the Civil War, Cavendish, perhaps, sought through some, if not all, of her works to move people to virtuous actions, which she would argue, aligned with her beliefs.

Scholars who use Cavendish's poetry and fictions to gain additional understanding of her concept of the female intellectual contributing to the public realm of print often focus on Cavendish's construction of an authorial persona. What is more, relationships such as Cavendish's with the Royal Society fellow and influential physician, Walter Charleton, opened new imaginative spaces for her to create unique poetic artifacts.¹³⁵ Investigations into Cavendish's relationships, such as those on the resource DigitalCavendish, provide us new ways of seeing just how her expansive network of famous intellectuals, particularly natural philosophers, fueled her aspiration for fame. And yet, Cavendish's unconventionality crops up throughout her life and works. Her obsession with fame does not undermine her adherence to the compulsion to put her "fancies" into the public realm. This thirst for fame motivates much scholarship on Cavendish's innovations with genre. As Paul Salzman has argued, Cavendish

¹³³ Cavendish only published her plays in print. She never staged them.

¹³⁴ Alexandra G. Bennett, "'Yes, and': Margaret Cavendish, the Passions and Hermaphrodite Agency," in *Early Modern Englishwomen Testing Ideas*, edited by Jo Wallwork and Paul Salzman (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 79.

¹³⁵ L.E. Semler, "The Magnetic Attraction of Margaret Cavendish and Walter Charleton," in *Early Modern Englishwomen Testing Ideas*, edited by Jo Wallwork and Paul Salzman (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 72.

demonstrates early desire to attain recognition as a writer and a thinker.¹³⁶ Cavendish's "sexualised and hierarchal poetics" negotiate relations between reader and discourses of gender, and hierarchies of knowledge and gender."¹³⁷ Cavendish reproduces the laws of privilege "as self-reproducing and self-authorising" articulation of inclusion and exclusion suppresses her fear of being misclassified.¹³⁸ Cavendish repeatedly uses the idea of her own mind to frame her writings.¹³⁹ Interestingly, Cavendish artfully manipulates her virtuous-wife authorial persona to authorize her own writings in the privacy of her mind, and, seemingly contrary to such an act, to authorize her own publications. Kate Lily argues that Cavendish uses marriage tropes in order to place herself in the ideal activity of reading, writing, and contemplation.¹⁴⁰ This creation of her authorial persona as a virtuous wife, quietly retreating for introspection, permits her the space to authenticate her writing without the authority of others because she works within the private space of her mind.

Although she authorizes herself as virtuous wife working in the respectable private space of her mind, Cavendish consciously attempts to integrate herself into literary tradition by using

¹³⁶ *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 143.

¹³⁷ Kate Lily, "Contradicting Readers: 'Margaret Cavendish' and the Rhetoric of Conjuality," in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, edited by Stephen Clucas (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 20. She reads her errors as an authenticating gesture that preserves "trace of singular authorship" (23).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹³⁹ For example, Jay Stevenson in "Imagining the Mind: Cavendish's Hobbesian Allegories" remarks that "some allegorical narratives about the mind in *Natures Pictures* suggest that religious ideals are mental constructs conducive to psychic order," in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, edited by Stephen Clucas (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 145-146.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

her multiple generic categories to make herself a ‘complete author’ – “an enterprise never before attempted.”¹⁴¹ However, rather than following the humanistic tradition’s rhetorical maneuver of establishing herself via authorities, Cavendish’s authorship is concerned with “establishing a personal voice and legitimizing the self as the authority of a necessarily subjective discourse.”¹⁴² This act extends further, permitting experiments with form to translate “to a broader meditation on the very nature of knowledge as well as on the particular kinds of knowledge being advanced by her peers.”¹⁴³ For Cavendish, play with genre was to resist being bound by legislature, political alliances, and gender.¹⁴⁴ Emma Rees traces these resistances within Cavendish’s peritextual exilic publications.¹⁴⁵ Although she may not have set out to accomplish such an impressive literary project with “Aristotelian generic categories in mind” her thoroughness in attending to a multiplicity of genres is certain.¹⁴⁶ Cavendish’s literary practice is highly

¹⁴¹ Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz, Eds. “Introduction,” *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish* (London: Associated University Press, 2003), 10.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴³ Brandie R. Siegfried, in “Anecdotal and Cabalistic Forms” argues that “for Cavendish, the elasticity of being (potentiality) precedes knowing by setting up the conditions under which true thinking can take place.” Her play with genre suggests “that a thinker may come to recognize the possibility of systematically different interpretations of the same set of natural phenomena, mutually incompatible accounts of what is going on in the natural world,” in *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish*, edited by Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz (London: Associated University Press, 2003), 78.

¹⁴⁴ By legislature Emma Rees refers to the laws that prohibit Cavendish from patriarchal and national boundaries. Emma Rees “Triply Bound: Genre and the Exilic Self,” 29. Please also see Rees’ extended study, *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 26-46.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz, “Introduction,” *Authorial Conquests*, 9.

sophisticated, replete with contradictions, and appears to embody a “conscious and deliberate exploration of the various forms and genres available to her at the time.”¹⁴⁷ Cavendish’s play with genre at once demonstrates her breadth of literary engagements, while also creating new forms from traditional ones. These creations not only allow her to innovate from within acceptable genres, but also provide a space for her to present an experiential reveal that speaks to the already existent space for women to act as public figures of intellect.

My argument in this chapter is that the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* lies not with the heroine and her struggle into writing as it did with Wroth’s women in *Urania*, but with the narrative pattern surrounding those poems directed to or about the heroine. In this experiential reveal we see a woman writer not anxious about her place in patriarchal society, but confident of her authority, accepted and respected as a public leader, and simultaneously both feminine in her adherence to convention and masculine in her public accomplishments. This chapter is organized into three parts. In the first section I discuss Cavendish’s self-authorizing strategies. The next section builds on the first by examining the experiential reveal surrounding love poems about Travellia, the principal female character. Cavendish creates authority through this technique by demonstrating how Travellia uses these narrative moments to authorize herself, eventually gaining political power. The third section investigates the connection between Travellia’s self-authorization and Cavendish’s creation of an authorial persona by enforcing her image of virtuous writing wife. I argue that Cavendish uses the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, combined with her authorial persona

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

of virtuous wife, to present a world in which women are accepted as public writers, capable of altering their society for the better, by using poetry to move readers to virtuous action.

Self-Authorizing

Before we can enter into a discussion of how the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* provides further insights into Cavendish's creation of an authoritative space for herself as writer, we must first discuss the nature of the publishing world for members of the aristocratic class to which Cavendish belonged. During the time in which Cavendish first began publishing, aristocratic etiquette and social mores regarding the act of publishing found themselves at the very least in flux.¹⁴⁸ At the time in which Cavendish is writing, these practices still remain largely in favor of manuscript culture for men as well as women. In fact, those aristocrats who do publish in print in Cavendish's time must negotiate their way through careful authorizing maneuvers. That is, a culture of print publication was not yet established in England when Cavendish was writing. Writers who desired to publish their works in print felt pressure to first gain the appropriate patronage and provide their manuscripts to those who might authorize their works before providing them for public consumption. Such maneuvers remained largely intact even when the nation found itself faced with civil war and continued well into the eighteenth century.

Although the changes brought about by the Civil War can hardly be thought to give Cavendish any amount of pleasure, it is possible that she took advantage of her shifting world in

¹⁴⁸ The instability of social expectations that came about by an increase in public consumption of literature has been given new attention recently. Especially see Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives: Euphues in Arcadia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Gillian Wright, *Producing Women's Poetry 1600-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

order to present her perspective on what ought to change.¹⁴⁹ Her forays into the world of natural philosophy and literary experimentation stand as a testament to her attitudes regarding progress and innovation. Cavendish's front matter situates herself in a culture of writers and philosophers. This gives further insights and evidence to her "unapologetic approach to publishing and her self-presentation as a woman author."¹⁵⁰ Although later women writers, such as Barker, used front matter as a strategy for authorizing their works, writers during Cavendish's time usually took precautions before publishing to indicate signals of their sociable origins. But Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies* "appeared in print with very little protection."¹⁵¹ Rather than gain entrance through her connections, she appeals to her readers for judgment. When this act received unkind reception, she responded by positioning herself as writer, critic, judge, and reader, thereby removing what she saw as misreadings of her works, but also usurping coterie conventions of writing and publishing.¹⁵²

Cavendish in her works of the 1650s appears both to adhere and to subvert the conventions of coterie criticism. For instance, *Natures Pictures* (1656), in which *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* is contained, represents her significant rhetorical shift toward coterie values of

¹⁴⁹ William Cavendish, Margaret's husband, was one of the most wanted royalists and could not return to England without Margaret traveling there from Antwerp to beg for the return of the Cavendish lands. By this time in her life, Margaret had lost her brothers, her mother, and a sister to the violence of the civil war.

¹⁵⁰ Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, "Front Matters," 64.

¹⁵¹ Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, "Front Matters," 66.

¹⁵² Cavendish's "total self-referentiality" is a pattern she creates here and follows in her later works. Catherine Gallagher, "Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England" *Genders* 1 (Spring 1988): 25. The social impropriety of a woman publishing her works this way resulted in a backlash that demonstrates many of Russ' list of disciplining women away from writing -- i.e. she did not write it.

representation.¹⁵³ Such representation includes portraying oneself as a member of a supportive group of other writers. Through her 1656 frontispiece, in which her family is gathered around a table as if caught in the midst of intellectual conversation, Cavendish directs attention to her familial group as ideal audience in order to establish her legitimacy as writer. Cavendish's use of her husband particularly in this illustration to create her authorial presence publicizes their partnership.¹⁵⁴ This partnership in her construction of a space for her to publish does not subsume her into a role of wife only. Rather, her emphasis on their equality raises her from the period's idea that a woman needs a man for self-realization by suggesting that only those who view her as an equal, rather than as subservient, become a member of her coterie. She put her revisions on display, indicating defiance to coterie expectations and suggesting that she "did not seem to bother to understand or care for the aims of sociable criticism."¹⁵⁵ Her final revisions to *Olio* and *Natures Pictures* (1671) eliminate evidence of her concessions to coterie critical practices.¹⁵⁶ Although Cavendish briefly attempted to adhere to the rules of coterie practices, her decision in the revisions of *Olio* and *Natures Pictures* to erase evidence of these concessions

¹⁵³ Ibid., 74

¹⁵⁴ "The Cavendishes themselves also noted, the reactions were not solely instigated by gender. The solitary and autonomous public image Margaret cultivated in her prefaces was equally responsible for provoking disapproval and censure" (Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, "Front Matters," 71).

¹⁵⁵ Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, "Front Matters," 80. Less than thirty years later, Barker will publish with very little protection. Although her writing circle of Cambridge scholars supported her poetry, Barker's print culture did not require the level of manuscript acceptance before publication that Cavendish's society expected. What is more, as aristocrats, both Wroth and Cavendish were expected to behave in accord with their family's political beliefs. Barker, even as a Jacobite, found publication for her romances with Edmund Curll – known for his ability to market romances such as Barker's to both Tories and Whigs.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 81. In *Mad Madge*, Whitaker notes that from *Natures Pictures* Cavendish "omitted the most acutely apologetic of her original prefaces, and she rewrote the others into a single preface, much less self-critical in tone," 337.

demonstrates her belief that her writing and publishing practices did not hinge on conventional means of acceptance, but, rather, on her revised vision of publishing practices. Ultimately, Cavendish attempted to work as her own critic, disallowing coterie practices to shape her authorial self-referentiality.¹⁵⁷

That Cavendish would publish, not only as a woman, but also as an aristocrat and an exile, illustrates her determination to authorize herself as writer despite socially proscribed limitations. Margaret and her husband William were living in exile in Antwerp when she wrote *Natures Pictures*. Perhaps Cavendish imagines herself as public leader through her contributions to philosophical, literary, and social conversations from a place that is not her home. Perhaps Cavendish gained some peace in imagining that her writings could propose a change for her nation that would help heal the wounds of civil war. Toward the end of her story-telling poems in *Natures Pictures*, Cavendish arranges a series of characters that imagine an end of the civil war and the return to England's scenic beauty. In her own life, Cavendish moved from the periphery of society, in her exile in the Low Countries, to an intellectually central location, in her Royal Society participation in London. Travellia makes a similar move as she progresses from slave to viceroy. Both Cavendish and Travellia began as aristocrats in their home countries, were forced into exile by war, sought respect and safety through their intellect, and eventually gained places of public power through their intelligence and rationality.

We must infer what might have been her anxieties about publicly presenting her works or why she felt determined to do so regardless.¹⁵⁸ While paratextual and peritextual evidence

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 82.

¹⁵⁸ In fact, as Lily points out, "If Cavendish writes in order to become famous, she also aligns herself with the Sidneian rhetoric of writing as recuperative political praxis for self-styled

certainly gives us a picture of the struggles Cavendish might have experienced in her efforts to become famous for the works she published, her rhetorical strategies within these works deepen our understanding of this remarkable drive to create an intellectually authoritative public persona. Through the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, we see Cavendish negotiating a space for women writers to publish, and within that space to gain acceptance as public figures who can guide the nation into a better place.

Rather than following the humanistic tradition's rhetorical maneuver of establishing herself via authorities, Cavendish's authorship is concerned with "establishing a personal voice and legitimizing the self as the authority of a necessarily subjective discourse."¹⁵⁹ Even if this discussion must remain within the realm of print for her, the way in which she writes a heroine who authorizes herself into publicly governing a nation through virtue, wit, rhetoric, and strength of character creates a space for women writers.

This place is created by Cavendish's deployment of Sidnean poetic theory of poet as leader. Travellia's power as a leader comes from the authorizing of those in authority over her, but that is given because she earns it. As a leader, she earns the respect of the people and, therefore, they follow her advice. Likewise, according to Sidney, poets are leaders for their nation because they instruct. For he says in his *Defence*,

But if anything be already said in the defense of sweet poetry, all concurreth to the maintaining the heroical, which is not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of poetry. For, as the image of each action stirreth and instructeth the mind, so the lofty image of such worthies most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy, and informs with counsel how to be worthy. (*Defence* 231)

noble exiles," in "Contradicting Readers: 'Margaret Cavendish' and the Rhetoric of Conjugality," 33.

¹⁵⁹ Line Cottagnies and Nancy Weitz, "Introduction," *Authorial Conquests*, 11.

Sidney's poet is one who moves the nation to virtuous action. It is significant that Travellia is not a ruler – she is viceroy, and as such, rules in the person of the king/queen and counsels them. Just as Sidney constructs the image of the poet not as above king or god, but as a governing body for the nation's education, spirit and overall goodness, so too does Cavendish place her heroine as a beloved leader for nations. Travellia instructs the Queen's nation to right action, so too does Sidney's poet. Travellia is chosen to rule the people because she has earned this place. Each of her actions "stirreth and instructeth the mind." Throughout *Natures Pictures* Cavendish echoes Sidney's belief that poetry is to be didactic.¹⁶⁰ Through the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, Cavendish makes clear that a woman participating in intellectual pursuits provides a significant voice for society. What is more, Sidney, like Cavendish, is an aristocrat writing a romance that participates in gender bending. Similarly, Cavendish co-opts gender bending in her romance in order to emphasize the power of the female poet to lead a nation through virtue and heroic action.

Victoria Kahn discusses the influence of Sidney's *Arcadia* on romances of the 1650s as they anticipated the eighteenth-century shift in fiction from self-interest to aesthetic interest.¹⁶¹ In many ways, Travellia symbolizes the hero whose actions represent aesthetic interest, rather than self-interest. While she is interested in self-preservation, she does not preserve her chastity at the cost of her intellectual virtue. Her philosophical conversations with the Queen and the Prince that I detail in the following section demonstrate an acquisition of political power via rhetorical manipulation of passions. According to Michael Rex, Cavendish's creation of

¹⁶⁰ Rees, *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile*, 9.

¹⁶¹ Victoria Kahn "Reinventing Romance, or the Surprising Effects of Sympathy" *Renaissance Quarterly* 55.2 (2002): 627-628.

emotional response as an innovation to epic provides a space for women to contribute literature in a public arena.¹⁶² While epic was a genre from which a wide range of political sympathies could choose, romance was, traditionally, a royalist genre.¹⁶³ However, the Civil War transformed the question of genre choice in political criticism.¹⁶⁴

Cavendish's manipulation of the romance genre provides her a space to stay within her carefully crafted virtuous authorial persona, while also proffering alternatives for women. For the purposes of this chapter, I will remain within the scope of Cavendish's possible alternatives for women who desire writing as profession. Cavendish negotiates a public space for the woman writer to contribute to literary development and social betterment within existent social expectations for women with the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*. Of all her works, *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* follows conventions of its genre with relatively little deviation. However, Cavendish uses epic tropes in order to proffer the existence of a space within patriarchal bounds for women to participate publically in intellectual and social conversations. Traditionally, an epic ends with the hero's eventual and triumphant return home. Travellia, however, does not return to her native land. Even Penelope, with whom Cavendish appears to align Travellia, goes home in terms of submitting to Ulysses upon his return. Rees says about Travellia as Penelope that she uses her intellectual resources to preserve her chastity throughout her adventures. Cavendish rewrites the Homeric ending in order to suggest,

¹⁶² Michael Rex, "The Nature of Epic: Margaret Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies* and the Construction of a "New" English Epic Ideology" in *Experiments in Genre in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, edited by Sandro Jung. Dartmouth, NH: University Press of New England, 2011.

