

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: PRIVATE SCANDAL IN THE PUBLIC  
SPHERE: SEXUAL SCANDAL AS EARLY  
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POLEMICS

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Changes in literary strategies and polemical contest in the early eighteenth century legitimized the use of sexual scandal as a means of attack in the mainstream commercial press. Authors embraced scandal to obscure and temper partisan conflicts that motivated animosities, and in doing so they sanctioned inquiry into the private lives of public figures. This strategic use of scandal emerged as a reaction against the political-religious polemics of the English civil war of the mid 1600s. The discourse of scandal developed as an alternative to the discourse of politeness, which similarly evaded explicitly partisan exchanges. Instead of using politeness to cultivate decorous public debate, some authors turned to scandalous (often calumnious) exposés because it allowed them to veil troubling conflicts while still venting animosities. Chapter One examines how early modern sexual libels were transformed after the civil war. I show how in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* Andrew Marvell adapted these precedents into his religious polemics; he redirected them against a

quasi-public target, the Anglican cleric Samuel Parker, in order to ridicule Parker as an individual. Chapter Two demonstrates how Delarivier Manley perfected this strategy of obfuscation in *The New Atalantis*. At moments of political crisis throughout the text, Manley's political narrative pivots towards amatory encounters to distract readers from the crisis at hand. By casting her political tract as a sexual allegory, she legitimized the personalization, privatization and sexualization of political discourse. As Chapter Three illustrates, in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* Joseph Addison and Richard Steele repudiated the public's appetite for scandal, but their very censures reflect that scandalous discourse permeated public debate. Although known for shaping the public sphere, in denouncing scandal, they revealed skepticism of the public's ability to engage in rational dialogue. Chapter Four shows that Alexander Pope and his literary rivals adapted scandal as a means of satiric attack against each other—that is, against private figures in the public eye—to undermine one another's cultural standing. I reveal the buried political-religious conflicts that motivated these hostilities, and I demonstrate that Pope refined his use of scandal as a literary tool throughout his career.

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EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POLEMICS

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## Introduction

In the late 1500s, scandalous rumors and verses circulated about Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, especially regarding her purported adulterous affair with the Earl of Bothwell. The affair was particularly sensational for the suggestion that she was complicit in plans to murder her husband, Lord Darnley. In England, Mary's political opponents furnished love letters she supposedly wrote to Bothwell in their attempt to prove her guilt in Darnley's murder. Gossip and rumors also at times enveloped Queen Elizabeth's relationship with her courtiers, especially the Earl of Leicester, as subjects questioned the Virgin Queen's sexual chastity. In addition to having direct bearing on questions of succession, Elizabeth and Mary's sexual purity, or lack thereof, was understood as a reflection of their ability to manage and rule their countries.<sup>1</sup> Five hundred years later, gossip and scandals about rich socialites, famous actors, and star athletes often dominate the news cycle. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, socialites Paris Hilton and Kim Kardashian became celebrities, famous simply for being famous, propelled in large part by supposedly illicit sex tapes that were released to the public. In 2011 Kardashian made headlines for ending her 72-day marriage, and in 2009 Golf champion Tiger Woods damaged his public

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<sup>1</sup> See Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 75-78; also see Julian Goodare, "Mary (1542–1587)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2007. 10 November 2011 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18248>>. As I will discuss in Chapter One, male rulers, such as Mary's son James I, were the subject of sexually scandalous rumors and libels as well.



persona after reports of his serial affairs surfaced and his wife left him. Emerging details on Wood's affairs dominated the news cycle for days. How did we get from illicit rumors about the monarch to a media industry dedicated to covering the private lives of the rich and famous? While this cultural appetite for scandal, particularly sexual scandal, may now seem ubiquitous, changes in the discursive practices and literary strategies in the English commercial press in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries helped fuel and legitimize the public's appetite for secrets about the intimate lives of public figures.

While public interest initially focused on sexual scandal at court and the exposure of such secrets for political gain, by the early eighteenth century, print culture promoted the commercialization of alleged sexual secrets of private individuals. William Congreve's comedy of manners *The Way of the World* (1700) illustrates the emergent cultural power of scandal at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Congreve's plot rests in large part on a private individual's fear of the public exposure of her family's private secrets. Mr. Fainall, and his mistress, Mrs. Marwood, attempt to blackmail Mr. Fainall's mother-in-law, Lady Wishfort. The adulterous pair accuses Lady Wishfort's daughter, Mrs. Fainall, of an affair, and Mr. Fainall threatens divorce unless Lady Wishfort signs over an additional fortune to him. Mrs. Marwood warns that if Lady Wishfort demands proof, they will go to court and people will then spread the gossip through the town. The real threat, however, is how the scandal will spread throughout London in the press and news marketplace. Marwood insists: "Nay, this [the court case] is nothing . . . But it must after this be consign'd by the Short-hand Writers to the publick Press; and from thence be

transferr'd to the Hands, nay into the Throats and Lungs of Hawkers . . . And this you must hear 'till you are stunn'd; nay, you must hear nothing else for some Days."<sup>2</sup>

Lady Wishfort agrees that the humiliation of the court case would be "very hard," but the spread of gossip would be "[w]orse and worse," and ultimately, it is the idea of the information circulating in the news marketplace that is "insupportable" (V.v.44, 48, 57). The threat to circulate Mrs. Fainall's private scandal in the print marketplace cinches the blackmail.

Congreve's fictional scenario reflected contemporary conditions in the print marketplace where scandals about real individuals circulated in a variety of genres, from newspapers and periodicals to quasi-fictional political tracts and Augustan verse. Sixteen years before Congreve's play, Aphra Behn used veiled sexual secrets in her epistolary tract *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* to expose and condemn English aristocrats who supported excluding King Charles's brother, James II, from the throne and who took up arms to support their cause. Behn based her text on an actual scandal and military confrontation, but the narrative's salacious details go beyond mere fact. And forty-two years after Congreve's play, poet laureate Colley Cibber infamously used similar means to defend his status and literary reputation against Alexander Pope's injurious characterizations of him, particularly the "libelous" attacks in Pope's 1742 *Dunciad*. Cibber published an open letter addressed to Pope in which he calumniously recounts the time he saved Pope's "little-tiny Manhood" from disease just as Pope was "perching upon the Mount of Love" at a

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<sup>2</sup> William Congreve, *The Way of the World*, in *The Works of William Congreve*, ed. D. F. McKenzie, prepared for publication by C. Y. Ferdinand, Vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), V.v.49-56; hereafter cited in text.

whorehouse.<sup>3</sup> These authors revealed alleged sexual secrets in print as a literary weapon to influence public opinion against their adversaries. In such usage, scandal is a rhetorical strategy of attack used to undermine an opponent's cultural standing, and this strategy of dispute constitutes a new form of polemical exchange, a safer alternative to the dangerous political-religious polemics of the seventeenth century. The political-religious polemics of the previous century were intimately linked to civil war, but in the eighteenth century the explicit focus on sensational titillating details distracted readers from the substance of the initial conflict. The rhetoric of scandal is thus a tool that authors employed as they sought to confront their adversaries while simultaneously attempting to contain the possible dangers of hostile exchange.

\* \* \*

Scandalmongering has a long history in the English print marketplace, and the early periodicals and illicit libels that cultivated the public appetite for salacious details helped make the strategic use of sexual scandal commercially popular and viable.<sup>4</sup> Although the Fainalls' adulterous affairs in *The Way of the World* and Pope's humiliations at a bawdy house may seem tame compared to the actual historic antics

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<sup>3</sup> Colley Cibber, *A Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope*, 1742, Augustan Reprint Society no. 158 (Los Angeles: University of California, 1973), 48.

<sup>4</sup> For a look at scandal and scandalmongering in the early English press, particularly in early newspapers and journalism, see, for example, M. A. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England, 1476-1622* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), 6, 13, 16, 23-28, 138-41; Martin Conboy, *Journalism: A Critical History* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 6, 39, 50, 78; Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, 1620-1660* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 29-30; C. John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15, 125, 155; and Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 81-83.

of Charles' Restoration libertine court, the exposure of these *private* individuals' sexual secrets in the marketplace is of a different order than sexually explicit poetry or texts critiquing the sexual morality of the court. Authors such as Behn and Pope did not casually drop scandalous accusations into their satire for the sake of mere titillation, entertainment, or personal railing. Rather, this discourse of scandal came to operate as a new polemical strategy in the eighteenth century. The term *polemics* is most famously associated, first with the Reformation, then with the seventeenth-century pamphlet wars that debated the political-religious principles of the English civil war. It connotes "strenuous argument and violent invective" and "enmity"; and the strictest meaning of the term denotes a generic category of seventeenth-century tracts that are inherently tied to religious controversy in particular.<sup>5</sup> But aggressive debate continued into the eighteenth century even as the overt terms and stakes of dispute changed. I suggest that revealing others' purported sexual secrets in the eighteenth-century print marketplace became a new weapon of attack that allowed authors to combat their adversaries while obscuring and diverting attention from the dangers of public conflict—dangers that had become all too real during the civil war of the preceding century and that produced fears which lingered well into the eighteenth century. In the eighteenth century, this veil was especially important since many of the hostile exchanges were motivated by partisan divisions with roots in the political-religious factions of the civil war. I thus use the term *polemics* to emphasize

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<sup>5</sup> Jesse M. Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 11, 4, also see 55. While focused on polemics as a genre, Lander also examines the "broadly conceived polemical culture, one in which antagonisms proliferate, refusing to remain within the traditionally defined realm of politics" and "the ways polemic permeated discursive, aesthetic, and social practice" (*Inventing Polemic* 18, 35)—interests which complement and support my use of the term.

the combative nature of these scandalous revelations, to remind us that they had an intended effect on public opinion, and to highlight the lingering effects of the civil war that still underlie many of these arguments.

The strategic use of scandal differs both from the slander and gossip that is ubiquitous in social interaction and from the more specific legal question of libel. Libel is only a concern to the extent that an author in question takes steps to avoid legal charges,<sup>6</sup> and the accuracy of the allegations appears to be beside the point given the popularity of calumnious attacks and the sheer number of responses they generated. Scandal is the public exposure of an individual's private flaws or behavior in order to undermine his or her authority and reputation. While broadly speaking the exposed behavior may be a breach in decorum, morality, or even the law, I focus on the pointed and calculated use of sexual transgressions for specific effect on public opinion throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The subjects of attack thus hold some kind of position that gives them public visibility, but increasingly throughout the period we see that they are essentially private individuals in the public spotlight.

Seventeenth-century precedent coupled with commercial innovations in publicity created a cultural setting that enabled and encouraged authors to turn to sexual titillation, as opposed to more "substantive" principles, to undermine an opponent.<sup>7</sup> The rhetorical strategy depends on the established power of public

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. to William Cohen, who in his study on the Victorian novel, defines sexual scandal in relation to the legal system; see William A. Cohen, *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> There are precedents of such tactics before the age of print as well. For example, enemies of the Greek philosopher Epicurus used slander, including rumors of sexual incontinence, to undermine his reputation and philosophic teachings. See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent*

opinion, a power most critics date to at least the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> But it also depends on an emergent separation of the private and public spheres. It gains its titillating appeal by transgressing this very boundary: a scandalous accusation or revelation brings private details about an individual's intimate life into public circulation. Scandal gains its power from the threat of such exposure and the ability to capture and thereby alter public opinion. For scandalous revelations to have an appeal and shock urgent enough to capture broad public interest, an interest necessary to sustain the profitable circulation of a commercial text, the individual under scrutiny must have a public persona. Rumors of affairs and encounters with prostitutes are commonplace. Newspapers and periodicals might even report on a neighbor's scandal if it ended in divorce or a legal proceeding. Yet, while a neighbor's secret might fascinate one social circle, an extended community is necessary to sustain a commercial publication. Individuals with official positions at court and in the church long served as public figures. The civil war and the related pamphlet wars helped cement a new class of public figures: political leaders. In the wake of the civil war, the rise and rage of party politics kept politicians in the public eye. But after the Restoration the idea of celebrity continued to expand to incorporate a wide array of private individuals as theater once again flourished and businessmen took advantage of opportunities in the commercial marketplace. The allure of Restoration theatre, particularly the presence of women on stage, helped fuel an early celebrity culture, including promotional ploys such as biographies that appeared to give the public

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*Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks, Vol. 2 of 2, 1925 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 581-585.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter One, note 64 below.

access to the actors' private lives.<sup>9</sup> Inventions in print marketing, led by the prolific bookseller Edmund Curll in the early eighteenth century, helped make authors, such as Pope, into popular public figures as well.<sup>10</sup> The increasing commercialization of the print marketplace and the interrelated rise of publicity at the turn of the century created conditions ripe for the adoption of scandal as rhetorical tool and cultural weapon. The economy of scandal depends on and reinforces the emergent sense of celebrity, and both depend on print technology.