¹⁶³ Paul Salzman, "Royalist Epic and Romance," in *Writing of the English Revolution*, edited by N.H. Keeble (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 216.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

significantly, that unlike Penelope, “marriage does not mean powerlessness as Travellia resists coming home to the loom.”¹⁶⁵ Penelope, often used as the paragon of female constancy and loyalty to patriarchal structures, functions as a motif of creative ingenuity. The image of women weaving and unweaving in order to preserve their chastity through their own initiative is one deployed frequently in texts by women.¹⁶⁶ The freedom inherent in such acts provides women writers an ideal platform from which to argue their own ingenuity and initiative from a standpoint of feminine virtue.

In *Poems and Fancies* Cavendish compares herself to Penelope while also suggesting that she is incapable of performing domestic activities, “in her negotiation of self as writer, she juxtaposes appearance and actuality, undermining the apparent passivity and complicity entailed by domestic images, and applying them instead to her writing.”¹⁶⁷ She places herself between textile and text, creating a place for the woman writer.¹⁶⁸ In *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*,

¹⁶⁵ Rees, *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile*, 178. Penelope’s loom is often used in works by and about women to signal the potentiality of a metaphor for self-expression and self-preservation.

¹⁶⁶ For instance, Miller, in *Subject to Change*, reads the story of Ovid’s Arachne as a punishment for her interpretation of weaving; that is, “she is restricted to spinning outside representation” and “cut off from the work of art, she spins like a woman,” 82. The image of Arachne is also used to represent how to read women working both in and against patriarchal structures that bind them. Such symbolic precursors to women’s artistic work as Penelope and Arachne have been rewritten by women throughout the centuries to express their experiences of creating as women. For an example of this, please see, Anne Finch’s “A Description of One of the Pieces of Tapestry at Longleat” (1713).

¹⁶⁷ Emma L.E. Rees, “A Well-Spun Yarn: Margaret Cavendish, and Homer’s Penelope,” in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, edited by Stephen Clucas (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 174.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

Cavendish positions Travellia not only as part-Penelope, but also as part-Ulysses.¹⁶⁹ That is, Cavendish uses the evolving categories of epic and romance as places where her heroine can be both Penelope and Odysseus. While Cavendish shuns the distaff yet appropriates “the symbol of Penelope in order to eschew public impugment of her reputation,” it was essential for her self-construction as author to surpass the paradigmatic Penelope.¹⁷⁰ Travellia represents female virtue creating within the domestic realm and the actively public hero capable of leading through intellect. In surpassing Penelope, Cavendish co-opts the Odysseus function by retaining the virtuous wife authorial persona while also positioning herself as an innovator and leader within her current society.

Travellia and the Experiential Reveal

Assaulted and Pursued Chastity is a brief romance that follows the adventures of a young lady, Miseria, who must leave her nation, The Kingdom of Riches, in order to avoid the violence of war. She is cast by a storm on the shores of The Kingdom of Sensuality, where her strong sense of virtue and honor protect her from the Prince. She eventually escapes dressed as a page and changes her name to Travellia. As a stowaway aboard a ship, she befriends the captain who accompanies her on her next set of adventures on an island of cannibals. After outsmarting the rulers of this island, she and the captain escape, only to be captured by the Queen who falls in love with Travellia. Travellia uses her intellect and virtue to rise to a position of governing the Queen’s army. The Prince, meanwhile, has been in pursuit of her and has aligned himself with the King, who takes the Queen hostage as their nations fight each other. Travellia’s army captures the Prince and rescues the Queen, yet all is resolved in the end with the discovery of

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 177.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 178.

Travellia's true sex and the Queen's agreement to marry the King. Travellia, meanwhile, falls in love with the subdued Prince and agrees to marry him. The Queen's and the King's nations united, they appoint Travellia as Viceroy at the resolution of the romance.

The experiential reveal surrounding love poems about Travellia provides a space for Cavendish to grant herself authority to publish. Rather than granting authority through the inclusion of her poetry attributed to her heroine, Cavendish permits those characters in love with Travellia to sanction her authority over them and their nations through their poetic expressions of emotion. While their love for Travellia remains unrequited until the final pages of the narrative, the experiential reveal in their moments of poetic effusion function as markers for Travellia's development of independent authority. In what follows, I delineate how the experiential reveal surrounding the dialogue poems between Travellia and the Prince and Travellia and the Queen create a narrative in which Travellia at once grants herself, and earns from the Queen and the Prince, a respect that leads to a position of power. I then demonstrate the parallel between the powerful and authoritative Travellia in the romance, and the powerful and authoritative Cavendish as author.

In the experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* the silences lie in the poems rather than in the prose. In the prose before and after, Travellia has authority, but the silences in poetic responses to Travellia expose a parallel to Cavendish as a writer. That is, there will be those who will not see past her female body and those who will disagree with her philosophies, but ultimately she surpasses these silences and assumes her authority as a writer.

There is evident respect for Travellia throughout the narrative. Her virtue and kind-hearted ways earn her a love from those she encounters that preserves her safety. This virtue does not come from a place of safeguarding her chastity alone. The respect she earns throughout

each of her adventures comes largely from the use of her mind. As a heroine she frequently reflects Odyssean cunning in order to rescue herself and others from several threatening situations.¹⁷¹ Further, she enjoys philosophical conversations and readings that will enlarge her understanding of humanity and the natural world. Travellia's choice in reading materials, her speeches, and her poetic dialogue with the Prince establish Travellia as both active and contemplative.¹⁷² After wounding the Prince, an imprisoned Travellia asks for reading material "for said she, my brain hath not a sufficient stock to work upon itself."¹⁷³ Cavendish then breaks down categories of reading, excusing each one as inadequate for her heroine, until she is left with a set of playbooks, which "discovers and expresses the humours and manners of men, but which I shall know myself and others the better," and mathematical ones, so that she "shall learn to demonstrate truth by reason" (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 408).¹⁷⁴ Before she dons the

¹⁷¹ Emma L.E. Rees, "A Well-Spun Yarn: Margaret Cavendish, and Homer's Penelope," in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, edited by Stephen Clucas (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 177.

¹⁷² Cavendish portrays this duality in several of her plays, often complicating it in female characters. As Anna Battigelli points out: "In [Lady Sanspareille's] devotion to pursuing the life of the mind in this public manner, she conflates the active and contemplative lives, but this conflation becomes a problematic internal struggle. ... Like her characters, Cavendish also weathered this internal storm," in *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 34.

¹⁷³ *Natures Pictures Drawn by Fancies Pencil To the Life. Being Several Stories, Comical, Tragical, Tragi-comical, Poetical, Romantical, Philosophical, Historical, and Moral: Some in Verse, some in Prose; some Mixt, and some by Dialogues.* Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and most Excellent Princess, The Duchess of Newcastle. The Second Edition (London: Printed by A. Maxwell, 1671) 406. All further citations will be in-text as *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*.

¹⁷⁴ Such breakdowns of "how to write" or, in this case, "how to read" are reminiscent of Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (1595) as well as John Dryden's *Of Dramatic Poesie* (1688), and are in the vein of what Fielding later does throughout *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (1749) with his interpolated chapters on good novel writing.

clothes of a page and stows away to escape from the licentious Prince, this heroine establishes herself as a person concerned with activities in the mind and the good they will do for her active self in the world.

The violence that the Prince does to Travellia is important. The juxtaposition between the violent Prince, whose threats to Travellia's chastity drive her to an act of physical violence against him, and a cunning Travellia who places emphasis on demonstrating "truth by reason" through the education of herself, sets a stage for Cavendish to create a heroine who will conquer the Prince through her intellect. Travellia's combating of the Prince with violence marries with her cunning intellect in order to illustrate her as an active heroine. Her active spirit in the violence she does to the Prince and in her escape from him by stowing away as a page is interjected with an emphasis on Travellia's discernment in genre as a mode for instruction. This interjection contrasts the Prince's violence in an important way that will underscore Travellia's authority as a ruler by the end of the romance.

The emphasis on Travellia as male does not rely on physical prowess. In fact, she is often first perceived as beautiful and coveted physically whether in female or male dress. Her use of Odyssean cunning promotes her to leadership positions and saves her and her adopted father in a few instances. While it appears that masculine traits within Travellia permit her success, Cavendish carefully imbues her heroine with feminine virtue, artfully combining both masculine and feminine characteristics.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ That is, she stays away from gender-blending, or drawing too close to criticisms like Denny's that might negatively accuse her or her heroine. Rather, she tactfully uses the heroic virtuous Travellia in ways that go beyond the romances of the sixteenth-century. As Rees argues, and as I will expand upon in the following section, "Cavendish has defended and dignified her own continued presence in the masculine realms of print and publication. That is, she does not sew, but writes; enters the public realm of the printed word, but constructs it so as to maintain a

Travellia's relationships with the Queen and with the Prince perhaps best illustrate how Cavendish's heroine is at once masculine and feminine. In each of these relationships, Travellia acts in both masculine and feminine ways. The Prince falls violently in love with her female form, yet Travellia only permits a relationship with him after the narrative illustrates to us how the Prince and Travellia are equals as soldiers and philosophers. The Queen falls desperately in love with Travellia-as-male, yet their relationship is only resolved once they become united in female friendship. Because of the balance Cavendish creates in the narrative between masculine and feminine Travellia, Cavendish importantly portrays her heroine as capable of embodying the best gendered qualities of both sexes. In the experiential reveal that surrounds the dialogue poems between Travellia and the Queen and Travellia and the Prince we see Travellia gain power and authority through rhetorical play that involves neither her masculine nor feminine characteristics. Rather, these exchanges remain curiously void of attention to Travellia as a body, instead focusing on her mind to underscore her intellectual rather than emotional engagement in poetry. This focus reflects Cavendish's creation of space for the woman writer within the fancies of her mind where attention to physical beauty can be redirected to the appreciation of her mind.

Cavendish's Neoplatonism provides her with a position from which to explore the disparity between the world of the mind and the harsh reality in which we live.¹⁷⁶ From here she can discuss the potential for women to play an active part in the contemplative life. These

sense of modesty. Ultimately it is her rescripting of the gendered aspects of the epic and romance genres which has facilitated this" in *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile*, 122.

¹⁷⁶ See Battiglia, *Margaret Cavendish and Exiles of the Mind* for more information about how Cavendish's plays in particular reflect how "Cavendish remained all her life profoundly ambivalent about the respective merits of the active life and the contemplative life, at times taking on the militancy of her active cavaliers, at others embodying the quietism of her contemplative cavaliers. More typically, she seems to have been attracted to both philosophical stances simultaneously, and this led her to difficulties that are evident within her work" (31).

worlds, however, did not stay in her mind. Rather, she sought to publish her creations in an effort to share with her nation her philosophies, her stories, and her observations, dissections, and conclusions on human existence. In the dialogue poems that I explore below, we can trace Cavendish's philosophies of Platonic love, Atomism (which she ultimately dismissed in her own life), and Neoplatonic rationalism. Her use of these philosophies in the context of the experiential reveal promotes Travellia, and by extension Cavendish, as an intellectual leader, capable of thinking through, dismissing, or applying philosophical thought. In this rhetorical act, Cavendish emphasizes the power of the female mind to counsel and govern.

More poems appear in the final pages of *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*. This gathering of interpolated poetry in the final third of the romance stands out as an important marker for the development of Travellia's power, permitting reciprocal relationships that accept her as an equal rather than as an object. Travellia uses the respect granted as a means by which to succeed in her philosophical debates with the Queen and the Prince. In doing so, Travellia represents the female philosopher capable of persuading, and, further, leading, through her rhetorical prowess. Furthermore, the difference between the Queen's treatment of Travellia and the Prince's treatment of her becomes of even greater interest when we take into consideration what becomes of these relationships once Travellia permits a reciprocation of their love. From the Queen, Travellia receives the appointment of Viceroy, and from the Prince, his hand in marriage. That the female authority would bestow upon Travellia a public role, and the male authority a domestic one, becomes even more significant when we compare the two poetic dialogues.

The dialogue poem between the Queen and Travellia enters the narrative at a point where the Queen has solicited advice from Travellia and now scorns this advice because it will cause her to be separated from Travellia. The Queen, unlike the Prince, is given no opportunity in the

narrative to chase physically after Travellia. This is, in part, because Travellia enters her narrative as a slave; however, the Queen gives her heart to Travellia freely and without the expectation that Travellia must return her love.¹⁷⁷ At no point does the Queen attempt to force Travellia into a romantic relationship with her. Instead, the Queen appoints Travellia to a position of power while she is away on matters of state – an act that results from following Travellia’s advice. This act, however, only occurs after Travellia convinces the Queen to follow her advice on leading the nation.

Travellia’s response to the Queen’s anguish begins with a speech elevating the Queen for her beauty and power and gently chastising her for loving Travellia, a lowly slave in the Queen’s kingdom.¹⁷⁸ She sends the Queen forth with a triumphant reminder that she is a monarch and as such has a duty to protect her nation that she must uphold. She then transitions into poetry from the prose, “may fortune always smile, peace in your kingdom dwell,” to the verses,

And in each heart such loyal love may grow:
No disobedience may this kingdom know;
Age crown your life; and Honour close your days:
Fame’s trumpet loud to blow about your praise.
(*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 471)

This focus on the Queen’s fame through the ruling of her kingdom foreshadows Travellia’s future ruling as viceroy. That is, the authorizing of a female authority (the Queen) by a female rhetorician (Travellia) results in turn in the authorizing of Travellia as leader by the Queen. Travellia’s words to the Queen in these verses emphasize the obedience of the Queen’s subjects

¹⁷⁷ This, in part, lays the groundwork for what will become a female friendship – a more equal platonic relationship that could become closer than any other.

¹⁷⁸ It is possible that Travellia’s station as a slave in a foreign land that rises into a place of power reflects Cavendish’s desire to be recognized for her intellect and famous amongst her countrymen, despite her station as an exiled aristocrat.

and the praise that ought to surround the Queen. Travellia's silence on her own relationship with the Queen, and the Queen's subsequent silencing of Travellia's verses with her own poetic response, appear at first to take away Travellia's voice.

However, the rhetorical strategy of female authorizing female actually places emphasis on the female rhetorician authorizing herself. Through the experiential reveal, we can see that it is Travellia's authorizing of the Queen that in fact gains her own authorization. While she may first have attracted the Queen's notice because of her physical beauty, once she soothes the Queen with accolades of the Queen's power and beauty, she earns power from the Queen. This narrative organization – Travellia's respected station and rhetorical prowess interrupted by the Queen's praise of Travellia's words and the return to prose – illustrates the importance of a platonic love, as well as the strength a woman possesses to lead a nation.

Platonic love, here, emphasizes the type of intellectual equality that Cavendish championed in her own life. This scene also contains an exemplification of how a woman can use her intellect to lead a country. Travellia's strength of intellect assists her in altering perspectives of her away from seeing her only as a body to be possessed and into viewing her as an authoritative figure to follow. While the Queen represents a love relationship for Travellia that counters the violent one she has with the Prince, this love, which bestows on Travellia authority over a nation, is given in response to Travellia's empowering poetic speech to the Queen. Perhaps this narrative technique is a playful rhetorical turn by Cavendish when we consider that she grants *Natures Pictures* authority to become public by giving herself the authorizing power. Just as Travellia gives herself authority through her intellectual prowess to advise a nation so too does Cavendish give herself authority to publish.

The silencing I would like to discuss occurs when the Queen responds to Travellia's affectionate poem about the Queen as a nation-leader. The Queen responds by weeping,

No sound will pierce my ear; or please my mind,
Like to those words you utter when they're kind.
(*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 471)

Here we see the moment when the Queen begins to authorize Travellia, but these verses demonstrate contingencies on this authorization; the Queen will only be pleased with Travellia if her words are kind. The implied sentiment here has a silencing effect because the Queen desires for Travellia to speak as she wishes her to speak – that is, to woo the Queen – rather than to speak with the political guidance that ultimately proves her capability to govern an army.¹⁷⁹ The experiential reveal establishes a Travellia whose intelligence earns a respect that leads to power, but the love those who authorize her silence her when she does not reciprocate. This silencing is a reversal of the empowered poems that heroines such as Pamphilia compose only to find themselves interrupted. This silence perhaps gestures toward Cavendish's anxieties regarding her decisions to print publish without traditional coterie endorsement, but with her own authorization.

Although Travellia falls silent after her response to the Queen, this silence provides the Queen with the opportunity to affirm Travellia as leader. Not only does she advise the Queen, but also Travellia artfully shifts expressions of love to affirmations of authority. While Travellia displays silence after the Queen's effusion of love for her in verse, once the prose shifts to descriptions of what happens next, we see Travellia allowed to speak due to the Queen's love. Although the Queen seemingly silences Travellia in their dialogue poem, Travellia's actions in the narrative following their poetic exchange recover her voice and grant her increasing

¹⁷⁹ Later, the Prince, in his dialogue poem with Travellia, will silence her by disagreeing with her philosophically.

authority. After the poetic dialogue, the Queen “at last by his persuasions, more than by her council’s advice” consents to leave the kingdom “upon that condition he would take upon him the government of her kingdom until such time as she returned again” (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 471). Further, she tells Travellia that if she should die, he should rule the kingdom. The people, knowing the Queen’s command, plot to kill Travellia, yet promptly fall in love with his governance of them because:

he behaved himself with such an affable demeanor, accompanied with such smooth, civil and pleasing words, expressing the sweetness of his nature by his actions of clemency, distributing justice with such even weights, ordering everything with prudence, governing with that wisdom, as begot such love in every heart. (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 472)

This moment, combined with what happens before the poetic dialogue and the dialogue itself, reveals a narrative in which Travellia authorizes her own power. In other words, Travellia’s *praxis* governs his acceptance as an alien in the socially central role of governor.