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By historicizing the discourse of sexual scandal in the print marketplace of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, I illustrate how it developed as an alternative to the discourse of politeness that has dominated critical attention. The privileged status in literary criticism given to the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, the domestic novel, and Jürgen Habermas' rational public sphere has encouraged continued emphasis on the eighteenth-century discourse of politeness. This discourse of politeness served contemporary political needs. In the late seventeenth century, an emphasis on reason and moderation replaced the rhetorical extremism of the civil wars; it countered and contained the fanaticism and enthusiasm—the passion—of earlier religious disputes.<sup>11</sup> More specifically, critics generally concur that the

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<sup>9</sup> See Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 13, 24-25, 31; also see Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> Paul Baines and Pat Rogers, *Edmund Curll, Bookseller* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), esp. 86, 318-319.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, John Spurr, "England 1649-1750: differences contained?" in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1650-1740*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 26-28; Lawrence E. Klein, "Sociability, Solitude, and Enthusiasm" *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 60.1/2 (1997): 153-177; Howard Nenner, "The later Stuart age," in *The varieties of British political thought, 1500-1800*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock, with the

emergent emphasis on politeness stemmed from an effort to contain the vitriol of the seventeenth-century press, particularly the polemical tracts surrounding the civil war. Mark Knights contends that politeness evolved to control divisive factional debate in print; politeness and reason became ideals for political discourse.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, while Lander's primary purpose is to redeem seventeenth-century polemic as a significant and "productiv[e]" literary endeavor during the early modern period, he concludes that the eighteenth-century discourse of politeness "emerge[d] as a repudiation of the polemical." He acknowledges that dispute continued, yet he focuses on the ascendancy of "the literary" and polite learning, which includes (Augustan) wit and irony.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, Timothy Dykstal contends that the dialogic form emerged as an antidote to seventeenth-century polemic. Ordered and reasoned dialogue allowed for polite, civil, and effective public debate.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the focus on moderation expanded during the eighteenth century to encompass standards of decorous behavior and the elevation of genteel tastes. Lawrence Klein defines eighteenth-century politeness as "a refined sociability" or the behavior and comportment in conversation that was proper for a civilized and well-regarded gentleman. He persuasively shows how authors such as Joseph Addison and Richard Steele embraced this discourse of politeness in pursuit of a veiled political agenda to "[shift] the guardianship of culture

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assistance of Gordon J. Schochet and Lois G. Schwoerer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 182; and Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, eds. "Politics of Discourse: Introduction" in *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 16.

<sup>12</sup> See Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6-8, 342-348. Also see Nicholas Phillipson, "Politeness and politics in the reigns of Anne and the early Hanoverians," in Pocock's *The varieties of British political thought, 1500-1800*, 211-245.

<sup>13</sup> Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 34, 227, 1, also see 1-3 and 222.

<sup>14</sup> See Timothy Dykstal, *The Luxury of Skepticism: Politics, Philosophy, and Dialogue in the English Public Sphere, 1660-1740* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001).



from [the Church and Court, and therefore] the Tories” to the Whigs.<sup>15</sup> These prescriptions for cultivating refined, polite behavior, however, point the reality of an indecorous public in need of reform.

Thus, in contrast to this focus on politeness, I emphasize the way in which this vitriol and the specter of the civil war survived into the eighteenth century. I illustrate how the dangerous, overt political-religious polemical impulses of the mid-seventeenth century were sublimated into other adversarial rhetorical strategies, such as the calculated revelation of sexual scandal. Scandal provided a veil to discuss animosities not allowed by the discourse of politeness. This recourse to scandal as a rhetorical strategy was commercially successful as seen in the main tracts of this study, and recognition of its influence is necessary for critical understanding of the period. We should not overlook such moments as brief distractions into personal railing or as the sole province of amatory fiction. While the exposés may be fleeting in some texts, influential authors of the period used them in systematic ways. Even Pope developed the strategy in a sustained manner throughout his career, fine-tuning it into a devastating satirical weapon. The novel may have won literary and cultural prominence by the late eighteenth century; but the novel developed in contradistinction to literary strategies (and a public appetite for such strategies) that focus on salaciously attacking and discrediting an opponent’s standing in the court of public opinion. Both relied on the pleasure of transgressing the boundary between

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<sup>15</sup> Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the culture of politeness: Moral discourse and cultural politics in early eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4, 9, also see 3-5. Brian Cowan expands on Klein’s argument in “Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37.3 (2004): 345-366. For more on the role of party politics in the “civilizing process” known as politeness, see Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., “Introduction: discovering the Renaissance reader” in *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 22.

public and private life, of making the private and intimate available for public consumption.<sup>16</sup> The sexually titillating possibilities of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) have been written out of accounts of the "rise" of the polite domestic novel throughout the second half of the century.<sup>17</sup> But the novel's success against the titillating allure of scandal was not a given nor was it as complete as the critical history of the "rise" of the novel might suggest.

A few critics have already begun to call attention to the role of salacious libels, rumors, and trials in the long eighteenth century. In contrast to my focus on the commercial print marketplace, Harold Love examines the proliferation of illicit or "clandestine" political satires throughout the Restoration and later Stuart period. Some of these satires include sexualized attacks, but Love is particularly interested in the function of *manuscript* verses or lampoons: for instance, the various perspectives of such satires depending on their purpose and intended audiences, such as the difference between town and court lampoons, and how these clandestine texts helped form communities.<sup>18</sup> Matthew Kinservik examines three interrelated aristocratic trials

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<sup>16</sup> In a recent study which challenges us to rethink the separation between fact and fiction in modern novels, Sean Latham acknowledges that these similar appetites continue even today. Building on a remark by Truman Capote, Latham provokingly notes, "even the most difficult novels can be all too easily read as titillating memoirs or even private diaries in which authors make private scandal into public commodities" [*The Art of Scandal: Modernism, Libel Law, and the Roman a Clef* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4, also see 7, 17, 26.]

<sup>17</sup> Richardson himself tried to foreclose amorous readings of his epistolary novel; and William B. Warner and Bradford K. Mudge each show how salacious and sexually explicit texts were funneled into the category of "pornography" and separated from the domestic novel. See Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); and Mudge, *The Whore's Story: Women, Pornography, and the British Novel, 1684-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire, 1660-1702* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

of the late 1770s and illustrates the increasing publicity around aristocratic scandals.<sup>19</sup> Such critical inquiries point to the prominence of sexual scandal throughout the period and the importance of scandal as a rhetorical strategy. Recognizing the prominent use of scandal as a literary strategy in early eighteenth-century commercial texts necessarily challenges us to adjust our understanding of the discourse of politeness and the spectrum of acceptable public discourse during the period.

At the turn of the century, as the first half of this dissertation shows, political writers altered how the public engaged with political dispute. In the mid seventeenth century, a pamphlet war had accompanied the civil war. Pamphlets that debated contentious religious-political principles were closely associated with the violence and physical realities of the war itself. Marvell famously lamented, “O *Printing!* how hast thou disturb’d the Peace of Mankind! that Lead, when moulded into Bullets, is not so mortal as when founded into Letters!”<sup>20</sup> Consequently, in the decades following the civil war, authors turned to private, scandalous secrets to obscure persistent political divisions and constitutional questions; they helped divert public debate and thereby make it safe by refocusing attention to titillating, personal details. In addition to the sexual libels and rumors that had long swirled around the early

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<sup>19</sup> Matthew J. Kinservik, *Sex, Scandal, and Celebrity in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2007). For more on political sexual scandals in the late eighteenth century, also see Nicholas Rogers, “Pigott’s Private Eye: Radicalism and Sexual Scandal in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 4 (1993): 247-263; Anna Clark, *The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); and Vincent Carretta, *George III and the Satirists from Hogarth to Byron* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990).

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Marvell, *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Annabel Patterson, Dzelzainis, N. H. Keeble, and Nicholas von Maltzahn, Vol. 1 of 2 (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 46. Also see Harold Weber, *Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), esp. 18.

modern court, amorous and sexualized exposés were embedded in seventeenth-century civil-war pamphlets: the moral failings of leaders reflected their political ones. Such early (and often illicit) tracts condoned and facilitated the use of scandalous allegations as a legitimate basis of attack in controversial writing. After the civil war, authors continued such tactics and embraced sexual scandal, but for new purpose. For instance, my examination of Manley's secret history, a genre which provides veiled political critiques as it chronicles the sexual indiscretions of politicians and courtiers, shows that she turned to scandal to diffuse the dangers of party politics. The narrative diverts attention away from divisive political questions and towards the amorous seduction recounted in great detail. Sexual improprieties replace dangerous religious-constitutional debates. Instead of pamphlet wars accompanied by bullets, hostile confrontation could now be couched in terms of personal anecdotes and titillating details, which distracts from and displaces constitutional debate and thereby encourages the personalization and privatization of political discourse.

As discussed above, throughout the early 1700s, the strategy became even more available for other authors to adopt as the concept of public celebrity expanded and the dangers of the civil war began to fade from living memory into the past. Accordingly, as the second half of my dissertation shows, sexual scandal was not only the province of sensational journalism or disreputable romance or a reflection of the public's unrefined base appetites. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Tatler* and *Spectator* papers did not simply censure such "low" texts or appetites; they censured the print marketplace more broadly and, as I show, more skeptically than commonly

acknowledged. Augustan authors even adapted scandal as a strategy of attack against their cultural opponents as cultural, political, and literary disputes were funneled into devastating exposés. Augustan literature did not simply include the biting, pithy wit of the heroic couplet.<sup>21</sup> In his polite, classical verse, Pope made an art out of exposing his opponents' private vices for public ridicule and profit. The economy of scandal thus further crystallizes the cultural tastes that the discourse of decorum worked against and complicates our understanding of Pope's satiric tools. Recognizing these titillating accusations and revelations as calculated strategies of attack leads me to re-evaluate critical assumptions about strict disciplinary periodization, the literary and polemical precedents of secret history, the rational-critical nature of the public sphere, and Pope's literary legacy.

Throughout this project I show that the eighteenth-century use of scandal emerged out of and in contradistinction to the constitutional-religious polemics of the civil war; therefore, in Chapter One, "The Seventeenth-Century Context for Eighteenth-Century Scandal: Marvell's *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*," I analyze how the use of scandalous polemical attacks evolved throughout the seventeenth century. The polemical use of scandal has deep roots throughout the early modern period, and as a result, the eighteenth century use of scandal cannot be understood within the context of the Restoration or the eighteenth century alone. Illicit sexual libels attacking the court and providing political critiques circulated in ephemeral tracts throughout the early modern period, and such attacks were incorporated into the

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<sup>21</sup> Howard D. Weinbrot cautions against viewing Augustan precedents as strict prescriptions for determining eighteenth-century aesthetic and political values; accordingly, I use the term descriptively, rather than prescriptively, to refer to Pope and his contemporaries. See Weinbrot, *Augustus Caesar in "Augustan" England: The Decline of a Classical Norm* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), esp. ix, 1-9.

polemical pamphlets that accompanied and participated in the civil war. Strict disciplinary periodization inaccurately separates the turmoil of the mid 1600s from the projected stability of the Restoration and the eighteenth century, but fears of repeating the war continued.<sup>22</sup> In the aftermath of that dangerous polemical contest, author such as Andrew Marvell redeployed scandalous attacks as a response to these seventeenth-century conflicts. In the prose satire *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* (1672), Marvell embeds sexualized attacks into his religious polemics. These barbs interrupt and distract from the substance of the religious debate and thereby temper the dangerous religious hostilities while still participating in stinging adversarial attack. Marvell thus draws on early modern precedent, such as the sexualized rhetoric of anti-popery and illicit sexual libels against the court or civil war leaders, but he redirects these traditional attacks against new quasi-public targets, in this case the Anglican cleric Samuel Parker. In translating the early modern tradition of illicit critiques against the court into a popular and commercially successful prose satire that savages Parker, Marvell provides a prominent early example of the polemical uses of personal sexual scandal, and his tract stands as important precedent for the eighteenth century.

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<sup>22</sup> I am not the first to call for a more expansive look at the connections between our disciplinary periods and particularly the deep, lingering effects of the mid-century war and an increasingly polemical culture. For some arguments that point to the enduring influence of the civil war, see Sharpe and Zwicker, "Introduction: discovering the Renaissance reader," 18-23; Jason McElligott ed., "Introduction: Stabilizing and Destabilizing Britain in the 1680s," in *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006): 4-5; Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), esp. 4-8 and *passim*; and Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. 1-2, 13.

In Chapter Two, “Titillating Distractions: Delarivier Manley and Politics as Sexual Scandal,” I reassess the polemical intent and origins of the genre of secret history. My analysis of Delarivier Manley's rhetorical strategies in *The New Atalantis* (1709) suggests that Manley viewed herself (or at least attempted to position herself) as a major political writer of the time, and I briefly consider Aphra Behn's *Love Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684-87) as a model for Manley. In these secret histories both authors embrace scandalous affairs as a veil to discuss political crisis, and I examine how and why Manley used sexual scandal as the basis of her political allegory. Most critics view Manley in terms of eighteenth-century amatory fiction, derived from the French Romance tradition. My research, however, suggests that Manley was also influenced by English civil war polemics, a precedent overlooked by critics. These English precedents clarify our understanding of secret history as a political genre and emphasize the strategic importance of the titillating stories within the text. Manley's *New Atalantis* comments on party politics of the time, but it evades dangerous ideological conflict by diverting attention from partisan debates to sexual secrets at crucial moments in the narrative, such as the succession of William and Mary. Sexual scandal distracts from and thereby contains the rage of party, even while the text as a whole participates in political discourse. The overall effect is to present a new way for the public to engage with and conceptualize political debate: it encourages the personalization, privatization, and sexualization of public discourse to avoid what would be otherwise potentially destabilizing factional politics.