That the Queen gives Travellia authority over her nation while she is away, that she seeks her advice and follows it, that she does not abuse her power over Travellia, all stand in clear contrast to the way the Prince attempts to use the heroine. Of course, the Prince’s pursuit of Travellia motivates the adventures for the narrative, but it is the transformation of the Prince with which I am tangentially concerned here. His behavior from the point of the narrative where he becomes increasingly submissive to her underscores a significant change in his character. This transition occurs as he realizes her dominance as a leader and changes his perspective of her as a body.

Travellia’s poetic exchange with the Prince participates in the same narrative pattern as the experiential reveal in the dialogue poem between Travellia and the Queen. That is, Travellia is portrayed in a position of authority/persuasion over the Prince, is silenced in his poetic

response to her verses, but then gains a higher position of respect from the people once the poetic dialogue concludes. Although the pattern mirrors the exchange between Travellia and the Queen, the experiential reveal utilizes Travellia's cross-dressing in order to give voice to the potentiality of female power. This power comes from a respect in intellect and from the Prince's decision to see Travellia as an equal. It parallels Cavendish's desire to be respected as an intellectual equal by leaders in philosophy.¹⁸⁰ Cavendish uses Travellia to suggest the power of a female mind in governing a nation when she is given respect for her intellect rather than seen only as a female body.

When the Prince and Travellia engage in a poetic dialogue, we see that he now respects her. At this point in the narrative Travellia is commanding the Queen's army and the Prince is their prisoner. He keeps himself hidden to her, but they engage in philosophical verse dialogue. The audience, therefore, knows that it is the Prince and Travellia, but can appreciate the Platonic exchange between the two battle-worn soldiers about life and death. Complicating this respect, however, the Prince appears to silence Travellia's philosophical verses with contradictory ones. However, this exchange is not silencing when seen in the larger context of philosophy.

This dialogue poem between Travellia and the Prince illustrates the shifting philosophical thoughts that Cavendish experienced in the 1650s.¹⁸¹ While she participated in philosophical discussions with her husband and other men who visited the Cavendishes, under the guise of

¹⁸⁰ Cavendish dedicated her *Grounds of Natural Philosophy* (1668) to "all the universities in Europe," hoping that her philosophies "would now reach the continental readership she had so long desired," according to Whitaker in *Mad Madge*, 307. Cavendish also sent copies of this work to several universities in hopes that they might find it useful in their educating purposes.

¹⁸¹ In 1663 Cavendish will reason rejection of atomism: "after I had Reasoned with my Self, I conceived that it was not probable, that the Universe and all the Creatures therein could be Created and Disposed by the Dancing and Wandering and Dusty motion of Atoms" (*Philosophical and Physical Opinions*).

soldier, philosophical dialogue moves beyond the realm of the domestic. While in exile during the Civil War, Cavendish began to put aside the theory of atomism that she once clung to as an explanation for the pain and chaos that surrounded her. It is possible that she did so because she sought meaning for the inexpressible horrors she experienced due to war.

Travellia initiates this exchange with the Prince by “complaining” of that pleasure she never could obtain,

I have heard of Pleasure, ne’re could it obtain;
For what we Pleasure call, still lives in Pain:
Then Life is Pain, and Pain is only Life
Which is a Motion, Motion all is strife;
As forward, backward, up or down, or so
Sideways, or in a circle round, doth go.¹⁸²
Then who would live, or would not wish to dye,
Since in the Grave there is no Misery?
O let me dye, strive not my Life to save;
Death happy is, and Peace lies in the Grave. (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 485)

Travellia’s poem reflects atomism thinking through the mirrored, fruitless syntax of the lines, “The Life is Pain, and Pain is only Life/ Which is a Motion, Motion all is strife,” paired with the dizzying, chaotic diction of, “As forward, backward, up or down, or so/ Sideways, or in a circle round, doth go.” This pairing gives way to Travellia’s pained verses as she attempts to give direction to her misery. In doing so, Travellia performs the role of both soldier and philosopher.

¹⁸² Earlier, in *Poems and Fancies*, one of Cavendish’ atomism poems holds the lines:
Some factious Atomes will agree; combine,
They strive some form’d Body to unjoyne.
The Round beate out the Sharpe: the long
The Flat do fight withal, thus all go wrong.

The parallels between this atomism poem and Travellia’s lines demonstrate Cavendish’s continued philosophical musings on the atomism that a newly married Parisian-Margaret found herself intensely drawn to. Perhaps the most well-known of Cavendish’s atomism poems is “World on an Eare-Ring,” a now frequently anthologized poem that explores the possibility of worlds within worlds and the extended possibilities of human senses.

Her verses represent atomism thinking through their chaotic, directionless images that express the pain Travellia is experiencing as a wounded soldier.

Rather than dismissing Travellia's philosophical beliefs, the Prince responds to Travellia's verse as a philosopher, thereby equalizing their status. Because the Prince responds to Travellia's atomism with naturalism, we see that he has transformed from the lust-centered man in pursuit of Travellia to a man ready to answer her hopelessness with philosophical hope. His desire for her life is no longer focused on her body, but, rather, is now focused on meeting her intellect. The Prince's response to Travellia begins with him telling her that she "preached a false doctrine" before shifting into poetry that answers Travellia with:

Life is a blessing which the Gods do give;
And nothing Shews them Gods, but that they live:
They're the Original of Life, the Spring;
Life the beginning is of every thing:
And Motion is from all Eternity,
Eternal Motions make the Gods to be.
To wish no Life, we wish no Gods, and then
No resurrection to the Souls of Men;
In Resurrection, we as Gods become;
To be—none would refuse a Martyrdome:
The very Being pleaseth Nature well,
Were she to live always in pains of Hell.
Nature, nothing is more horrid to her
Than Annihilation, that quite undoes her
Thus Gods and Nature you do wish to spoil,
Because a little pain endures a while; (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 486)

In the Prince's poem he reconciles the pointless futility of chaos found in atomism with the purposed direction attained through naturalism. That is, these poems retain the tranquility obtained from atomist beliefs, but position this peace through a careful reasoning of some sense of stability and system.¹⁸³

Importantly, however, by responding to Travellia's atomism with naturalism, these verses signal two things. First, verses reflecting naturalism follow those that represent atomism reflect the Cavendishes personal shift from atomism beliefs to naturalism ones. This poetic exchange is significant in establishing the female poet as a leader. The interpolated poetry within a narrative about the Prince's shift to respecting Travellia as an intellectual and a commander of an army bolsters Cavendish's desire to provide her nation with philosophical direction in a chaotic time. Second, and related to this representation of personal philosophical belief, is an authorizing of the Prince as an acceptable partner for Travellia. Cavendish treasured her intellectual relationship with her husband more than any other aspect of their marriage. In this dialogue poem we see the Prince has transformed into the type of equal partner suited for the intellectual leader that Travellia has established herself as. Rather than chasing after her chastity, the Prince discreetly responds to Travellia's philosophies with further philosophical discussion. Travellia as a Penelope-Odysseus hero provides verse that, along with the Prince's response, can guide readers away from fear of the chaos and into some semblance of constancy in feeling. Travellia's relationship with the Prince as equals allows her to act more completely as both Penelope, through her constancy to the Queen by ruling in her absence, and Odysseus, through her heroic behavior.

Authorial Persona

¹⁸³ Hobbesian influence on Cavendish's pessimistic view of human nature has been explored by scholars such as Matthew R. Goodrum, in "Atomism, Atheism, and the Spontaneous Generation of Human Beings: The Debate over a Natural Origin of the First Humans in Seventeenth-Century Britain" in an effort to recover the impact that such philosophers as Cavendish had on the late seventeenth-century, in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63.2 (2002), 212 See also, Lisa T. Sarasohn, *The Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish: Reason and Fancy during the Scientific Revolution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); and Sarah Hutton, "In Dialogue with Thomas Hobbes: Margaret Cavendish's Natural Philosophy" *Women's Writing* 4 (1996): 421-432.

The relationships that reinforce Cavendish/Travellia authority and power via the experiential reveal culminate in the heroine permitting her reciprocation of love and accepting and entering into a relationship with the Prince. Their marriage is represented by a poem interpolated into the description of the marriage scene. This poem is attributed to William Cavendish in a note included by Margaret. Through this part of the experiential reveal we can see Cavendish furthering her creation of the virtuous wife authorial persona. Despite Cavendish's unconventional acts in the preface to *Natures Pictures*, she includes this poem by William at the end of *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*. This intentional integration of her husband's poem might at first appear submissive to his authority, but when read within the context of Cavendish's creation of an authorial persona through the experiential reveal, the inclusion of this poem is anything but submissive.

Just as the experiential reveal in the dialogue poems begins with Travellia in a position of authority and ends with Travellia in an even more respected position, so too is the final poem in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* bookended with prose expressing Travellia's respected virtue and intellect. Upon interrupting a conversation between Travellia and the Queen in which they initiate their female friendship, the King asks for the Queen's hand in marriage, while the Prince coyly confesses that he is now a widower. Next in the narrative, the Queen grants Travellia to the Prince and Travellia gives thanks to the Queen. The Queen's authority over both Travellia and the Prince negotiates a place for female authority in the narrative. However, the King, who tells the Queen, "you have given me nothing," is soon granted her hand by her council. While Travellia once had authority over the Queen and her council through solicited advice, the King

now appears to usurp all female authority.¹⁸⁴ However, the narrative is quick to recover female authority through the Queen's declaration that, "In the meantime, the Prince, and his Princess that was to be, should be Viceroy, or rather she should rule" (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 508). The precision of this ruling by the Queen restores female power while simultaneously presenting compliance to patriarchal monarchical lineage. The Queen and Travellia permit their marriages, participating in social expectations; yet, the rhetorical turn that occurs in the syntactical construction of "should be Viceroy, or rather she should rule" overrides convention without breaking it. That is, the Prince and Princess will be Viceroy once they are married, but the governing rights go to Travellia because the Queen authorizes it as such. As a viceroy, Travellia signifies the body of the king with the presence of her body. Through this symbolic act, Cavendish demonstrates how Travellia is powerful in her own right, but places her in a category of power that signals how women are permitted authority in this historical period. Because Travellia functions in the person of the King and Queen, the experiential reveal here shows how women could be viewed as intellectually authoritative without threatening male power.

While it is important that female authorizes female, Cavendish is careful to continue a narrative in which Travellia earns this right. Once Travellia tells the people that she is a woman, they declare "Heaven bless you, of what sex soever you be" (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 510). She then changes into "her effeminate robes, and came out again, standing in the same place," and gives a speech to them that begins "Thus with my masculine clothes I have laid by my masculine spirit; yet not so by, but I shall take it up again, if it be to serve the Queen and the kingdom, to whom I owe my life for many obligations" (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 510-

¹⁸⁴The council also grants that the Queen will live in the King's realm and that their sons will have the right to rule both kingdoms before their daughters would.

511). At the end of the speech the peace treaty is read and “all the soldiers, as if they had been one voice, cried out, Travellia shall be Viceregency” (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 512). What is more, the prose insinuates that she is made Viceroy to pacify the people. While this appears to undermine the power wielded by the Queen, when read in the context of their response once her true sex is revealed, this pacification reads as Travellia’s right to power. Although the Queen’s nation is prepared to accept rule by a woman because they are already ruled by a woman, Travellia earns authority not through the authorizing of the Queen alone, but also because she has proven herself to be an inspiring leader for a nation. When the Queen says “what sex soever you are” she simultaneously draws attention to the limitations of female sex in Cavendish’s historical context, while also dissolving those limitations by placing greater emphasis on the fact that she, the Queen, is ruler and so shall Travellia function in the person of ruler. In shedding her masculine weeds, Travellia further emphasizes the symbolic act of granting public female power.

Importantly, after the people give their great proclamations of joy, “the Prince told his mistress, she should also govern him.” To which she answers, “that he should govern her, and she would govern the kingdom” (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 508). Although she behaves according to the seventeenth-century English patriarchal marriage expectations that a husband rules over his wife, Cavendish makes clear that Travellia is in a position where she can choose to behave according to such expectations. She at once permits him to rule over her, chooses to behave according to patriarchal marriage standards, and makes clear that she will still govern the

kingdom. In this rhetorical move, Cavendish clearly delineates two separate spaces for women – earned public positions and expected private domesticity.¹⁸⁵

Interpolated into the marriage scene is a poem about Travellia. It is not attributed to any of the characters, but enters the narrative as if to describe the bride in a way befitting verse,

Her Face did seem like a Glory bright,
Where Gods and Goddesses did take delight:
And in her Eyes, new Worlds you there might see,
Love-flying Cupids there as Angels be:
And on her Lips Venus enthroned is,
Inviting duller Lovers there to kiss:
Wing'd Mercury upon her Tongue did sit,
Strewing out Flowers of Rhetoric and of Wit;
Pallas did circle in each Temple round,
Which with her Wisdom, as a Laurel crowned;
And in her Cheeks sweet Flowers for Love's Poesies,
There Fates spun Threads of Lilies and of Roses;
And every loving Smile, as if each were
A Palace for the Graces to dwell there;
And chaste Diana on her Snow white Breast
There leaned her Head, with pure Thoughts to rest;
When view'd her Neck great Jove turn'd all to wonder,
In Love's soft Showers melting without Thunder,
The lesser Gods on her wite Hands did lie,
Thinking each Vein to be their Azure Skie.
Her charming circling Arms, made Mars to cease
All his fierce Battels, for a Love's soft Peace;
And on our World's Globe sate triumphing high,
Heav'd there by Atlas up unto the Skie:
And Sweet-breath'd Zephyrus did blow her Name
Into the glorious Trumpet of good Fame. (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 513)

Throughout the entirety of the poem there are praises for “her” – seemingly Travellia, given the narrative context. However, this poem is William's to Margaret. In this strategic narrative act,

¹⁸⁵ Directly after this exchange marriage festivities consume and complete the rest of the novella. Interpolated in the marriage festivities is a poem describing Travellia on her wedding day “only dressed in a white silk garment.” Given Cavendish's notorious obsession with the details of dress, her choice in simplistic wedding garb for Travellia provides a point of interest. Perhaps this simple garment represents at once Travellia's virtue and her universes of the mind. That is, she is not decadently ornamented, yet she dons the garb of female virtue.

the virtuous author, for whom this poem was written, is at once literary innovator and heroic wife. Why, at this juncture in a narrative about the adventures of a powerful heroine, would Cavendish include a poem by her husband? Although this might appear a submissive act on the part of Cavendish as wife – within the context of Travellia’s apparent submission to the Prince – as a part of the complicated experiential reveal in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, this inclusion of William’s love poem to her is an authorizing act.

This poem authorizes Cavendish as a writer in multiple ways: 1) it is a poem to her from her husband that situates her triumphantly as a celebrated writer; 2) because it is about Travellia in the romance, a parallel is created between Travellia and Cavendish that imbues the later with virtuous public authority; and 3) in this place in the narrative, it authorizes Cavendish as a woman to fulfill what she sees as her destiny – to become famous as an intellectual, and, as an intellectual, to act indirectly as a public leader.

Within William’s interpolated poem in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* we see her, Travellia/Cavendish, praised for her “rhetoric,” “wit,” “wisdom” and “pure Thoughts.” She will be crowned with laurels while the gods of love and war will stop what they are doing to listen to her and assist her work. Further, the speaker references the power of the fancies in her mind, “And in her Eyes, new Worlds, you there might see.” Perhaps most importantly, the central part of the poem illustrates a powerful, divinely inspired, intellectual woman,

Wing’d Mercury upon her Tongue did sit,
Strewing out Flowers of Rhetoric and of Wit;
Pallas did circle in each Temple round,
Which with her Wisdom, as a Laurel crowned;
And in her Cheeks sweet Flowers for Love’s Poesies,
There Fates spun Threads of Lilies and of Roses;
And every loving Smile, as if each were
A Palace for the Graces to dwell there;
And chaste Diana on her Snow white Breast
There leaned her Head, with pure Thoughts to rest; (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 513)

With every focus on features of the body – tongue, temple, cheeks, smile, and breast – the speaker balances his praise with an emphasis on the divinely inspired poetry that the subject is capable of creating. William’s poem empowers the female mind through an adaptation of a poetic convention that traditionally focuses not on a woman as an autonomous intellectual being, but as a set of physical parts. Diana appears as an inspiration for the woman philosopher-poet just as she does for Wroth’s Pamphilia. Diana functions here, however, to impart pure thoughts for the female poet, rather than act as a mirror for the poet as she does for Pamphilia. William’s creation of a relationship between the poet-inspiring goddess and Margaret in these verses authorizes Cavendish as at once a virtuous woman and an inspired writer.

The clearly decisive act of permitting William’s poem here and not in the preface to *Natures Picture* demonstrates her creation of an authorial persona that both possesses public authority and still adheres to the socially proscribed role of wife. As discussed previously, while Cavendish could have included prefatory poems of praise not only from William, but also from fellow aristocrats to authorize her publication of *Natures Picture*, she does not. She asserts in this rhetorical act that she does not need anyone to approve of her works – their merit will earn them a public space to guide the people. Just as Travellia gains a viceregency through a combination of self-authorizing and earned authority, so too does Cavendish hope for a place of national recognition through her intellectual contributions. However, Cavendish does not simply assert an authority over the public. She spends careful attention to creating an authorial persona. This persona works with her socially proscribed role as woman. The experiential reveal surrounding this final textual act in a romance novella demonstrates Cavendish’s role as her own authorizer becoming virtuously inscribed in her decisive inclusion of William’s poem at the end of *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*.