This new understanding of scandal as rhetorical strategy leads me to challenge orthodoxies about the rational public sphere in Chapter Three, “Curbing Scandalous Exchange: Re-examining the *Spectator* and *Tatler*.” Joseph Addison and Richard Steele’s treatment of scandal in their essay periodicals, the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, reflects the prominence of scandal in public debate by the early eighteenth century. Given the seemingly paradoxical prevalence of sexual scandal in the Age of Politeness, I illustrate that the public’s desire for titillation shows the power of irrational arguments in what we traditionally accept as the rational public sphere. I argue that the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, although known for shaping the public sphere, fail to create or sanction a legitimate political discourse for men or women. These periodicals denounce the salacious rumors that seduce readers and in doing so reveal their skepticism of the public’s ability to engage in rational-critical dialogue.<sup>23</sup> As my analysis of these papers shows, they specifically censure both the public’s obsessive appetite for scandal and the commercial exploitation of such tastes, and they link such discursive practices back to dangerous political factions and disputes, dangers that lingered from the civil war. Their critiques show that public debate and political discourse now focused on titillating private details and innuendo; the privatization and personalization of politics that secret history helped authorize had become mainstream. Rational public debate may be an ideal correction, but instead of

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<sup>23</sup> Anthony Pollock and Brian Cowan also argue for a new understanding of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*’s relationship to the Habermasian public sphere. See Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1755* (New York: Routledge 2009), 10-11, also see 4-6 and chaps 1-2; Cowan, “Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse,” 346, 351, also see 356-57, 347-48. Also see Tedra Osell, “Tatling Women in the Public Sphere: Rhetorical Femininity and the English Essay Periodical,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38.2 (2005): 283-300.



cultivating such an ideal, the papers that censure scandal and factional debate actually silence the public voice, replacing it with the prescriptions of a few approved voices.

Even Alexander Pope's heroic couplets reflect and cultivate the public's taste for scandal. In Chapter Four, "Alexander Pope's Scandalous Exchanges: Sexual Calumny in Augustan Wit," I consider Alexander Pope's various quarrels with the bookseller Edmund Curll, actor-laureate Colley Cibber, and Whig aristocrat Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Examining Pope's use of sexually scandalous attacks against literary and political adversaries throughout his entire career, I illustrate that these vicious exchanges actually compose a literary strategy of attack. Whereas the critical focus on Pope's Augustan wit and style has obscured his use of sexual scandal as a precise satiric tool to undermine an opponent's cultural status, I offer a new understanding of Pope's literary legacy that reflects the prominence of such techniques in his "high" Augustan verse. Pope and his adversaries not only embraced such salacious methods, but they turned this weapon against each other, that is, against private individuals in the public eye, not the monarch or even politicians. These authors, public figures in their own right, exploited the growing interest in celebrity: they recognized the public's desire for intimate private details about public figures, and they specifically appealed to this public opinion to undermine their opponent's cultural reputation. These overtly personal and salacious attacks often covered deeper literary and political disagreements, and Pope even embraced such "low" forms in some of his most canonical pieces, including *The Dunciad* (1728, 1742) and *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735). Pope refined this strategy throughout

his career, from early obviously calumnious accusations to precise and devastating revelations seamlessly embedded into his verse.

I have chosen this array of texts since it reflects the flexibility and adaptability of the economy of scandal. These sources also illustrate the prominence of scandal in some of the most studied texts of the period: texts by authors, such as Addison, Steele, and Pope, who have historically been part of the literary canon thanks to their contemporary and early legacies; and texts by authors, such as Manley and Behn, whose work has more recently been recovered and recognized thanks to the work of feminist critics. Marvell's twentieth-century reputation may have been defined by his lyric poetry, but his contemporaneous reputation rested on his satirical tracts, such as *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*.<sup>24</sup> This survey is not intended to be all encompassing, but rather illustrative and suggestive. By amassing this varied collection we can see that these seemingly isolated moments of vituperative personal attack add up to something more: a substantial engagement with intentionally placed salacious exposés at key moments of dispute to disrupt the dangerous legacy of hostile exchange in print. This polemical strategy of using private intimacies to undermine the cultural reputation of a variety of public figures also shows the “deep” links between our twenty-first-century celebrity or scandal industry and the eighteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See Annabel Patterson, *Marvell and the Civic Crown* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), and Annabel Patterson, Introduction, to *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Patterson, Martin Dzelzainis, N. H. Keeble, and Nicholas von Maltzahn, Vol. 1 of 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), xi.

<sup>25</sup> I borrow the concept of the “deep eighteenth century” from Roach, *It*, 3.

## Chapter 1: The Seventeenth-Century Context for Eighteenth-Century Scandal: Marvell's *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*

Alexander Pope and his literary rival, poet laureate Colley Cibber, levied salacious attacks in print against one another for decades. In *An Epistle from Mr. Pope, to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735), Pope defends his satires by pointing to their harmlessness, yet within this very defense, he furthers his ongoing campaign against Cibber. He asks, “has not *Colly* still his Lord, and Whore?”<sup>26</sup> The question references Cibber’s continued financial success, but it simultaneously critiques Cibber’s dependence on literary patrons and his habit of patronizing prostitutes. Pope renewed his assault against Cibber in 1742 when he added a fourth book to the *Dunciad*. In the addition, Cibber is named heir to Dulness’s empire of darkness and chaos, enthroned to symbolize the worst of the eighteenth-century hack literary productions, but Pope couples this professional condemnation with a salacious jab. Before surveying how Dulness’s empire spreads over art and learning, Pope suggestively describes her (incestuous) relationship with her (impotent) son, Cibber. As Dulness ascends her throne, Pope notes that “[s]oft on her lap her Laureat son reclines.”<sup>27</sup> In response, in 1742, Cibber published an open letter addressed to Pope in which he describes Pope’s purported failed sexual encounter at a brothel. Rescuing Pope from probable disease, Cibber claims he interrupted Pope’s rendezvous with a monstrous prostitute just as the author, with his “little-tiny Manhood,” stood “perch[ed] upon the Mount of

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander Pope, *An Epistle from Mr. Pope, to Dr. Arbuthnot* in *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A Reduced Version of the Twickenham Text*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), line 97.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books* in Butt’s *Reduced Twickenham*, book IV, line 20.

Love.” Cibber, completing the rescue, grabbed Pope by the heel and dragged him away from “his Danger.”<sup>28</sup> The account emphasizes and exposes Pope’s tiny stature—both his frail, diseased body and his phallus. Besides Pope’s physical vulnerability to the prostitute, his sexual conquest is interrupted, with the implicit suggestion that it would have overwhelmed him if it had continued. How and when did the public distribution of such sexual taunting in print become a common and influential strategy to diminish an opponent’s literary achievements? When did the public exposure of a private individual’s sexual secrets gain commercial popularity and viability? And how did scandal become a legitimate and culturally sanctioned mode of polemical or adversarial exchange in print? After all, despite Pope’s aversions to Cibber’s literary productions, given their professional successes, Pope and Cibber represent significant literary and cultural arbiters of the early eighteenth century, and their similar tactics can hardly be dismissed as mere sensationalism (or what we today might call “tabloid” trash).

While I will examine scurrilous accusations involving Pope in detail in Chapter Four, to answer these questions we must first go back to the seventeenth century. The seeds of such eighteenth-century scandalous attacks were planted in seventeenth-century polemics and in reaction against seventeenth-century conflicts, particularly the civil war. As this project will show, throughout the eighteenth century, authors repeatedly and strategically tempered their partisan political discourse. Most famously Joseph Addison and Richard Steele’s popular and influential eighteenth-century periodical the *Spectator* prides itself on staying above

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<sup>28</sup> Colley Cibber, *A Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope*, 1742, Augustan Reprint Society no. 158 (Los Angeles: University of California, 1973), 48.

partisan conflict, yet Lawrence Klein has shown how its emphasis on cultivating refined and polite tastes in its readers is actually a Whiggish program to reject the traditional cultural authority of the Tory institutions of church and court.<sup>29</sup> My project, however, reveals that Addison and Steele were not unique in evading direct political exchange. As an alternative to the discourse of politeness, authors such as Delarivier Manley, Pope, and Cibber used sexual scandal to temper and obscure their partisan disputes. This evasive strategy directly responded to the civil war by refusing to duplicate the dangerous factional pamphlet debates that had helped draw the country into war. Traditional academic periodization has artificially separated the turmoil of the seventeenth century from the image of stability associated with the restoration of the monarch in 1660. But fears of returning to civil war survived into the early eighteenth-century, and this study shows that the use of scandal as a weapon of attack was one way authors responded to this perceived danger. They used titillating accusations to distract readers from the substance of divisive disputes and thereby elided and contained conflict. In order to understand the eighteenth-century strategy of obfuscation through scandal, we must understand both the seventeenth-century precedents in scandal and the tradition of polemics in the civil war.

Andrew Marvell's popular prose satire *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* (1672), most famous for its religious polemics, skillfully transforms early modern precedents to levy scandal against new targets and thereby serves as a crucial transformative example of how this discourse of scandal emerges and gains cultural currency as a popular mode of adversarial exchange. Marvell's tract was instrumental in

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<sup>29</sup> See Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the culture of politeness: Moral discourse and cultural politics in early eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3-10.

sanctioning the use of personal scandal as a weapon of attack in the mainstream commercial press. His strategy grew out of early modern precedents, including tactics used in civil war polemics, even as it reacts against and attempts to temper the escalation of divisive conflict. Although Marvell's nineteenth- and twentieth-century reputation was built on his poetry, his seventeenth- and eighteenth-century reputation rested on his politics and prose satires, particularly the "hugely successful" *Rehearsal Transpros'd*, which intervened in contentious religious-constitutional debates of the time.<sup>30</sup> The tract refutes Anglican cleric Samuel Parker's argument for strict religious conformity to the Church of England, but throughout the prose satire, Marvell embeds calumnious sexual secrets about Parker within his larger constitutional-religious polemics. In using these attacks against Parker, Marvell merges the tradition of two early modern discourses—illicit sexual libels against the court (or the civil war government) and the rhetoric of anti-popery—and redirects scandal to undermine Parker's reputation. He strategically turns attention to Parker's purported sexual desires and deviancies. These scurrilous accusations trivialize Parker and thereby momentarily distract from and dampen the dangerous constitutional-religious questions at the heart of their dispute. In examining Marvell's tract, this chapter thus surveys the polemical work of scandal throughout the seventeenth century as the public distribution of scandal moved from illicit manuscript verses and ballads into printed texts. Marvell recognized the power of scandal to affect political discourse

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<sup>30</sup> Martin Dzelzainis and Annabel Patterson, Introduction, *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, by Andrew Marvell, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Patterson, Dzelzainis, N. H. Keeble, and Nicholas von Maltzahn, Vol. 1 of 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 20; also see Annabel Patterson, *Marvell and the Civic Crown* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 9.

and public opinion, and he harnessed this power in a very public and popular forum, which served as precedent for the eighteenth-century discourse of scandal.

Despite disciplinary conventions in periodization that turn 1660 into a firm line between the seventeenth century and long eighteenth century, the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 did little to resolve ongoing constitutional and religious conflicts that motivated the civil war. Tensions over the balance of power between the king and Parliament and questions of religious conformity to the Church of England continued throughout the late seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> By the early 1670s, the significance of these enduring factional debates had become clear in what Derek Hirst calls “the first Restoration crisis,” which primarily centered over the question of Indulgence.<sup>32</sup> The Clarendon Code enacted throughout the early 1660s and a subsequent Conventicle Act of 1670 sought to restrict and monitor religious Dissenters who refused to conform to the Church of England. But these Nonconformists argued for Indulgence and religious toleration. They argued for freedom of religious conscience against orthodox Anglican clerics, such as Parker, who insisted on strict conformity to church doctrine as mandated by legal prescription and upheld by monarchical authority. The stakes were high for both parties: for the Nonconformists fighting for freedom from state-mandated persecution, and for the high Anglican clergy attempting to insure the supremacy of their Church.

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<sup>31</sup> See Tim Harris, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660-1715* (London: Longman, 1993), 1-10, esp. 6 and 8. Also see Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), in passing throughout; and Gary Stuart De Krey, *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party, 1688-1715* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

<sup>32</sup> Derek Hirst, “Samuel Parker, Andrew Marvell, and political culture, 1667-73,” in *Writing and Political Engagement in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Derek Hirst and Richard Strier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 146.

Since Indulgence would allow for freedom of religious conscience, it revived fears of Catholicism, and despite their opposing stances, both the Nonconformists and Anglican clergy adopted what had become the traditional discourse against popery to support their cause. Resting on the premise that the pope is the Anti-Christ, the discourse of anti-popery emphasizes the papacy and the church structure which, according to the logic of the critique, corrupts true religion by mediating between the people and scripture. Rome stands as a threatening foreign other, for “allegiance to a foreign ruler (the pope) . . . [indicated] acceptance of his right to excommunicate and depose Christian princes.”<sup>33</sup> Some Anglican clergy feared that if toleration or Indulgence permitted Englishmen to pledge fealty to the pope, it thus threatened to pave the way for the return of Vatican rule over the English monarch and church.<sup>34</sup> On the opposing side, Nonconformists associated the Anglican episcopacy with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and thereby claimed they were combating the evils of popery by asserting freedom of individual consciousness.

Parker was a vocal opponent of toleration and Indulgence and supported the monarch’s supreme authority to prescribe religious conformity to the Church of England. But when Charles passed a Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, the balance of power appeared to shift away from the Anglican clergy. In this political context, Parker published a posthumous edition of a work by the former Archbishop of

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<sup>33</sup> Peter Lake, “Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice,” in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Longman Group, 1989), 79. On popery as Anti-Christianity and the pope as the Anti-Christ, see Lake, “Structure of a Prejudice,” 73, and his “The Significance of the Elizabethan Identification of the Pope as Antichrist,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31.2 (April 1980): esp. 164.