Cavendish uses the virtue of her heroine to further construct her authorial persona. That is, in the conclusion to the romance we see Travellia choosing domestic compliance. In permitting a conventional marriage hierarchy, Travellia enacts the proscribed role of wifely submission, yet does so without anxiety. Cavendish herself might have felt socially inscribed tension in her pursuit of fame. Her public identity did not conform to the social norms of virtuous wife. Yet Cavendish appears to use this tension to expose the illogical exclusion of women from the intellectual public sphere. Sylvia Bowerbank explores how Cavendish uses nature to authorize herself as a writer, “her writings can be read not only as records of and reactions to loss, but also as strategies of compensation and renewal based on speaking for and modernizing the code of the forest and, more generally, of nature herself.”¹⁸⁶ In this reading of Cavendish’s works, a clear connection between male spheres – ownership of land and political lawmaking – and female spheres – emotional response and natural mothering – appears as inextricably intertwined.

Nancy Weitz’s discussion of the pressure Cavendish would have experienced helps to explain conflicts in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*. Cavendish’s need to serve her “own authorial goals, her understanding of reader expectations, her adherence to generic and modal conventions, and finally her own reputation” led to her use of chastity, “the principle female virtue,” which bears importance to the plot and moral message of the story as well as on

¹⁸⁶ Sylvia Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies of Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 53. Further, Cavendish would have been all too familiar with the emotions attached to the loss of land as her family, as well as her husband, experienced the painful and violent seizure of their lands by those on the other side of their political alliances.

“Cavendish’s authorial ethos and her choice of genre for this message.”¹⁸⁷ Cavendish’s preoccupation with virtue in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* does not wholly comply with the romance genres of her male predecessors. For instance, although her works, at times, pay homage to elements of Miltonic thinking and form, Cavendish’s contradictions in her representation of chastity under assault betray a “philosophy of rape quite radically different from Milton’s.”¹⁸⁸ In fact, both the story and the preface slip in and out of the conflicting position of woman as innocent victim and culpable victim.¹⁸⁹ Cavendish’s overtly pragmatic view of chastity as a social tool is radical compared to other women writers of her time.¹⁹⁰ Even Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* warned readers that romances were only safe because an allegorical truth was contained in their pages. Cavendish’s preface demonstrates her concern with the romance nature of *Natures Pictures*; yet, “Cavendish clearly delights in the possibilities the genre offers for spinning a tale.”¹⁹¹ In modifying socially accepted form and content, Cavendish

¹⁸⁷ Nancy Weitz, “Romantic Fiction, Moral Anxiety, and Social Capital in Cavendish’s ‘Assaulted and Pursued Chastity,’” in *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish* (London: Associated University Press, 2003), 146.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 149. James Fitzmaurice in “Fancy and the Family: Self-Characterizations of Margaret Cavendish” sees Cavendish’s reliance on French romance style as related to her idealistic notion of writing as influenced by the power of fancy, in *Huntington Library Quarterly* 53 (1990), 200. In *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, Travellia says of romances that she will not read them because “they extoll virtue so much as begets an envy, in those that have it not, and know, they cannot attain unto that perfection: and they beat infirmities so cruelly, as it begets pity, and by that a kind of love; besides their impossibilities makes them ridiculous to reason; and in youth they beget wanton desires, and amorous affections” (*Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* 407).

offers to her readers a new female virtue – one that bypasses convention in order to hold women to a standard that permits print publication for women writers.

Valerie Billing argues that Cavendish manages the tension of aristocratic wife and self-created author through literary collaborations with her husband in order to revise “discourses about and practices of collaborative authorship.”¹⁹² Such collaboration is reflected in the inclusion of William’s poem in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*. Laura Dodd argues that Cavendish subordinates her poetic ambition to her husband’s example, suggesting that her literary successes are because of her family relations.¹⁹³ Although she creates an authorial persona that is at once a virtuous wife and contributing intellect, Cavendish also revealed the restrictions of marriage and privacy expectations for women. She even comments at one point in her personal writing that celibacy was the only way for a woman to be free to be a writer. However, as Rees argues, “William’s wife’s anomalous role as a writing woman allowed her a license to propagate at times uncompromisingly contentious ideas which a *man* -- in the context of the age, the only proper pretender to the title of ‘writer’ -- would not have published.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Valerie Billing, “‘Treble marriage’: Margaret Cavendish, William Newcastle, and Collaborative Authorship” *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11.2 (Fall 2011): 95. Cavendish indirectly refutes the notion that she can increase Newcastle’s estate by producing children and perhaps ‘increase[d] his posterity’ “by writing a text that sought to restore both his reputation and his lost assets” (104). While Sara Mendelson in “Playing Games with Gender and Genre: The Dramatic Self-Fashioning of Margaret Cavendish” says that Cavendish’s revisions to *A True Life, Natures Pictures, and The Life of William* in 1667 were an afterthought, Billing argues that these relocations of texts remind readers that Newcastle’s biography is from her point of view. Billing argues that this narrative act places her as integral to both his authorship and life. She sees the rhetorical technique of suddenly moving from adoration of her husband to “a reflection of her own identity as a writer” as a rhetorical technique used to revise the relationship of marriage and legitimize a place of fame for herself as writer.

¹⁹³ Lara Dodds, *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2013), 59.

¹⁹⁴ Rees, *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile*, 3.

Cavendish justifies her literary activities by recreating her feminine identity.¹⁹⁵ In fact, her works themselves demonstrate the transformation of solitude into virtue, “of reconciling the private and public through reading, writing, and publication.”¹⁹⁶ Cavendish uses the marriage trope in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* in order to place herself in the ideal activity of reading, writing, and contemplation.¹⁹⁷ Cavendish aligns herself with literary activity via a virtuous wife authorial persona and changes conventional genres and stories in order to create a place for herself in literary fame, and in doing so opens up a space for other women to publish their secular fictional works.

While it must be acknowledged that this ending is such that Travellia can govern a nation because she is not returning to her own nation, this ending is an innovation to conventions of epic. Perhaps, Cavendish does not use this fictional parallel to demonstrate how a woman can be a powerful public leader and a socially conventional wife. However, since Travellia has earned the right to be a viceroy that is, logically, where she will rule – such an honor clearly is not transferable from nation to nation. Therefore, that this power is given within the safe space of a nation other than Travellia’s does not alter the power of Cavendish’s work, nor the message about the woman writer that I read therein. However, this reading does not undermine the authority and respect that Travellia has gained, nor does it undermine the virtuous authorial persona that Cavendish has carved out for herself. That is, her position as loving aristocratic

¹⁹⁵ Cecile M. Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth-Century England* (University Press of Virginia, 1999), 95.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁹⁷ Kate Lily, “Contradicting Readers: ‘Margaret Cavendish’ and the Rhetoric of Conjugality,” in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, edited by Stephen Clucas (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 30.

wife, loyal to king and country, capable of innovating a national form in a virtuous way that also presents a heroic narrative about bettering her nation, situates her in a position to open up a public space for women to contribute intellectually to the betterment of their nation.

Conclusions

In her earlier work, *Poems and Fancies*, Cavendish uses her preface to position her poetry as written philosophically “with a perspective assessment of the complex interaction of gender, genre, and subject matter.”¹⁹⁸ Through her double rhetoric, “Cavendish feminizes poetry and affirms the creative nature of women’s work.”¹⁹⁹ She is able to reimagine the symbolic meaning “in a way that frustrates or denies the restrictive binary in which women are praised as abstract ideals or blamed as the all-too-physical embodiment of temptation.”²⁰⁰ Further, in “World in an Eare-Ring,” the speaker represents “a woman, and a world, defined neither by the tradition of symbolic praise of woman, nor of blame.”²⁰¹ Cavendish does this with Travellia as well in an effort to demonstrate the space women have to innovate traditions for the betterment of British society. In part, Cavendish positions Travellia as an arbitrator of emotion. Travellia’s emotional responses to situations take on practical, active responses. Her use of intellect via emotional response situates her as an ideal governing body by the conclusion of her adventures. However, while traditional epics use emotion as motivation for heroic action, Travellia’s heroic action in *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* often emphasizes her feminine virtue in heroic action.

¹⁹⁸ Lara Dodds, *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish*, 80

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

Cavendish demonstrates in her prose, poems, and plays that women are as capable as men in developing intellectual concepts. These women, according to Cavendish, exist outside conventional social expectations, such as marriage and domesticity. Indeed, she puts into her works that she alone is fortunate in having a life in which her husband permits, even encourages, both lifestyles. Her experiential reveal uses silences with poetry *about* the heroine in order to create a narrative in which a woman can lead while also submitting to patriarchal convention.

Certainly, Cavendish's literary maneuvers "utilized genre not only to facilitate her initial movement into print, but also to negotiate others of the triple binds of exile."²⁰² As a woman writer, she took advantage of an era full of change as a way to rationalize space for the woman writer contributing publically in print. Young Margaret, as a member of Henrietta Maria's court might have been encouraged to begin "perceiving herself as a thinking self."²⁰³ After *Natures Pictures*, the Restoration provided Cavendish with the space to experiment with the fictions of her mind and to offer up alternatives for her world. Cavendish's revised Penelope trope, that of a woman who rules publically, offers up a place for women writers to guide the nation to right and virtuous action.

Cavendish's desire for intellectual and literary fame is reconciled with Travellia's final act of putting aside her masculine garb and ruling the people. That is, Cavendish makes clear her virtuous wife authorial persona while revealing a space within the current confines of patriarchal society for women writers to publish, to enter the public arena as intellectuals, and to improve the world through their literary works. Cavendish would be sensitive to the separation of public and private life because of her overwhelming desire to write, to have her works public, and to be

²⁰² Emma L.E. Rees, "Triply Bound: Genre and the Exilic Self," 37.

²⁰³ Battiglia, 17.

recognized for them. She would, of course, want this recognition to be positive; therefore, she would want to renegotiate the boundaries that frown upon such a public act.²⁰⁴ Cavendish's defense strategy is to encourage other women to follow her lead.²⁰⁵ More specifically, the poems *about* Travellia that champion her virtuous intellect interrupt (are in the middle of) prose detailing her heroic masculine spirit. This experiential reveal works with Cavendish's preface to *Natures Pictures*, which attempts to authorize herself, in order to legitimize a space for women writers to publish without breaking the patriarchal bonds of seventeenth-century England.

²⁰⁴ Weitz explores the way this text reveals Cavendish's use of, subversion of, and questioning of the male writers' topos of chastity and its link to silence. Weitz, "Romantic Fiction, Moral Anxiety, and Social Capital in Cavendish's 'Assaulted and Pursued Chastity'," 146.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

Chapter Three

Alternative Patterns: Jane Barker's Poetic Intrusions in *Love Intrigues* and *Patch-Work Screen*

for the Ladies

*Where fortune would not with her wish comply
She made her Wish bear Fortune Company.*²⁰⁶

The above verse appears in *Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* at the conclusion of one of Galesia's interpolated stories about a misguided and wronged woman. These two lines show that, while desire and fate are not always in compliance with one another, we can make choices to bring the two together. I open this chapter with this verse because it represents Barker's constant awareness of the situation of women and how that situation prohibited much movement for women. Equally important is the context in which this verse appears in *Patch-Work Screen*. Like many of Barker's interpolated stories, the one that inspires this verse is about a woman forced into a position of harsh living conditions because of her submission to patriarchal expectations. Happening simultaneously in the narrative with this interpolated story is Galesia's narrative of her own struggles into writing. This verse works both to expose the unfair situations in which women find themselves and as an opportunity for Barker to suggest an alternative path for the woman writer in which she is supported, respected, and given the space to write.

²⁰⁶ Jane Barker *Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* Ed. Carol Shiner Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 122. Capitalization not mine. Further citations will appear in the text as *PS*.

Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies details the struggles Galesia faces when she decides to follow a life of study and writing instead of marriage and domesticity. The story is framed by Galesia giving pieces of her writing to a Lady to patch together a screen while simultaneously revealing stories about Galesia's adventures.²⁰⁷ Through the Lady's portrayal of Galesia, the reader can envision a woman writer fully supported in her decision to write. In fact, even when Galesia expresses moments of doubt about her place in the world as a writer, the Lady uplifts her writing as a worthy occupation. The Lady publishes Galesia's poems by making them into a screen, and encourages Galesia to produce more verses each time she finishes patching on a new one. Further, the Lady encourages Galesia to continue producing verse within the framework narrative. For example, twice the Lady's butler interrupts Galesia's story. Each time, Galesia produces a recipe in verse. This production, encouraged by the Lady, and accepted by her butler, supports Galesia's writing. She is given the space to write, and encouragement to respond to these interruptions with her voice. Consequently, the Lady represents a form of patronage.

In this narrative construction, Barker presents a model of a woman supported, respected, and given space, so that she might perform as a poet. Just as Wroth imagines an audience for Pamphilia's poetry when she carves on the tree, so too does Barker provide Galesia with an audience in the Lady. We are not offered a great deal of insight into the function of the patch-worked poetry screen beyond a screen, but like Pamphilia's ash, Galesia's screen assumes an audience outside of her choosing – thereby imagining her writing as public. While Galesia has a patron in the Lady, she, like Pamphilia, chooses which poems to present. The Lady accepts each

²⁰⁷ While the first Galesia novel is addressed to Galesia's friend Lucasia, the second Galesia novel in the trilogy, *Patch-Work Screen*, frames the narrative as though Galesia were telling a new acquaintance her life stories after she decides she wants to live a life of celibacy, study, and poetry writing.

of the poems Galesia gives her, and trusts Galesia in these presentations, rejecting none of them and asking for none that Galesia deems unfit – a difference in the traditional method of patronage in which the patron has all the power.²⁰⁸

In attempting to imagine a community of acceptance for the female writer, Barker creates a patronage relationship between the Lady and Galesia. However, while the Lady encourages Galesia, provides her with a place to live, and enjoys what Galesia produces, this is not a lasting community. As the ending of *Patch-Work Screen* directs the reader, Galesia's contributions to the Lady's patch-work screen have completed the project, and the Lady is no longer in need of Galesia's verses. However, in this troublesome ending we discover that her difficulty in locating a place for herself as writer within her social world exposes the situation of the woman writer. Galesia still lacks any real community, any greater recognition as a writer, and any space of her own, outside the direction of the Lady, in which to write. Her patch-worked stories throughout the novel further illustrate the tension Barker herself felt as an early eighteenth-century woman writer as her world continually encroached on her attempts to focus on writing.

It was not until Barker was in her sixties that the Galesia novels appeared in print. However, from the evidence of Barker's history we have, we can see her writing at every stage in life. As a young woman in communication with Cambridge scholars, she wrote; as an exile in St. Germain, she wrote; as a catholic in the protestant England to which she returned, she wrote; as a heavily taxed landowner, she wrote; as an aunt fighting in probate court for custody of her nieces, she wrote. Baker's poetry and prose emerge throughout her life as testaments to her consistent engagement with the literary, political, religious, and social tapestry in which she lived until her death in 1732. While Wroth's *Urania* reveals ways in which the woman writer must

²⁰⁸ Alexander Pope makes infamous patrons who think they have all the power.

move beyond the confines of patriarchal boundaries in order to compose, Galesia has a publically accepted place for her poetry with the Lady, yet, as her tales in *Patch-Work Screen* demonstrate, despite the allowance of her to perform as writer, she is discouraged repeatedly from writing.

Galesia is consistently stripped of any community, her recognition as a writer is temporary at best, and her space is encroached upon by the unfair situations in which the larger category of women find themselves. Barker spends considerable energy in her Galesia novels creating a space for herself as a professional writer. What is more, she innovates traditional forms of narrative from a uniquely female perspective not only to create a place for herself in literary traditions, but also to open that space to other women writers and readers. In doing so, Barker at once reveals the inequalities of her time and place in regards to the situation of the professional woman writer and presents to her audience an imagined space for women who desire to escape social expectations in pursuit of knowledge and writing.

To reveal the situation of the woman writer, that is, to reveal the limitations created by social expectations for her specific time and place, Barker uses silences in the prose of *Patch-Work Screen*. Barker then fills these silences with poetry that reveals her imagined situation as a writer. In creating this alternative narrative, Barker demonstrates what the world could furnish for women. The silences work together with the poems that fill them to provide this alternative narrative. It is in this pattern that I locate the experiential reveal in Barker's work. Different from Wroth and Cavendish, Barker uses her first two Galesia novels, *Love Intrigues* and *Patch-Work Screen*, to present an alternative narrative to the one in which Galesia falls in love, through her deployment of the experiential reveal.