<sup>34</sup> As Hirst explains, “[b]y the end of the 1660s there had developed a thoroughgoing Anglican critique of non-conformist discourse, the means—it was alleged—by which old evils were perpetuated” (“Samuel Parker, Andrew Marvell,” 146).



Armagh in Ireland and attached his own anonymous preface justifying the tract. Bishop John Bramhall was famous for his defenses of the Church of England, and his tract, *Vindication of himself and the Episcopal Clergy from the Presbyterian Charge of Popery*, defends the Anglican clergy against Nonconformists' charges of popery.<sup>35</sup> Bramhall never published the *Vindication* in his lifetime, and in the preface Parker attempts to justify his decision to publish the posthumous tract. He suggests that he prepared the text upon the repeated insistence of his bookseller, and that Bramhall's argument is relevant because the Nonconformists still use the charge of popery against the Church of England "in every common and useful chance."<sup>36</sup> Parker's preface goes on to blame the Nonconformists for the civil war and accuse *them* of paving the way for the return of popery in England. Whereas Nonconformists associated the Anglican episcopacy with papal hierarchy, Parker suggests that dissent allowed Englishmen to pledge their allegiances to another sovereign.

Marvell's explicit purpose in the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, which was published anonymously, is to rebut Parker's preface. Parker provides a 94-page preface for Bramhall's 170-page tract, and Marvell provides a wide-ranging

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<sup>35</sup> John McCafferty, "Bramhall, John (*bap.* 1594, *d.* 1663)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman. 24 May 2007 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3237>>; Jon Parkin, "Parker, Samuel (1640-1688)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman. 24 May 2007 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21336>>; Hirst, "Samuel Parker, Andrew Marvell," 145-164; and Gordon J. Schochet, "Samuel Parker, religious diversity, and the ideology of persecution," in *The Margins of Orthodoxy: Heterodox Writing and Cultural Response, 1660-1750*, ed. Roger D. Lund (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 119-148.

<sup>36</sup> [Samuel Parker, ed.], *Bishop Bramhall's VINDICATION OF himself and the Episcopal Clergy FROM THE Presbyterian Charge OF POPERY, As it is managed by Mr. Baxter in his Treatise of the Gortian Religion. Together with a PREFACE SHEWING What Grounds there are of Fears and Jealousies of POPERY* (London, 1672), sig. [A8v]. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text and noted as "P."

326-page refutation of Parker's preface. In addition to logical, theological, and historical refutations, Marvell includes scandalous accusations in his rhetorical arsenal. He mounts a defense of conscience, refutes monarchial sovereignty over religious protocol, and attempts to discredit and trivialize Parker through barbed, sexualized attacks.

Marvell systematically embeds calumnious accusations in the tract in order to undermine Parker's polemics, yet these moments of personal assault against Parker interrupt the focus of the intense religious polemics and thereby diffuse dangerous constitutional-religious questions. In his satire, Marvell attempts to reach beyond Parker and critique the divines who similarly supported far reaching ecclesiastical authority. Paradoxically, however, the calumnious accusations undercut the image of Parker as a representative for the Anglican clergy as a whole and thereby dampens any escalation of dangerous religious debate. The "exposés" profess to provide a personal glimpse into Parker's life, particularly his life as a man—an individual cleric with needs and desires, such as a competing desire to satisfy both his mistress and his bookseller. Marvell exposes Parker's (purported) deviant sexual desires, ranging from inappropriate heterosexual desire to homoerotic desire to self-love, and repeatedly suggests that Parker's religiosity culminates in sexual transgressions. This focus on Parker's personal sins often obscures the intended critique of the episcopacy at large. Yes, the clergy might have similar failings, but the accusations highlight an intimate portrait of a single man. Nonetheless, even in this personal frame of reference, these attacks continue the polemical work of Marvell's tract: they undermine Parker's claim to moral and religious authority while momentarily distracting the reader from

the dangerous constitutional-religious debate at hand—a technique of obfuscation and tempering that Delarivier Manley would develop and perfect in her *New Atalantis* as discussed in Chapter Two.

Marvell did not have the last word in the matter, however, and seventeenth-century responses to his tract, particularly his use of scandal, have colored our twenty-first-century understanding of both Marvell the man and his prose satire. The titillating nature of these seventeenth-century exchanges and their enduring power attests to scandal's ability to distract readers from the substantive political contest at hand. Contemporaries immediately attacked Marvell's *Rehearsal*. Emphasizing and inverting Marvell's sexualized attacks against Parker, several of the pamphlets specifically question Marvell's (hetero)sexuality. *Rosemary and Bayes* (1672) impugns his masculinity by casting him as Rosemary, and another tract explicitly maligns his sexual and polemical prowess, suggesting that his satire provides "[a] *two-horned Argument*; whereas most men would have believe that he could have made neither two horns nor one . . ." <sup>37</sup> Twentieth- and twenty-first-century inquiries into Marvell's literary imagination continue to raise similar questions, some bordering on scandalous, about his sexual proclivities. Was he homosexual? Was he impotent? Was he subject to pedophilic abuse as a child? <sup>38</sup> Paul Hammond in

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<sup>37</sup> Henry Stubbe, *ROSEMARY & BAYES: OR ANIMADVERSIONS Upon a TREATISE Called, the Rehearsall Trans-prosed* (London, 1672); and *A Common-place-Book out of the REHEARSAL TRANSPROS'D, . . .* (London, 1673), 10-11. Also see Paul Hammond, *Figuring Sex between Men from Shakespeare to Rochester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press-Oxford University Press, 2002), 189-199.

<sup>38</sup> William Empson initiated such scandalous questions when he used biographical details to interpret Marvell's poetry; see William Empson, *Using Biography* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1984), 14-15. Cf. Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker, "Eros and Abuse: Imagining Andrew Marvell," *ELH* 74 (2007): 371. Cf. Michael Long, *Marvell, Nabokov: Childhood and Arcadia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press—Oxford University Press, 1984), 6-7.

particular argues that the scandalous exchanges in and surrounding *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* point to such questions regarding Marvell the man. Although he interprets the scandal in relation to Marvell's personal proclivities, which does not capture the polemical nature of the exchange, he rightly calls attention to the uniqueness of the attacks. In considering Marvell's calumnious assaults on Parker's sexuality, Hammond maintains, "just why Marvell's imagination should have traveled this path is unclear," and he concludes that the answer reflects some sort of truth about Marvell's sexuality.<sup>39</sup> While acknowledging the possible political motivations behind the attacks leveled at Marvell in response, Hammond insists that the "series of such persistent allegations" require critical attention, for "it is not common for such aspersions to be so specific, or to be repeated by so many writers."<sup>40</sup> Hammond's inquiries suggest the desire to make sense out of and account for seventeenth-century attacks against Marvell. But rather than clearly pointing to some truth about Marvell the man, the scandal and the responding pamphlets reflect the polemical nature of the attacks and the emergence of scandal as a prominent mode of adversarial attack in public debate. They do not merely reflect *ad hominem* attacks or provide clues to Marvell's sexuality, but rather they are direct responses in-kind to Marvell's own polemical attacks against Parker. The fact that these salacious slurs still affect Marvell's reputation some 450 years later reflects the powerful influence of such lines of attack to redirect the focus of attention away from the substance of

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<sup>39</sup> Hammond, *Figuring Sex between Men*, 188. Michael Long also read these moments in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* as a coherent trope, but he reads Marvell's Parker as a "carnival figure," that is, "a figure of gross and ludicrous appetite, sexually rampant and cloacally obscene" (*Marvell, Nabokov*, 159).