While many scholars have investigated Barker through the lens of religion and politics, and a number have detailed pathways of meaning for the poems in her *Poetical Recreations* (1688), few have looked at the poems within her novels, and no one, to my knowledge, has analyzed the significance of the revisions to the poems from *Poetical Recreations* for their integration into her novels. The work most devoted to Barker is Kathryn King's, *Jane Barker, Exile*.²⁰⁹ Barker's situation on the fringes of society, as a Jacobite, Catholic, and exile living in France, places her ideally to present vocal criticism and live a life examined by her own rules. Scholars such as King, Paula Backscheider, Jean Kern, Rivka Swenson, Josephine Donovan, and Jane Spencer have used Barker's life and works as a case study for the early modern woman writer and her emergence into print, social criticisms, and literary circles.²¹⁰ Barker's novels are

²⁰⁹ King, Kathryn R. *Jane Barker, Exile*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000). In *Exile* King says, "Far from recording an elegiac retreat from human company, as has been suggested, [Barker's] early poetry testifies to a sustained and for the most part well-pleased companionability and shows the writing and exchange of verse was a vital part of Barker's social existence" (29). King also notes that "If the *Poetical Recreations* verse is any indication, poetry by women in this period exhibits a greater range of tones, moods, manners, and voices than existing female paradigms, with their heavy stress upon gender differences and patriarchal silencing, prepare us to recognize" (52). In, "Galesia, Jane Barker, and a Coming to Authorship," King focuses on the problem of audience in Barker's novels, "The discomforts attendant upon this entry into the marketplace are one source of Barker's ambivalence, which makes her autobiographical Galesia fictions unusually rich texts for the study of anxieties of authorship in an early professional female writer," in *Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women*, edited by Carol J. Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 92. King further opens the doors of inquiry in this essay by stating that "Whether Galesia writes *as if male*, using the language and discourses of university-trained men, or *as a female*, disengaged from public modes of discourse, the effect is much the same: the female subject is herself invisible, absent, or excluded" (95).

²¹⁰ Paula R. Backscheider, "The Rise of Gender as a Political Category" in *Revising Women: Eighteenth-Century "Women's Fiction" and Social Engagement*, edited by Paula R. Backscheider (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2000), 31-57; Jean Kern. "The Old Main; Or, 'To Grow Old, and Be Poor, and Laughed At'" in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815* edited by Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986), 201-214; Kathryn King. "Of Needles and Pens and Women's Work" *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 14:1 (1995): 39-57; Josephine Donovan. "Women and the Rise of the

rich in material for discussions of materiality, the complexity of autonomy, and early modern understandings of the body. This scholarship tends to work more with *Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* than with any of the other novels because of the complicated nature of the patchworks, the variegated genres within this novel, and the mastery of covering and uncovering meaning Barker exhibits through her manipulation of genre, structure, and form.

Other critics, such as Jonathan Kramnick and Harriette Andreadis, view Barker's poetry as a key to understanding the "semantics of desire" in her relation to sexuality.²¹¹ While these works are charged with dramatic sexual interpretations of Barker's poetry (such as readings of illicit sexual affairs, and possible lesbianism), Tonya McArthur revisits questions of sexuality by using previously established readings of Barker's religion and politics.²¹² Some Barker scholars examine her writings purely from a political-historical standpoint, but most of these investigations cannot ignore the politically charged nature of her works because of Barker's concern with power structures and social balances.²¹³

Novel: A Feminist-Marxist Theory" *Signs* 16:3 (1991): 441-462; Jane Spencer. "Creating the Woman Writer: The Autobiographical Works of Jane Barker." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 2:2 (1983): 165-175; Rivka Swenson. "Representing Modernity in Jane Barker's *Galesia Trilogy*: Jacobite Allegory and the Patch-Work Aesthetic" *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 34 (2005): 55-80.

²¹¹ Harriette Andreadis. *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics 1550-1714*. (Chicago: UCP, 2001); Jonathan Kramnick. "Rochester and the History of Sexuality" *ELH* 69.2 (Summer 2002): 277-301.

²¹² McArthur, Tonya. "Jane Barker and the Politics of Catholic Celibacy." *SEL* 47:3 (Summer 2009): 595-618.

²¹³ Examples include: Paul Korshin. "Jacobitism and Eighteenth-Century English Literature" *ELH* 64.4 (Winter, 1997): 1091-1100; Marta Kvande. "Jane Barker and Delarivière Manley: Public Women against the Public Sphere," *The Eighteenth-Century Novel*, 5 (2006), 143-174.

Barker's first two Galesia novels offer insight into the experience of the early eighteenth-century woman writer, as they are written from the perspective of Galesia looking back on a time in her life when she decided to devote herself to knowledge and writing poetry. This means that the content, in part, reflects the sentiments of a young woman in late seventeenth-century England, during a time of extreme political turmoil, attempting to carve out a place for herself as a professional writer. However, it is important to note that Barker writes the Galesia novels from a moment in life when she can look back not only on the turmoil that her nation has undergone, but also on her life. Her age is crucial in viewing *Patch-Work Screen* as a vision of women's situation in Barker's era. Furthermore, this allows Barker the vantage point to see life as holding possibility beyond her own time. There is an air of prophecy in this novel that gestures toward Barker's hope for a world of less painful exile. Although critics such as Cheryl Nixon see only Barker's preface as containing hope for change, I see the voice the poems provide for the novel as Barker revising the way the world looks. The second installment of Barker's Galesia novels is of particular interest in explorations of how early modern women writers invent a language to express their experience as writers because it details the struggle young Galesia experiences as she seeks to carve out a place for herself as a writer despite encouragement from others to pursue a domestic life rather than a life of the mind.

In this chapter I explore how the experience of the woman writer is portrayed in Barker's Galesia novels. Barker's use of the experiential reveal emphasizes the path of professional writing that women ought to be permitted without struggling against pressures to follow a more traditional path of courtship and marriage. I first look at the "trauma of romance," a term defined by Lynn Pearce to mean the alteration in oneself recognizable after falling in love with another

person, as a means by which Barker creates a space for the woman writer.²¹⁴ *Patch-Work Screen* draws attention to Galesia's love for knowledge and poetry as a sustaining drive to pursue the life of the poet. In the second section of this chapter I examine the silencing forces that oppose Galesia's desire to write. The social expectation that she marry intrudes upon her writing space frequently. In this section I explore how Barker uses silences to reveal the situation of the woman writer. That is, I read those moments in which the prose falls silent as a rhetorical technique by which Barker exposes the prohibitions working against women writers. Finally, I look at the way poems in *Patch-Work Screen* work to fill those silences with possibilities for women who wish to write professionally. The poems that fill the silences created by domestic demands in *Patch-Work Screen* highlight Galesia's knowledge of medicine and poetry. In raising these poems up as proof of Galesia's knowledge and talent, Barker fills the silences created by social expectations with an alternative narrative in which the woman who desires to write is given the space, support, and respect she desires.

Motivating Romantic Trauma

As the foundation for my understanding of the "trauma of romance," I use Lynne Pearce's theory that because being in love, in part, defines who we are from the moment of falling in love, it involves a traumatic separation, in part, from who we once were. In *Love Intrigues*, a teenage Galesia vents her emotions through poetry, sleepless nights, and revenge fantasies. As a result of Galesia's romantic trauma, she determines to remain celibate and focus all her attention on writing and learning. By employing Pearce's assertion that 'losing our hearts' to another "eradicates, in an instant, the subjects we once were and reincarnates us in another guise," I argue that for many early eighteenth-century women writers unrequited love allowed

²¹⁴ Lynne Pearce, *Romance Writing* (Malden: Polity Press, 2007), 1.

for reincarnation as writer.²¹⁵ While social expectations dictate that courtship and marriage ought to function centrally for women's lives, unrequited love provides a motivation for women to re-center their lives around what interests them, such as writing. While Pearce asserts that we become a new person the moment we fall in love and are thenceforth reincarnated, I argue that this reincarnation happens for Galesia as the catalyst for her to become a poet. What is more, while Pearce's theory deals with human relationships, I argue that Galesia's falling in love with poetry has the same effect. The instant she falls in love with poetry, Galesia becomes a new person. Once Galesia determines to focus on becoming a poet she understands that she is happier with her occupations than with her relation to Bosvil. The trauma of love seen in works such as *Love Intrigues* carries into the trauma of being an early modern woman writer. That is, while the passions associated with romantic love shift into attachment to poetry, knowledge, and study, a traumatic tension exists between the woman in love with writing and the social disapproval of such a love. However, just as Galesia endures a traumatic experience through Bosvil's cruelty, so too does she experience trauma in her romance through social disapproval of knowledge and writing.

Rather than a more traditional narrative of unrequited love, Barker's *Patchwork Screen* presents the interior struggle within a teenage Galesia as her cousin Bosvil toys with her emotions. While Barker employs her own narrative strategy for exposing the pain caused by inconstancy, such expressions of inwardness echo the torture Pamphilia receives from Amphilanthus. While both Galesia and Pamphilia vent their pain in private, observing the laws of discretion that have persisted from Wroth's time into Barker's, Galesia's expressions of confusion over inconstancy take on a vehemence that Pamphilia's do not. We are reminded of

²¹⁵ Lynne Pearce, *Romance Writing* (Malden: Polity Press, 2007), 1.

Travellia's determination to resort to violence rather than fall victim to inconstancy, but while Cavendish's heroine actively defends herself in the plot, Galesia must keep her thoughts of violence to herself because the violence against her takes place in a domestic, rather than a public, setting. While Travellia defends her virtue with physical violence, Galesia has no physical recourse for the emotional harm Bosvil does to her. Just as Pamphilia carves on the ash so that others might experience her pain, so too does Galesia turn to writing as a means by which to imagine that others will prevent the damages that future Bosvils will inflict.

In a scene in which Barker strategically alludes to the lack of women's agency in marriage negotiations, she contrasts patriarchal maneuverings against Galesia's tortured emotions. Bosvil, who at this point in the narrative has confessed love to Galesia (unknown to her parents) and has convinced her to love him in return, meets with her father and another young man to propose that this second man marry Galesia. When Galesia's father returns from where they did this planning, "at a certain Place over a Bottle," he tells her of the planned union "with Satisfaction, also minding me how much I was oblig'd to my Cousin *Bosvil*. To which my Answers were few, dubious, and obscure; which pass'd with my Father for a little Virgin Surprize" (*LI* 30-31). In this scene we see the injustice of the courtship system in which Galesia finds herself and the trauma it causes her. While the patriarchy, represented by Galesia's father, makes decisions about Galesia's body, her mental and emotional responses are silenced as he insists on reading her reaction only against her sexual status.

When Galesia is alone to vent her emotions, she says, "But oh! my *Lucasia*, I cannot tell you what I suffer'd when I thought upon; inspir'd by an evil Genius, I resolv'd his Death, and pleas'd myself in the Fancy of a barbarous Revenge, and delighted myself to think I saw his

Blood pour out of his false Heart” (*LI* 31). Galesia then picks up a rapier that stood in the hall and walks toward Bosvil’s abode, saying to herself

The false *Bosvil* shall disquiet me no more, nor any other of my Sex; in him I will end his Race; no more of them shall come to disturb or affront Womankind. This only Son shall die by the Hands of me an only Daughter; and however the World may call it Cruelty, or Barbarity, I am sure our Sex will have Reason to thank me. (*LI* 31)

She then goes on in her monologue to imagine women throwing an annual festival in her honor and taking up the charge to rid the world of other such men. Placing such imaginings directly after patriarchal marriage negotiations allows Barker to reveal the inequalities of courtship.

While her father and the two young men negotiate the business of marriage, Galesia experiences the results of such negotiations alone. That her silence is read as a “virginal” response from her father isolates Galesia further from the societal proceedings that enclose her. While the characters that surround Galesia associate her responses with her body, her mind is revealed to the audience of *Love Intrigues*. This contrast provides a place for a shift in romantic perspective from the physical to the mental processes. Galesia’s verbalized experience of emotional response is not centered on her pain alone; rather, she wishes to eradicate the species of Bosvil in order to preserve womankind from her experiences in love. In doing this, Barker begins to shift the narrative away from a more conventional unrequited love plot to a plot that centers on the mind of the female poet. She addresses the domestic expectations of eighteenth-century women by putting aside the sword and its physical violence, and instead takes up the pen and addresses her situation with reason.

One of the ways Barker emphasizes the power of the female pen is through her references to Katherine Philips. Her desire to emulate Philips, which runs throughout *Patch-Work Screen*, supports her assertion that she can perform the role of leader through her poetry. “Daughters of

Orinda,” Philips’s followers, were seen as “moral, lady-like, modest, unassertive.”²¹⁶ Perhaps Barker wishes to follow the emblematic Philips as a woman poet because “it is possible that she [Philips] was appreciated by the women who followed her for an edgy, acerbic quality.”²¹⁷ Cavendish, likewise, envisions herself as a leader through her poetry. While Cavendish uses Travellia to suggest how a female poet might find acceptance as a leader for her nation, Barker uses Galesia to indicate the importance of a female poet as a leader for women. This shift in roles for the female poet perhaps implies Barker’s practical application of powerful female rhetoric. While Barker, like Philips and Cavendish, wrote political poetry as well, Galesia’s attempts in her poetry to eradicate the dangers of the courtship system, present an immediate use of her rhetorical prowess. Barker’s allusions to Philips as a means by which to locate herself in a lineage of publicly acknowledged women writers functions to promote her opinions on the flawed system to an audience wider than women. Even more importantly, Barker uses Philip’s tongue-in-cheek style of characterizing courtship practices.

In the midst of confusion over what Bosvil might feel for her, Galesia decides to write poetry. This moment marks Galesia’s turn away from a traditional path of courtship and marriage. Although poetry traditionally is a part of courtship, *Love Intrigues* uses Galesia’s heartbreak to build an alternative narrative. This turn is not focused on unrequited love. Rather, Galesia says she wishes to find fulfillment in study. In fact, many of her poems in the story that follows *Love Intrigues*, *Patchwork Screen*, are not about love at all. This replacement of romantic love and courtship with a love for poetry and study provides an alternative to conventional paths for women. The narrative begins to shift from action to contemplation and

²¹⁶ King, *Exile*, 19.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

from communal participation with a lover to solitary creation of verse. While Galesia's romantic interest in Bosvil, and his seeming reciprocation, prepared her to follow a path of marriage, her turn away from this future provides her with the opportunity to pursue a new love, that of poetry, without the limitations of time and space that a marriage would inevitably involve for her.

In a scene of idyllic poetic contemplation, Galesia, like Pamphilia, writes a poem on a tree. This poem, which contains a vow of celibacy alongside a wish to "reach fair Orinda's height," anticipates Galesia's reasons for writing, which she comments on in the prose after the poem.²¹⁸ By alluding to Philips, Barker is placing herself in a lineage of women writers who were respected for their talented and virtuous poetry. However, as soon as Barker, via Galesia, signals her placement in this category of female poets, she shifts swiftly to natural philosophy. She indicates that this desire is motivated by scientific musings. In the prose that follows, Galesia reflects on Francis Bacon's injunction that a man ought to have "two Designs on Foot at a Time."²¹⁹ She says that such sanctions ought to be followed, which signals not only her knowledge of Bacon's scientific writings, but also her position as a burgeoning student since Bacon's works traditionally were known by all eighteenth-century university students. In this move, Barker aligns Galesia with university scholars, while also gesturing toward the prohibition universities had toward women scholars.

Within these reflections Galesia says that she, "thinking it impossible ever to love any Mortal more, resolv'd to espose a Book, and spend [her] Days in Study" (*LI* 14-15). In this

²¹⁸ Orinda is Katherine Philips' Platonic name.

²¹⁹ Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* "... what are on foot from time to time, and how they are conducted, favoured, opposed, and how they import, and the like. For the knowledge of present actions is not only material in itself, but without it also the knowledge of persons is very erroneous: for men change with the actions; and whilst they are in pursuit they are one, and when they return to their nature they are another" (321).

moment in the narrative Barker deftly unites Galesia with knowledge of science in order to position her as capable of becoming a part of a scholarly world.²²⁰ Indeed, Barker's poetic rewriting of Bacon's text demonstrates her engagement with the texts of scholars despite her lack of opportunity to join them at university. That Barker chooses *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) on which to base her reasons for turning from romantic love to poetry emphasizes her ability to pursue knowledge on her own. This text discusses a great number of Bacon's philosophies on learning, but Barker alludes to a section of the text on the nature of human passion for knowledge. Barker's *Love Intrigues* tells the story of a woman who learns of the disappointment that can accompany romantic pursuits and her shift to a love for knowledge. Barker's inclusion of this section of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* at the moment of shifting Galesia's passions from Bosvil to poetry provides evidence for an intentional change in paths. Galesia knows what the path of courtship looks like for her before she alters her path to one of study and writing – she has considered both paths and has chosen through careful consideration.

Galesia's consciousness that she *decides* to love poetry and abandon a passion for Bosvil is further emphasized in a dream sequence. After Bosvil has broken promises to Galesia, he attempts to convince her yet again of his undivided love for her. While in his presence she remains silent, but reports in the narrative that her tears and sighs surely confirmed for him that her heart remained attached. Soon after this day, the disquieted Galesia falls asleep in a garden corner and dreams that:

an angry Power on a sudden carry'd me away, and made me climb a high Mountain,
where I met *Bosvil*, who endeavoured to tumble me down; but I thought the aforesaid
Power snatch'd me away, and brought me to that Shade, where I had writ those Verses

²²⁰ What is more, the poem that Galesia has composed before this scene she writes on the trunk of a tree with her pen. This suggests that she, like Pamphilia, has presented her poems for public consumption beyond of her choosing.

heretofore on the Bark of an Ash, as I told you; in which Verses I had seem'd to prefer the Muses, and a studious Life, before that of Business and Marriage. (*LI 25*)

This mountain reads as an allusion to Mt. Parnassus, the mythical place that poets must climb to attain the highest honor and respect for a poet. This power, perhaps, refers to the power that compels her to write poetry – a force Galesia remarks upon throughout each of the Galesia novels as beyond her control to ignore. That this power is angry, yet rescues her from Bosvil, suggests that the force within her that compels her to write wants her to abandon thoughts of Bosvil. That the power which took her, forced her to climb the mountain – a reference to how hard the poet must work to achieve Parnassus – and liberates her from Bosvil, only to place her where her poetic pursuits began, intimates that the expectation for love will menace the female poet. Bosvil's presence threatens her placement on the mountain. Not only does Bosvil pose a very real danger – in endeavoring to push her off the mountain – he also symbolizes the difficulty the female poet has in opposing the socially accepted order of life by choosing to pursue a love of poetry rather than marriage.

This dream also represents a dramatization of romantic engagement that would put an end to Galesia's poetic aspirations, thereby harkening back to her original decision to pursue poetry when she writes on the tree and resolves on a path opposed to marriage. In fact, Barker makes certain to highlight the contrasting paths of study and marriage in the final part of this dream when she summarizes the verses alluded to in the dream: "I had seem'd to prefer the Muses, and a studious Life, before that of Business and Marriage." In this moment, Galesia chooses a path alternative to one of courtship and marriage. Although this path is unconventional, she does not see herself as choosing to actively work against social expectations. Rather, Galesia chooses to follow the expectations she sets out for herself in this moment.

While this dream reveals the tension she feels between the love promised by Bosvil and Galesia's own love for poetry, the images reveal the danger Bosvil poses to Galesia's desires. Galesia calls this dream a vision and says that she later discovered she was right in thinking it so. When Bosvil betrays her yet again, her heart is set against him in favor of her poetic pursuits. However, in the dream we see the belief that romantic love threatens the poet. While Bosvil's cruelty may have initially driven Galesia to want to become a poet, the possibility that she will fulfill that desire is threatened in the dream – thereby gesturing toward the belief that, should Galesia not turn away from Bosvil, representative of the path of courtship and marriage, she will not achieve the Parnassus she so desires. It is the trauma of romantic love that motivates her to begin writing and her conscious decision to leave the path of courtship that Barker emphasizes. This emphasis sets up a foundation from which Barker can tell a new story of romantic love – that of Galesia falling in love with poetry.

In her second Galesia novel, *Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*, Barker shifts Galesia's determination to remain single away from a focus on unfulfilled romantic love and onto fulfilling poetic love. In doing so, Barker shifts the conventional romance narrative to a prose romance infused with poetry. That is, as we work through Galesia's tales to the Lady of her foray into poetry after her disappointment in Bosvil, the character of Galesia shifts from a vengeful heartbroken teenager, to a young woman determined to pursue her love for knowledge. The object of the love story that we are promised at the beginning of *Love Intrigues* is transferred from the cruel Bosvil to faithful poetry. Barker crafts a tale in *Patch-Work Screen* that artfully turns our attention far away from Bosvil and fully onto the character of Galesia herself. The love story that arises out of this shift is one that Galesia encompasses by herself. In this turn, Barker's

focus on Galesia as poet provides us with a new love story that involves Galesia with no other human.

As in traditional romance narratives, we are provided with a tale as traumatic and captivating as one about star-crossed lovers, but the tale of love we receive in *Patch-Work Screen* is between Galesia and her poetry. Galesia tells stories to the Lady throughout *Patch-Work Screen* of her attempts to break away from her love-ties to poetry. However, each time Galesia narrates this struggle she immediately provides the Lady with another patch as proof of her return to poetry. In this experiential reveal we see Barker shifting the narrative from one that began as unrequited romantic love to one that demonstrates an alternative path in poetic pursuits.

This shift in love stories arises from the trauma of Galesia's initial love story, but Barker so skillfully turns our attention and concern to the story of Galesia and her poetry that we forget what drove her to this new love. Galesia changes as a person as a result of the trauma of her love for Bosvil, but she also changes as a result of her love for writing. While the trauma of unrequited love turned her attention away from courtship to knowledge and writing, her poetic art responds both to the rejected love of Bosvil and the lack of acceptance from the culture to a woman writer. Different from Travellia's story of intellectual triumph, Galesia discovers that a turn from romantic love to a love for poetry brings with it its own set of heartbreak when those around her refuse to accept her as poet. This disappointment arises because, unlike Travellia, Galesia does not live in a society that will allow her to circumvent domestic obligations. While Cavendish places her heroine in a setting beyond the realm of England, and therefore creates a space in which to emphasize the heroine's capability to be both wife and nation-leader, earned through her cunning intellect, Barker's placement of her heroine in a domestic setting provides a

space in which to underscore the opposition facing a woman who wishes to follow a path contrary to social expectation.

In Barker's *Patch-Work Screen* we receive a narrative about a woman who falls in love with knowledge and poetry, and as she falls more deeply in love, opposition to this love transpires. The tension between the path the female poet feels she ought to follow, that of marriage, and the path she sees providing her a fulfilling existence, creates a love story in *Patch-Work Screen* between a young woman who cannot stop herself from loving study and writing despite outside forces seeking to divert her love. Once Galesia's full devotion to poetry is established, Barker uses silences to reveal the injustice of opposition to the woman writer and uses poetry to fill those silences as a means by which to assert the authority and talent of the woman writer.

Barker's position in early eighteenth-century England places her in a moment in literary history in which writers often played with genre. Here, in a time of immense experimentation, women writers such as Barker freely alter traditional genres in order to create new discourses for the situation of woman. Combining genres of poetry in prose romances propose a new narrative for the trauma of unfulfilled romantic love – one in which poetry and knowledge offer an alternative narrative to traditional generic models. In choosing the genre of romance, Barker can work within a popular venue for fiction of the early eighteenth century, while also altering it to present new models. However, we can see that there is tension within Galesia regarding her feelings toward poetry. She attempts to put poetry aside at moments in both *Love Intrigues* and *Patch-Work Screen*. In the same way that Cavendish in her own life discussed a sense that she ought to put writing aside and focus on domestic obligations, in *Patch-Work Screen* Galesia discourses on her efforts to ignore her muse, which represents her compulsion to write. Galesia is

proud of her work and displeased when her poetry is misread. However, Cavendish, Galesia, and Barker all discovered that their love for writing prohibited them from abandoning it. And just as Cavendish openly desired fame through her literature, from her very first start into poetry Galesia seeks to attain the status of a celebrated poet.

In her dedication to *Love Intrigues*, Barker says that she would have put all such thoughts of writing aside, but she was encouraged to pursue her novel writing by the achievements of Philip Sidney. She claims to follow in his footsteps with respectful distance and hopes for the same acceptance that his work received through its merit. In doing this, she asserts her own worth. Barker uses Sidney as a means by which to infuse her work with authority. Barker says that she would have suppressed any such thoughts of presenting her “little Novel” to the Countess of Exeter,

but that I was encourag'd by casting an Eye on that great Wit, worthy of his Time, SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, whose Steps with awful Distance, I now take Leave to trace; and beg this may find the same Acceptance thro' your Goodness, as his found thro' its own Merit; and then I am sure my *Roman* Heroes will be as safe in the Protection of the Countess of *Exeter*, as his *Arcadians* were in that of the Countess of *Pembroke*. (*Love Intrigues* 2-3)²²¹

By calling on *Arcadia* in her dedication as a template for her fiction, Barker places herself with Wroth and Cavendish in Sidney's literary heritage. In suggesting that she follows Philip Sidney, Barker asserts her right to be judged by her talent as a writer regardless of sex. Just as Wroth creates a place of authority for herself with Sidney by modeling her *Urania* on *Arcadia*, so too

²²¹ Other than this dedication, there is no evidence that the Countess of Exeter functioned as a stable patron for Barker. Further, there is no evidence that Barker's relationship with the Countess echoes that of Galesia's with the Lady. Perhaps Barker envisions through Galesia and the Lady a more desirable system of patronage. While Barker refers to her *Exilius; or, The Banish'd Roman* (1715) in her reference to her “*Roman* heroes,” she does so in effort, I believe, to unite herself with an author of Sidney's caliber by drawing her previous works to a place of importance in hopes of elevating the Galesia ones as well.

does Barker use *Arcadia* to claim a space for herself as a professional writer. However, in her oblique claim of merit by connecting herself to Sidney in her dedication there is a silence. This silence at once asserts a feminine modesty that reveals a discouragement to women's writing and provides Barker with a place from which to begin her alternative narrative.

What is more, the prefaces also work to imagine a female audience. In *Patch-Work Screen* the participation of the reader is important to encourage Barker's assertion that history has not been recorded in a patchwork since Joseph's coat of many colors and is therefore "certain, the Uncommonness of any Fashion, renders it acceptable to the Ladies" (PS 52). This allusion in the preface not only sets Barker's work in a tradition of Biblical histories, but also points to women as the audience of such narrative traditions. Furthermore, Joseph is a character notable for his intelligence and ability to rise from the margins to a place of authority. By creating this link between her work and this allusion, Barker strengthens her association with intellect and influence. In directing her fiction to an audience of women, Barker places women writers, and women readers, in a space of intellectual power.²²² Barker creates rhetorical

²²²The depths of isolation that Barker certainly experienced as an early modern woman writer cannot be fully expressed. Even with other women writing at the same time as Barker, Barker's position as a Jacobite and Catholic push her even further into the margins of exile. The profound isolation functions as yet another silencer. King illustrates a layering of sympathetic readers created by Galesia, the Lady, the "Jane Barker" introduced in the preface, and Jane Barker the author. In this layering Galesia and Barker are rescued from their exile. Further, this reading demonstrates a way in which Barker revises the violent plot that excludes the woman writer from community and recognition (King, *Galesia, Jane Barker, and Coming to Authorship*, 97). Cheryl L. Nixon, in "'Stop a Moment at this Preface': The Gendered Paratexts of Fielding, Barker, and Haywood," reads the preface of *Patch-Work Screen* as a liberating space. By reading the preface as a space of liberation for the woman writer and her audience, we can locate a female conversation. Within this conversation, women are given the space to act as readers, as critics, and even as participants in the writing of the narrative. However, since Barker's novel does not present a liberating space, Nixon suggests that Barker questions whether any space outside the preface exists that permits a group of women to come together in an empowering way *Journal of Narrative Theory* 32:2 (2002): 123-153.

maneuvers such as these throughout *Patch-Work Screen* to reveal not only the intellectual power women possess, but also the unfair limitations society creates. Barker's preface to *Patch-Work Screen*, when read with the trauma of courtship that occurs in *Love Intrigues*, shows the boundaries created by the patriarchal society in which she lives. The conventions of romance dictate a romantic plot between man and woman in the early eighteenth century, but Barker's use of unfulfilled romantic love shifting to fulfilling poetic love in *Love Intrigues*, combined with a female audience capable of reading a love between woman and poetry in the preface to *Patch-Work Screen*, proposes a path for the woman who wishes to write. It is an imagined space outside of societal pressures to abandon such love and return to courtship and marriage expectations.

The Galesia of *Love Intrigues* consciously turned away from a more traditional romantic path, and fell passionately in love with writing. Despite her solitude in this decision, she cannot separate her identity from her muse, who is spoken of as providing all the spiritual and physical needs for the writer. Galesia's new love story and the struggles inherent in the choice of this new romance are presented in *Patch-Work Screen* through its experiential reveals. The poems fill the silences of a tormented narrative about Galesia's attempts to find a space in which to write with the idea that a life devoted to writing is one more fulfilling than any other offered. Barker's experiential reveal unites silences in the prose narrative with the poems that fill them to provide an alternative narrative of an abiding love for poetry, a revision to the conventional romance plot of courtship and marriage. Barker replaces the courtship plot in *Love Intrigues* with one detailing Galesia's decision to remain celibate and pursue a life of the mind. Working in tandem with this shift in plot throughout *Patch-Work Screen* is a narrative that champions the female poet. This narrative is revealed through the silencing struggles of Galesia as she falls more deeply in love

with writing, despite pressures from her mother and suitors to abandon such pursuits. With each silence in the prose, Galesia provides a poem that, when read as filling the silences, portrays a woman talented, knowledgeable, and respected.

Silencing Expectations

Galesia's narrative reveals very real tensions the woman writer feels as she attempts to pursue her desire to write amidst social pressures to follow a more traditional life. *Patch-Work Screen* in particular illustrates the tensions and anxieties inherent in deciding to follow the path of a writer rather than that of wife. Not only does Galesia lose each community she attempts to establish because of her wish to write, but also she is constantly at odds with her mother when Galesia asserts her desire to remain single. Galesia's loss of her brother and her father early in the narrative of *Patch-Work Screen*, places pressure on Galesia's mother to find an eligible husband for Galesia.

After the death of her father, the world learns of Galesia's monetary value, which causes a stream of suitors to appear. Galesia says to the Lady of these memories that she will "pass them over in silence, as I was forced to undergo it with Submission" (105). This silence reveals an imposing marriage plot that echoes the trauma endured by *Love Intrigues's* Galesia in its expectations that she not follow her path, but, rather, follows a socially constructed one. Her silence here parallels her silence in *Love Intrigues* that her father took as consent to marry a man of Bosvil's choosing. However, Barker rewrites the conventional marriage plot by creating a narrative that ends in neither marriage nor death. In both instances, Galesia's silence represents her aversion to following traditional submission to marriage. Her silences indicate compliance on the surface, but the narratives in which these silences reside reveal paths of study and poetry as alternatives to tradition. In this revision of literary conventions, Barker exposes the difficulties

for a woman who wants to live the life of a writer without domestic responsibilities, as well as the opposition she experiences because of this wish each time her mother intrudes upon her study with her distress over Galesia's desire to spend her time writing.

Galesia remarks that she thought it perhaps unnatural for her not to fulfill domestic duties of wife and mother. Her mother wishes for her to cease her literary goals in order to avoid the name "Folly"

by becoming a good Mistress of a Family; and imploy your Parts in being an obedient Wife, a discreet Governess of your Children and Servants; a friendly Assistant to your Neighbors, Friends, and Acquaintance: This being the Business for which you came into the World, and for the Neglect of this, you must give an Account when you go out of it. (PS 133)

Galesia's mother lays out the expectations for women in clear terms that leave no room for study and writing. She couches these injunctions in the belief that this is the only reason a woman is born, thereby presenting her argument in such a way that makes any refutation not only socially unacceptable, but also unnatural. Galesia reports that "these were Truths which Reason would not permit [her] to oppose," but that she has a "secret Disgust against Matrimony" (PS 133). When Galesia's mother alludes to what was thought to be natural for every woman to perform, Galesia appears to condemn herself for not wanting to follow that life. That Galesia herself seemingly calls this reasonable demonstrates the silencing effect of unrelenting marriage expectations.

The tension between the expectations of Galesia's mother and Galesia herself is never more apparent than in Galesia's constant search for space in which to write, and her mother's continual intrusion into that space. When Galesia and her mother move to London, Galesia thinks she has finally found a place to study and write that her mother will not find. In the midst of city noise, Galesia begins to "tumble over *Harvey* and *Willis* at Pleasure" when she finds a

garret rooftop space in which to pursue her activities (*PS* 123).²²³ In this space, Galesia actively pursues knowledge and writing despite the constraints of the city, and her mother's scolding remarks. However, the novel promptly falls silent at this moment. This silence occurs due to a sudden discovery of her space by a stranger seeking help.

Galesia's writing space is assaulted when she assists a young woman in her escape by helping her from one rooftop onto her own and into her and her mother's home. Galesia's mother, after hearing the young stranger's tale of woe, promptly prohibits Galesia from returning to her space of study and writing, as she deems it both dangerous and unnecessary. At a moment in the narrative when Galesia feels she finally has the space to write, she is silenced. The silencing exhibited here illustrates a situation in which the woman writer, even when she finds a space in which to compose, experiences repression. That the novel falls silent here illustrates the repercussions that often accompanied pursuits involving independent wanderings away from the social strictures of the time. In this, the silence in the narrative exposes the situation of the woman writer – that she cannot find the space in which to pursue her writing and that, once locating such spatial solitude, it can be forcefully removed from her without warning. This lack of stability parallels the lack of permanence the Lady represents as a patron for Galesia's writing.

²²³ Readings of this scene range from the conflict between sexual and intellectual needs to criticisms of the patriarchy. Either readings support one in which the woman writer finds joy in the ideal of a space to write, yet is cramped in, and eventually banished from, this place. Barker's dissatisfaction with the situation of women, and more specifically the situation of the woman writer, is visible in this scene – whether that be a limiting of political involvement, violence against women, or strictures forbidding full participation in society. For readings of Galesia's garret please see: King, *Jane Barker, Exile* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Kristina Straub, "Frances Burney and the Rise of the Woman Novelist" in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*, edited by John Richetti (New York: Columbia UP, 1994); Josephine Donovan, "Women and the Rise of the Novel: A Feminist-Marxist Theory" *Signs* 16 (1991): 441-462.

The violence of Galesia's removal from her garret, expounded by the violence of the interpolated tale that silences Galesia, gestures toward the injustice of the woman writer's lack of space.

The interpolated tale that highlights the violence of removing the woman writer from her place of writing is "The Story of Belinda." While Galesia speaks longingly of a brief moment in which she had space to write, think, and study on the roof, this meditation is disrupted by one of several stories about a wronged woman. "The Story of Belinda" is about a young woman who was spoiled by her parents until she finds herself pregnant. She has been seduced and abandoned by the man that her parents had chosen for her to wed, despite her wish to marry a man her parents disapproved of for her. The irony in Galesia's mother forbidding her to return to the roof after this story reveals the injustices involved in the woman writer being forbidden to write. Just as Belinda's parents would not support her choice to marry a virtuous man over a dishonorable one, so too does Galesia's mother not support Galesia's decision to find satisfaction in writing rather than marriage. Galesia's mother's reasons for prohibiting Galesia's writing stem from her fear that she will not behave according to social strictures and will therefore exist outside socially accepted places like Belinda, who needs to avoid society because she has behaved contrary to its strictures, as well as from a desire that Galesia be supported economically – insured, from her mother's point of view, through a good marriage. While Galesia's situation differs from Belinda's in outcome (she is not persecuted to the point of needing to hide from her parents), the equation of a woman writer being taken away from writing with forcing a woman to marry a bad man is unjust. It presents the situation of the woman writer as needing not only space, but also support.

The Lady interrupts Galesia's story to suggest her surprise at Galesia's silence on this unfortunate occurrence. She thought that Galesia would have a poem to offer lamenting the loss

of her writing space. However, Galesia brushes this aside saying, “this makes me reflect, how useless, or rather pernicious, Books and Learning are to our Sex... However, I comply’d with my Mother, and made Inclination submit to Duty” (*PS* 132). This section of the novel exposes the situation of the woman writer in that the power of her writing faces continual attacks – if only through a forbiddance of physical space, not to mention emotional support, to be writer. While Galesia’s dream in *Love Intrigues* warns her that romantic engagement will harm her poetic aspirations, her interactions with her mother regarding courtship and study reveal a tension between Galesia’s desires and societal expectations. Furthermore, Galesia’s comments on books and learning expose the difficulty in creating even a mental space for woman writer because of the expectations, prohibitions, and suffocation by the world around her.

We know that Barker does not see books and learning as useless to her sex. Her constant allusions in her poems and prose to what she knows of science, history, literature, and languages asserts her confidence in the power of her own knowledge. Further, the list of useless activities of the young gentlewomen that Galesia attempted to befriend at the beginning of her tales provides a contrast to this section of the narrative. At first, Barker skillfully intertwines details of Galesia’s delight at “dressing, visiting, and other entertainments befitting a young gentlewoman” with the progress she made in anatomy lessons from her brother (*PS* 82). The mirroring here of a young woman delighting in fellowship with other women, while also rejoicing in pursuits of the mind illustrates the potential for a woman to become educated without marking her as an outsider. However, the narrative is quick to point out the exile Galesia feels when her fellow gentlewomen reject her for becoming a “useless member of our Rural Assemblies” (*PS* 83). Although Galesia in part faults herself in this exile, remarking that she became grave toward their diversions of

Our little Follies of telling our Dreams; laying Things under each other's Heads to dream of our Amours; counting Specks on our Nails, who should have the most Presents from Friends or Lovers; tying Knots in the Grass; pinning Flowers on our Breasts, to know the Constancy of our Pretenders; drawing Husbands in the Ashes; St. Agnes's Fast; and all such childish Auguries, (*PS* 83)

by listing these diversions against her newly found scientific knowledge, Galesia silently points to the more worthwhile use of a young person's time. That the narrative allows Galesia to blame herself when it comes to this loss of community is an example of silencing.

However, this silence gestures toward what should be – a community accepting of Galesia's new passions and perhaps even partaking in such pursuits.²²⁴ The contrast of superstitious activities with Galesia's learning activities allows the silence of the narrative to comment on the ridiculous nature of prohibiting young women from education. What is more, Galesia's reactions to these young women echo her occasional comments to the Lady that she considered abandoning her poetic pursuits in favor of a more traditional domestic path. This tension reflects the tension the early eighteenth-century woman writer felt as she carved out a professional space in which to write and be respected. Although Galesia appears silenced in both this section of the narrative and the later section with "The Story of Belinda," these scenes speak to the irony of society's decisions about what is useless for women. Barker's creation of these parallels in the silences raises the woman writer to be a productive and worthwhile member of society, while also demonstrating flaws in the current space for women.

Alternative Narratives

While silences reveal prohibitions working against women writing, many of the poems in *Patch-Work Screen* fill those silences with poetry that presents Galesia's talent. The poems in

²²⁴ See also, King, Kathryn. "Galesia, Jane Barker, and a Coming to Authorship" *Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women*, 1993.

Patch-Work Screen fill these silences to provide a narrative of a woman poet in love with knowledge and poetry. Poems that deal with writing or science proliferate on the pages of *Patch-Work Screen* in particular, and it becomes obvious in this novel that Barker clearly values her knowledge in these areas. Barker's inclusion of such poetry in the experiential reveal demonstrates an alternative narrative in which the woman writer is included in literary lineage, is given a community to support her talent, and finds the space to pursue her writing.

Lineage

Several of the silences in *Patch-Work Screen* are signaled by Galesia's loss of community. The most significant loss she experiences is that of her brother. He was the supporter of her quest for knowledge, the first critic of her poetry, and, at first, her sole source of education. Meditating on her newfound pursuits of knowledge and writing, Galesia says,

A Learned Woman, being at best but like a Forc'd-Plant, that never has its due or proper Relish, but is wither'd by the first Blast that Envy or Tribulation blows over her Endeavours. Whereas every Thing, in its proper Place and Season, is graceful, beneficial, and pleasant. However, my dear Brother humouring my Fancy, I pass'd my Time in great Satisfaction. (PS 83)

The confusion and tension found in Galesia's meditations on an educated woman's place in society begin to portray the isolation she feels. Like a plant contained in a greenhouse, forced to grow out of season, a woman educated finds the elements inhospitable. It is not that the plant, allowed its "due and proper relish," would not be able to endure all the harshness the world offered; rather, in order to withstand attack, a woman would need to be educated without social taboos prohibiting her movements. Here, the text suggests that women ought to be allowed the freedom to experience all they are capable and desirous of in the way of gaining knowledge. Further, they would then possess the confidence to go forth and engage others with their knowledge. Such a proposition echoes the preface of *Patch-Work Screen* and its audience of

ladies. Just as Barker uses Joseph's coat to suggest that her power has the talent and intellect to at once be regarded with distrust and simultaneously possess the ability to rise from exile to authority, so too does she here imagine a world that would nurture women who desired knowledge. Galesia's reference to Ecclesiastes 3:1 at a moment in the narrative when she has lost her strongest tie to education provides a place from which she can lament the imbalance of a learned woman forced into unnatural solitude.²²⁵ The balance in life that Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 lays out is undermined when a woman is never permitted "due and proper" pursuit of knowledge. Just as the plant that is kept away from its natural habitat suffers, so too will the woman writer suffocate without a space to pursue what she deems natural, rather than what society believes as "natural."

With the loss of her brother, Galesia finds herself isolated by the depth of her grief. Importantly, she focuses not only on her sorrow over the death of her brother, but also over the loss of the knowledge he imparted to her. She says she would like to die and in a lyrical moment expostulates that "The Reflection of *Ever* and *Never*, devour'd all that cou'd be agreeable or pleasing to me: *Ever* to want his wise Instructions! *Never* to injoy his flowing Wit!" (PS 85). This loss of a community in the form of university knowledge that supported her desire to study marks an important silence in *Patch-Work Screen*, but one that is soon filled with a poem that ventures an alternative to a life of study that is supported solely by a male family member.

As Galesia's grief abates, she says the "Muses began to steal again into my Breast," and she resumes the studies she began with her brother. The poem that fills the silence caused by his death demonstrates the poet's mastery over anatomy and poetry,

²²⁵ "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" Lloyd E. Berry and William Whittingham, *The Geneva Bible, a facsimile of the 1560 edition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

Then I perceiv'd how HARVEY all made good,
 By th' Circles of the Circulating Blood,
 As Fountains have their Water from the Sea,
 To which again they do themselves convey.
 And here we found great LOWER, with much Art,
 Surveying the whole *Structure of the Heart*.
 Welcome said he, dear *Cousin!* Are you here?
Sister to Him, whose Worth we all revere:
 But ah, alas! So short was his Life's Date,
 As makes us since, almost, our Practice hate;
 Since we cou'd *prolong* the *Motion* of his *Heart*. (PS 90)

When she narrates her decision to begin tutoring herself, she says she started with anatomy, “reducing it into verse” (PS 85). This comment is an echo back to the moment she decided to pursue knowledge and poetry in *Love Intrigues* when she shortens Bacon’s philosophies on learning into the adage “two Designs on Foot at a Time” (LI 14). That is, she presents her power in knowledge and poetry through her ability to recast philosophy into verse. Perhaps in doing so Barker further asserts her place in a lineage with Sidney by taking his injunction that poetry is superior to philosophy to a new place by actively revising philosophy into poetry in her novels.

Her decision to relate the workings of the heart in verse provides her with an innovative place in which to assert her knowledge. The marriage of science and poetry in “An Invocation of her Muse” and “Anatomy” – two sequential poems which enter the narrative at this point – provides a platform from which Barker can affirm her knowledge of medicine through poetic form.²²⁶ As the prose shifts into poetry, Galesia says she sees the muse plaiting a wreath for her brow. In this, Galesia invokes the image of the laurels reserved for poets on Parnassus. While this act puts her in the company of accepted poets, she goes one step further by saying that the

²²⁶ This poem is revised from “A Farewell to Poetry, with a long Digression on Anatomy” in *Poetical Recreations*. The “Invocation” replaces lines 1-12 of “A Farewell to Poetry” and the section on “Anatomy” begins at line 15 of the *Poetical Recreations* version. This information is located in *The Galesia Trilogy and Selected Manuscript Poems of Jane Barker*, edited by Carol Shiner Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 85 n.3.

wreath is made up of poetry *and* physic medicine. This image, that of the intertwining fields sitting atop the poet Galesia's head, situates her not only amongst lyric royalty and university educated, but also in a powerful place of her own choosing. That is, rather than accompanying her late brother and scholars like him in knowing the physical mechanics of the heart, or the lyricists in their understanding of the emotional workings of soul, Galesia carves out a place for herself as poet where she masters both at once – a tradition of the poet laureate, the highest honor.

By positioning herself as a knowledgeable poet via Galesia, and especially by including her own poems, Barker creates a space for herself in a lineage of knowledgeable poets. “An Invocation of her Muse” is the opening to a longer poem entitled “Anatomy” in *Patch-Work Screen* – two poems that appear back to back in this experiential reveal. “Anatomy” is a lengthy poem, unrevised from Barker's previously published *Poetical Recreations* (1688). “An Invocation of her Muse,” added immediately preceding “Anatomy” in *Patch-Work Screen*, is missing from the text of *Poetical Recreations*. Its absence from the earlier publication indicates its importance in *Patch-Work Screen* as it is the only complete poem clearly added onto one of her *Poetical Recreations* poems for function within the narrative of her novel. Only four stanzas of three lines each, “An Invocation to her Muse” fills the silence of Galesia's loss with,

Come, gentle Muse! assist me now,
A double Wreath plait for my Brow,
Of Poetry and Physick too.

Teach me in Numbers to rehearse
Hard Terms of Art, in smooth, soft Verse,
And how we grow, and how decrease.

Teach me to sing APOLLO's Sons,
The Ancient and the Modern-ones,
And sing their Praise in gentle Tones.

But chiefly sing those Sons of Art,
Which teach the motion of the Heart,
Nerves, Spirits, Brains, and every Part. (*PS* 86)

The tone of the poem presents a voice confident in the ability to learn not only the way blood flows through the heart, but also the course of emotion. Further, this confidence is tied up in certainty of the poet's talent to relate these mechanics. She asks her gentle muse to assist her, but with a tone revealing a sense that she already possesses the ability to learn and master all she studies. The speaker in this poem requests the mastery of both verse and medicine, desires to write about the human condition and to know the workings of the human body, and finally asserts mastery of literary knowledge through a blending of the art of medical knowledge into a lyricism of how the body works.²²⁷ This voice craves the knowledge to articulate understanding – to put into words and rhyme mastery of spirit and body – but in entreating the muse for this expertise, the poet alerts us that we will soon enter into verse that does just that.

In “Anatomy,” the speaker details what she learned from her brother in lyrical fashion. Within the space of her overt grief, Galesia fills the narrative with poems that express her depth of knowledge of poetry, anatomy, and medicine. Her intertwining of these fields of knowledge further proves her scientific and literary expertise. In the silence caused by her loss of communities – that is, her inability to fit in with the group of women her age and the death of her only true companion – we receive a poem expressing mastery of William Harvey, Richard Lower, and classical literature. Not only does she express this knowledge in her poem, she also presents the content in a well-formed verse narrative. She imagines herself on a quest with Thomas Willis and William Harvey, following them through the chambers and ventricles of the

²²⁷ “Apollo’s Sons” refers to physicians and medical students. As the Greek god of poetry and medicine, Apollo’s position in this poem unites both Galesia’s passionate pursuits.

heart.²²⁸ She uses kitchen metaphors and Greek references to reveal her knowledge of the workings of this all-important muscle. In doing so, Barker at one deftly intertwines women's space into the complexities of anatomy and the tradition of poetic allusion, and, at the same time, asserts that a woman's place of poetic composition is in the material heart as well as in the figurative heart.

This lacing together of scientific knowledge and poetic mastery aligns Barker with Cavendish. Cavendish's fascination with philosophy, especially natural science, provides a forum for Barker to assert her mastery of both anatomy and lyric. In fact, the narrative act of intertwining domestic space with scientific knowledge echoes both Wroth and Cavendish in their co-opting of Sidney's *Arcadia*. All three women use poetry in prose to emphasize female power through expression of emotion, and in that expression of emotion, via the authority granted the poet to influence nations for the better in Sidney's *Defence*, to assert a public role for the female poet. The experiential reveal in which "Anatomy" resides in *Patch-Work Screen* fills the silence of Galesia's loss with a narrative in which the powerful female poet is a part of a lineage of knowledge and poetry. Her innovations to poetry through the intertwining topics of medical knowledge, classical allusions, and domestic affairs replace the silence of the exiled woman poet with a voice strong in knowledge and powerful in talent.

Community

The lack of community to support the woman writer enters *Patch-Work Screen* as a recurring theme in Galesia's life. Having experienced repeated exile herself, Barker certainly includes this theme for a number of reasons. However, I would like to draw attention here to the

²²⁸ Thomas Willis played an important role in the discoveries in anatomy and neurology. William Harvey was at one time the physician to James I, and was the first person to describe in detail the circulatory system. He published "On the Motions of the Heart and Blood" in 1628.

ways in which Galesia's loss of community represents the lack of support for the woman writer. The silences created each time Galesia finds herself stripped of a community are filled by poems reflecting her knowledge and talent. This reveals an alternative narrative for the female poet – one in which her pursuits are supported by a society that is less preoccupied with woman's bodies. What is more, a historical community is formed through a line of foremothers running from the Countess of Pembroke to Wroth, Henrietta Maria to Cavendish, and Philips to Barker. Regardless of the pressure Galesia feels to abandon her pursuit of knowledge and poetry, the narrative in *Patch-Work Screen* focuses largely on Galesia's brief, yet successful, membership in a writing group. However, each time she narrates instances when she considered herself an equal with the scholars in knowledge and talent, a silence enters, indicating Barker's deployment of an experiential reveal.

In a notable moment in which this occurs, Galesia finds herself courted by a member of her Cambridge writing circle when she only wanted to share her poetic talent.²²⁹ That the scholars seem to treat her as a beautiful young woman, rather than as a literary equal, creates a gap in the narrative that exposes the need for a supportive community for the woman writer. When Galesia provides a poem to the Lady as an example of her response to the scholars she says she does not need youth or praise,

Howe'er, I wish thy Praises may,
Like Prayers to heaven borne,
When holy Souls, for Sinners pray,
Upon Thy-self return. (PS 96)

²²⁹ The Cambridge scholars were a real community of writers that Barker belonged to before her exile in France. Together they produced *Poetical Recreations* (1688), half of which contains poetry written by Barker. Many of the poems written by both Barker and some of the men in the group portray Jane Barker as the superior poet of the writing group. See Kathryn King, *Jane Barker, Exile*, 58-61.

The speaker rejects praise by sending it to heaven, then returning it to those who are praising her. Much in the way Galesia wants to reject the suitors, she rejects their praise. When Galesia expresses to the Lady how the scholars misread her poetry, we see Barker working in the silences to demonstrate the ways even the most ardent supporters of women writers can do harm when the attention is on a woman's body.

Their reading focuses on praise of her beauty, rather than the more universal theme of youth as fleeting. She complains to the Lady in this section of the narrative about this misreading. While she offered herself up to them as a writer, they only saw her as a female body. Instead of reading her own poetry as uplifting reason above beauty, the scholars read her poem as one in which she ignores her own physical perfections. However, Barker's poetic insertion at this point in the narrative clearly employs the trope that beauty is temporary and the mind is lasting. When Galesia's friends discount her mind as a poet and remark only on Galesia as a worthy possession for a man, they strip her of her place as a scholarly equal. Her status as woman disallows full participation in such a community.²³⁰ In doing this, they forcibly remove the feelings of community and equality she had with them. Galesia is left outside of her community of scholars because of their misreading of her poetry.

Erasing Galesia from the category of writer illustrates the violence done to women writers when they are seen as bodies, rather than as poets. Barker exposes the discriminating nature of viewing women writers as worthless creatures through the silencing Galesia experiences. This technique reveals the unreasonable expectations that arise when society

²³⁰ See also, King, Kathryn. "Of Needles and Pens and Women's Work" *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 14:1 (1995): 39-57.

becomes preoccupied with expected female behavior.²³¹ The narrative allowed her little time to dwell on the enjoyment she received in feeling a part of a scholarly community, but this poetical response fills the silence with a voice that corrects misreading, and redirects praise for Galesia as a body in order to eliminate the idea that she is merely an object. This poem, through a pious refusal of applause, allows for a narrative in which the heroine can circumvent unwanted attention of her body and find supportive recognition for her poetry, and even gesture toward her virtue and toward a religious community. However, this narrative exists in an imagined elsewhere, and when the prose picks back up, we recognize that Galesia does not receive the supportive recognition of a genderless poet that she so desires.

Space

Despite others pressing Galesia to question her desire for knowledge and writing, poems attributed to Galesia fill the novel. In the silence that enters the novel at each moment in which Galesia details a failed marriage plot imposed upon her there is a poem. In these poems Galesia is free to present her attitudes towards marriage, suitors, and the violence that women often face because of domestic expectations.

The woman writer's situation is often exposed in *Patch-Work Screen* through Galesia's struggles against courtship. Although she finds herself bombarded by dishonest suitors and her mother's insistence that she give up her studies for the domestic life, her poems provide her with a powerful voice that combats such limiting expectations. While Galesia in the prose of the novel finds herself in situations where she is stripped of her voice, Galesia in the poems in *Patch-Work*

²³¹ Barker differs from early modern writers such as Eliza Haywood because she is not concerned with what codes categorize a woman as virtuous or unvirtuous; rather, Barker is concerned with the roles women perform.

Screen triumphs over the deceit of men and provides female readers with an alternative to the domestic and unintellectual life.

Each time Galesia details a failed marriage plot imposed upon her, a silence enters the novel. This silence is then filled with a poem where Galesia is free to present her attitudes towards marriage, suitors, and the discrimination that women often face because of domestic expectations. That Galesia only expresses herself in verse at these moments directs attention to the violence of prohibiting her from freely living the single life. She does not feel free in her narrative to the Lady to express the injustices she faced from forceful marriage expectations.

Galesia's difficulties in the world of courtship are never more evident than when she becomes a commodity for men after her father dies. In "To my Indifferent Lover, who complain'd of my Indifferency," Galesia fills the silence of the narrative with reasons why she refused to act coquettishly. This poem fits Bosvil and herself, but extends to the experience of women in general in order to suggest the very real need for reform of the courtship system. She begins by detailing the ways in which the suitor was selfish in his motivations for pursuing her. In exposing the harm that comes to women from selfish suitors, Barker reveals the entrapment women feel because of the unreasonable expectations they face in the courtship system.

"To My Indifferent Lover" provides a voice for the experience of the woman writer through its imagining of a situation in which women are given the voice to proclaim an active position in social experiences such as courtship. This poem appears as a triumphant verse on behalf of a young woman who spied a false suitor before he had a chance to be unfaithful. She details the ways in which the suitor was selfish in his motivations for pursuing her. By drawing parallels between "faithful Love's the Rhetorick that persuades" and "But when we find, your Courtship's but Pretence, / Love were not Love in us, but Impudence," Barker illustrates how

rhetoric can be used against women, even when women are discerning about what they hear (*PS* 106). The system of courtship presumes a rhetoric that Barker points out is unfair. Women are expected to behave in compliance with courtship rhetoric, even if they are aware of its duplicitous nature. She exposes the situation of women by listing the states to which women with unfaithful lovers must fall, such as wishing their lover had befallen an awful death, but does so in order to expose the injustice of a courtship in which one party must be subjected to the dishonesty of the other. However, in her poem she erases the gender boundaries that force women into passive subjects, making her speaker an active agent in courtship.²³² In this way, courtship functions as a representation of the sort of social experiences women writers are not allowed to discuss or engage in. Through the experiential reveal here, Barker creates a courtship situation where women have the active voice, where they are free to chastise unfair situations and demand reform to the system.²³³

Barker uses the experiential reveal in which “To My Indifferent Lover” is situated to redirect arguments about educated women to the danger of rakish men. Barker ends the poem with the following lines:

But Second Thoughts again wou’d let me know,
In gayest Serpents strongest Poysons are,
As sweetest Rose-tress, sharpest Prickles bear.
And so it proves, since now it does appear,
That all your Flames and Sighs only for Money were.
As Beggars for their Gain, turn blind and lame,
On the same score, a Lover you became.

²³² See also, Wilputte, Earla. “Harridans and Heroes: Female Revenge and the Masculine Duel in Jane Barker, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood” “Harridans and Heroes: Female Revenge and the Masculine Duel in Jane Barker, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood” *Eighteenth-Century Women* 4 (2006): 27-51.

²³³ Demanding reform for a system such as courtship easily transfers onto other social systems.

Yet there's a Kindness in this feign'd Amour,
It teaches me, ne'er to believe Man more;
Thus *blazing Comets* and of *good Portent*,²³⁴
When they excite the *People to repent*.
(*PS* 106).

In this careful maneuvering, Barker presents an alternative to the hazards of inconstant men. By linking omens, clues to the future, to never trusting others, Barker expresses the damage that comes when men decide to pursue their own selfish ends at the cost of innocence.

Simultaneously, the “blazing comet” of an educated woman is good – set in opposition to the bad of courtship – when the world is ready to accept her. In this experiential reveal Galesia at once asserts her right to evaluate critically a man who pretends, and proclaims a place to support fully a woman who is educated. Furthermore, this type of criticism links Galesia to Pamphilia through a poetic reveal of man's inconstancy. Poetry provides heroine-poets such as Pamphilia and Galesia a place in which to express the unfairness of man's inconstancy when women are expected to perform with (or in Pamphilia's case are pinnacles of) constancy.

In “To My Indifferent Lover,” Barker blends the trope of the unfaithful suitor together with the image of the unthinking human in order to present an alternative patterning – one where a woman freely judges with whom she associates and how she will behave toward them.

Furthermore, the *Poetical Recreations* version of “To my Indifferent Lover” ends:

Yet there's a Kindness in this feign'd Amour,

²³⁴ While the use of comets as literary symbols had been common for quite some time, it is of interest that in Cavendish's *The Blazing World* (1666), educated women are comets that create havoc. Cavendish, and therefore Barker, uses the widely held belief that comets portended evil to suggest that what is thought of as evil, a discerning educated woman following her own path in life, is actually symbolic of good. However, this havoc only occurs because the world is not properly prepared for the brilliant and assertive woman. Here, Barker uses such an allusion to voice her conviction that the world would be a better place if people repented their error in judging an educated woman negatively. Here, Barker's scientific and literary knowledge likely plays in this poem to revise common conceptions of educated women.

It teaches me, ne'er to be Mistress more;
Thus *blazing Comets* are of *good Portent*,
When they excite the *People* to *repent*.
(PR 18).

By revising “ne'er to be Mistress more” to “ne'er to believe Man more” Barker corrects the situation where a woman is only allowed to work actively against the courtship system as an object. Here, the speaker of the *Patch-Work Screen* poem more fully portrays the interruptions to her autonomy inflicted by social expectations. Further, she creates the possibility of a world where women are free from such expectations and allowed to demand greater equality.

Conclusions

The voice that expresses the woman writer's experience also champions an alternative pattern that would allow equal access to learning. In *Patch-Work Screen* “To My Muse” appears as a way to fill the silence created by frustrated literary attempts. It illustrates a life free to express scholarly knowledge, free to explore avenues traditionally unavailable to women. “To My Muse” does this through a poem that appears as an invocation of a poet to her muse; yet, through this invocation we see a poet fighting against a tide of discouragement in order to come out at the end satiated by the power of scholarly learning. The speaker welcomes the muse back, remarking that,

Few Friends, like thee, wou'd be so kind,
To come where Interest does not bind;
And fewer yet return again,
After such Coldness and Disdain.
But thou, kind Friend, art none of those;
Thy Charms thou always do'st oppose
Against Inquietudes of Mind;
If I'm displeas'd, still thou art kind;
And with thy Spells driv'st Grievs away,
Which else wou'd make my Heart their Prey.
And fill'st their empty Places too,
With Thoughts of what we ought to do.
Thou'rt to my Mind so very good,

Its Consolation, Physick, Food.
(*PS* 124).

The voice that fills the silence of a narrative in which Galesia must struggle to find a “hole” in which to write is one that begins with a conflict between the poet and the muse. The poet begins by asking the muse to “infest” the speaker’s heart, signaling the discord that arises in pursuing a life of writing. However, the speaker spends more time dwelling on how the muse provides a companion that trumps all other companions – one that will not unnecessarily chide the poet for being drawn to writing. The speaker gestures towards writing as a fulfilling way to spend time. In this, Barker creates a voice that would support a woman such as Galesia in actively pursuing learning and writing, without constantly fighting opposition.

Barker’s revision of “To the Importunate Address of Poetry” to “To my Muse” further provides a language for the woman writer’s experience – a language that reveals how necessary it is for a space in which to write. Although the woman writer finds space to write, it is a struggle, and one that likely hinders an outpouring of creative production. These revisions call for movement away from boundaries that may still appear. This poem is revised in a way that emphasizes the happiness found in writing – happiness not overridden by guilt, as if entering in the public sphere through the written word were a crime. This poem, perhaps most importantly, directs attention to the need for the woman writer to be allowed autonomy – allowed to pursue writing without oppressive forces working against her – while also provided with a community that would support, not exile. This poem, therefore, remarks on the pleasure that surrounds, the joy that can inhabit, those that allow new forms, new occupations, and new ways of patterning.

Despite this enjoyment in the alternative path, the weight of solitude permeates this poem when Barker’s revisions are taken into account. “To the Importunate Address of Poetry,” the

poem revised from *Poetical Recreations* to “To My Muse” in *Patch-Work Screen*, does not hold the lines,

And fewer yet return again,
After such Coldness and Disdain
(PS 124)

Although both “To My Muse” and “To the Importunate Address of Poetry” discuss the kindness of friends in quelling the inquietudes of the mind, the addition of the two above lines to “To My Muse” indicates an emphasis on solitude through the trope of the solitary poet struggling with the muse. While “To the Importunate Address of Poetry” appears in *Poetical Recreations*, a highly social verse collection, “To My Muse” appears at a point in *Patch-Work Screen* in which Galesia feels isolated and alone surrounded by London's ruckus, but decides to persevere in her life of the mind. At this point in the narrative, Galesia has fallen in love completely with poetry.

The isolation in this scene, combined with the experiential reveals in which Barker exposes the pressures working against a woman who wishes to choose a path in life of study and writing, results in a trauma in the love of writing poetry. Her relationship with her muse represents that love. In other words, she has lost her heart to writing; thus, she is not the version of herself she was when her heart belonged to Bosvil. However, the muse as lover is not accepted by the society in which Galesia functions, as represented by her mother and suitors. Galesia's compulsion to write overrides the disapproval of others in her new romantic choice. The muse is the constant companion for the poet. It provides what the harsh world takes away. The grief, the disappointments of a world that will not allow Galesia to live a quiet intellectual life, are dispelled once the muse, the creative force, is allowed reign. The contrast between social disapproval and reigning muse speaks not only to the limitations disciplining women out of a writing space, but also to the possibilities supporting women into a poetic life.

Conclusion

Places of Possibility Beyond Bounds

In *Poetry is not a Luxury*, Audre Lorde speaks to the potential for creative recording of women's hidden emotions and feelings, "within these deep places, each one of us holds an incredible reserve of creative power, of unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling."²³⁵ Pamphilia, Travellia, and Galesia each present a voice for the experience of the woman writer within the fiction of Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker. These women writers attribute their own poetry, integrated into the prose of their romances, to their heroines as vehicles for their innermost emotions, thoughts, and desires. By interpolating these poems into the prose, these women create narrative strategies that give voice to the experience of the early modern woman writer.

Reading rhetorical strategies such as silence brings us closer to understanding the nature of women's language and its role in their narratives. Silences signal a self-conscious marking of the dissent from a dominant statement.²³⁶ Silence, whether created by punctuation, syntax, absence, or narrative intervention is a strategy often used by women writers to work within and

²³⁵ Audre Lorde, "Poetry is Not a Luxury," in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984), 36-37.

²³⁶ Nancy Miller, "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction" *PMLA* 96:1 (January 1981): 36-48.

against masculine traditions in order to offer a “female slant, emphasis, or approach.”²³⁷ These silences occur in plots, in altered ways of expressing, in the intervention of everyday life into the narrative, in different imaginings of the individual, and in strategic genre choices interjected into the narrative. By rewriting conventional expectations, the possibility for cultural resistance emerges. Silences become tied up in the form of prosimetrum as a means by which women converse with readers, not only about the limitations that work against them as writers, but also about the innovations they are capable of contributing to the landscape of prose fiction. Through the experiential reveal, early modern women create a language to express their experiences as writers. As a narrative form, silence protests the conformity to conventional roles and narratives expected of women by exposing the boundaries that they must circumvent or manipulate in order to write. The silencing interruptions that occur in *Urania* or *Patchwork Screen* reveal the ways women are discouraged or taken away from writing. However, interrupting silences only occur after the female poets have completed their poetry. This pattern gestures toward the confidence these writers have in their poetry, despite the social forces that attempt to discourage them from writing.

Early modern writers such as Wroth, whom Denny called a monster for writing as a woman, and Cavendish, who was dismissed as a woman writer through labels such as eccentric and oddity, must reject the paradigm of monster or angel and invent a language to express a legitimate category of writer. They do this within a narrative structure that their audiences will accept. Although Sidney uses silences and the prosimetrum form in Sidney’s *Arcadia*, these techniques do not function as a means by which female characters assert any agency. However,

²³⁷ Rachel DuPlessis, “Breaking the Sentence, Breaking the Syntax” in *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*, edited by Michael J. Hoffman, Patrick D. Murphy (Duke University Press, 2005), 41

by working within Sidney's structure, early modern women writers can use their own silence strategies to give their heroines agency, while simultaneously creating a place in literary traditions for women. This imagined elsewhere includes a space of respect and support for the professional female writer in early modern England.²³⁸ In order to access a view of how early modern women viewed themselves as writers, we must find ways to read the codes within their writings – their imagined elsewhere. This practice requests that we listen to narrative silences and read the strategy of using silences with prosimetrum form.

I am concerned with the experiences we lose if we do not learn to read the imagined elsewhere. The experiential reveal creates discourses that not only lament those limitations that work against the desire to write and publish, but also present the ability to imagine movement beyond those boundaries. I hope to redirect readings of how women use silence to work in and against patriarchal conventions to the relationship between silence and hybridized genres. In the space between genres in prose fiction, writers create a language that discloses the scene of writing as they experienced it. Patriarchal society attempted to discipline them out of their print cultures by labeling them 1) as utterly horrific (Wroth), 2) as dismissively amusing (Cavendish), and 3) as exceptionally uncouth (Barker). However, Wroth, Cavendish, and Barker used the prose fiction conventions of their time to write a space for themselves that was nothing other than talented, knowledgeable, and authoritative. That is to say, in the experiential reveal these women demonstrate perspectives of themselves as writers that is not monstrous, eccentric, or rare.

²³⁸ Miller's work, *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writings*, proposes that we pay attention to the scene of writing itself because it directs our attention to the imagined elsewhere (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990). Miller's "imagined elsewhere" is the space reasonably imagined, yet not lived, where women do not face limiting prohibitions.

Sidney's *Arcadia* and *Defence* provide a space for early modern women writers to write both in and against patriarchal structures. Co-opting Sidney's romance, working within his argument for the poet, and using the strategy of silences in moments of hybrid poetry-prose in their romances, provide a language to express the situation of the woman writer. Wroth has this language speak to the woman writer's lack of space and her need to go beyond the patriarchal confines of even the appropriated private spaces of chambers and gardens. Cavendish asserts a place for the woman writer within the confines of her milieu, revealing the power of a female poet to counsel a nation to a better place through her virtue, intellect, and rhetorical talent. A member of a group of professional woman writers in the early eighteenth century, Barker reveals the lack of space, community, and recognition afforded her because of prevailing domestic pressures to abandon writing and act as body by subscribing to the expected roles of courtship, marriage, and family.

By working both in and against Sidney's romance, the writers discussed in this dissertation create a literary lineage in which they might enter the public sphere as women who write ideas, emotions, and experiences that deserve public audience. The notion that their ideas are worth sharing with audiences that they cannot control, as they might be able to with manuscripts, through publication finds safety in the experiential reveal through adherence to Sidnean belief that the poet is capable of moving humans to right and proper action. These women use Sidney's argument about the power of the poet to guide audiences to act with heroic virtue in order to illustrate the ways in which women not only have a right to contribute their voices and experiences, but also are capable of using their voices and experiences to instruct and delight.

However, these women go beyond imitation by co-opting Sidney's choices in order to express female experiences. These experiences speak not only to the limitations placed on female writers, but also to the worlds these writers believe could be easily within the reach of their social, cultural, and historical periods. That is, the rhetorical strategy of the experiential reveal as discussed in this dissertation gesture toward an imagined elsewhere. As the silences in their fictions testify, this elsewhere exists in their milieu only in their imaginations. Whether constricted at every turn, disciplined away from publication, as Wroth experienced, marginalized by being an "oddity" in her pursuit of fame through publication, as Cavendish believed, or pressured to turn away from writing in order to follow domestic expectations, suffocated in her pursuit of a life of the mind, as Barker faced, these women wrote into their fictions the silencing that comes when women are seen as bodies rather than as minds. That these early modern pioneers in fiction each co-opt Sidney in order to provide a language for their experiences as writers, experiences unique to their particular milieu, speak to the ways in which women circumvent convention. In doing so they rhetorically oppose the boundaries that constrain their desires to share their experiences and ideas. The voice in the silences speaks to the ways in which women are disciplined away from publication through social expectations of discretion, modesty, and domesticity. Places of possibility, the imagined elsewhere, occurs in the space between poetry and prose. There, silence does not discourage, but provides opportunity for lament; and through that lament the unrecorded finds record.

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