<sup>40</sup> Hammond, *Figuring Sex Between Men*, 203-204

the dispute, and although Marvell falls victim to these assaults, he helped pioneer and authorize this mode of attack.

Beyond Hammond's detailed attention to Marvell's use of scandal, critics (both then and now) primarily describe the scurrilous attacks as part of Marvell's overall style of wit or a general tendency towards railing, but these readings similarly do not capture the polemical thrust of the calumnious exposés. Pierre Legouis theorizes that as a "layman" Marvell did not have the authority to "interfere in purely scholastic disputes; but he could give clerics a lesson in raillery."<sup>41</sup> Even the most recent critical editors of the tract consider such railing to be part of Marvell's innovation in wit.<sup>42</sup> Such readings reflect Marvell's and his contemporaries' explicit use of the term *railing* to explain each other's style, but Marvell's attacks are not merely witty barbs or unproductive personal libel. They evolve out of early modern precedents of attack and strategically dampen significant hostilities.

Besides reacting against the dangers of civil war polemics, *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* also stands apart from the flurry of illicit political libel—or what Harold Love identifies as "clandestine satires"—that peaked from 1660-1702. These satires, which often still took the form of manuscript verse, could very well include sexualized attacks, were intended to destroy an opponent's political standing, and were clandestine in that they were designed for illicit or unlicensed circulation. Marvell's political satire often participated in this contemporaneous mode, and Love

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<sup>41</sup> Pierre Legouis, *Andrew Marvell: Poet, Puritan, Patriot* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 194.

<sup>42</sup> Dzelzainis and Patterson, Introduction, 12. On Marvell's contemporaries' accusations of railing, see note 82 below.

even examines his *verse* satires.<sup>43</sup> But as an extended prose satire, Marvell's *Rehearsal Transpros'd* is a different type of text than the barbed verse satires that Love studies. For example, in the verse satire *Last Instructions to a Painter* (1667), Marvell explains political crises, such as the Dutch victory over the English navy on the Thames, in terms of Charles II's sexual appetite and moral failings.<sup>44</sup> The poem documents sexual deviancies which are tied to the court's sexual and political corruption and therefore central to the political critique of the king's policies. Such verse satires helped pave the way for *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*. The fact that the political attacks against Charles are couched in terms of his sexual prowess may even similarly help diffuse the brunt of the political critique, but Marvell's target—the quasi-public Parker—and the resulting critiques are categorically different in *The Rehearsal*. Moreover, while Marvell's prose satire was an illicit publication in many senses—it was first published anonymously and unlicensed—the king was fond of it, and ultimately it circulated freely in the marketplace. Due to the king's approval, Roger L'Estrange, the licenser of the press, licensed it with a few alterations mandated (although not necessarily made in all subsequent copies and editions).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire, 1660-1702* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6, 7, 107. Although focused on satires that do not circulate through “the licensed press,” Love does examine some tracts’ “surreptitious printing” (*English Clandestine Satire*, 7). For Love's treatment of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, see *English Clandestine Satire*, 112, 114.

<sup>44</sup> See Steven Zwicker, “Virgins and Whores: the Politics of Sexual Misconduct in the 1660s” in *The Political Identity of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Conal Condren and A.D. Cousins (Hants, England: Scolar Press, 1990), 85-110, and his *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649-1489* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 90-119. Also see James Grantham Turner, “The Libertine Abject: The ‘Postures’ of *Last Instructions to a Painter*,” in *Marvell and Liberty*, ed. Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), esp. 218, 226-227; and Love, *English Clandestine Satire*, 107-116.

<sup>45</sup> For the publication history of the various copies and editions of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, including a discussion on the required alterations, see Dzelzainis and Patterson, Introduction, 22-36, also see 14-15.

Marvell's successful tract, with its various imprints and second installment (*The Rehearsal Transpros'd: The Second Part*, 1673), and the overwhelming commercial responses to it, which attacked Marvell in kind, illuminate the emergent cultural currency of scandal as an effective adversarial strategy in the print marketplace. The growing commercial value of such a mode of adversarial polemics in the late seventeenth century culminated in the publication of *Poems on Affairs of State* (1689-1707)<sup>46</sup> and the amatory secret histories of the late seventeenth century, which I will discuss in Chapter Two.

### **Scandal at Court Before and After Charles II: Marvell In Context**

Traditionally throughout the early modern period, scandal was used in illicit libels against the court or the Interregnum government and in anti-popery rhetoric that used coded sexual accusations to impugn the motives and allegiances of suspected Catholics.<sup>47</sup> Marvell's *Rehearsal Transpros'd* draws on these precedents but alters the object of attack and thereby employs scandal in the commercial marketplace for new polemical ends. Marvell uses scandal as an integral strategy for his refutation of Parker's religious policies, but in explicitly attacking the cleric Parker with sexual calumny, he insists on the relevancy of scandal outside of political scandals related to

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<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of *Poems on Affairs of State*, a published collection of (often satirical) poems that originally circulated as illicit "clandestine satire," see Love, *English Clandestine Satire*, 7, 149.

<sup>47</sup> I focus on the use of sexual libel in politics in early modern England because I believe it is the most direct precedent for Marvell, but the use of scandal in politics has a long history, even going back to antiquity. See, for example, the essays in *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800*, ed. Lynn Hunt (New York: Zone Books, 1993); and Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 5, 258-260, 264, 324, 361.

court policy, court favoritism, and questions of succession—the traditional contexts for scandal. Notably, in the tract, Parker’s sexual transgressions do not even provide an allegorical critique of the crown since in 1672 Charles passed a Declaration of Indulgence in effect granting toleration to both Catholic recusants and Protestant Dissenters and drawing a stark contrast between Charles’s and Parker’s positions.<sup>48</sup> In authorizing this new mode of attack, Marvell provides significant precedent and early indication of what would come in the use of personal scandal in the eighteenth-century commercial marketplace.

Sexual escapades at court were often publicized by rumor, manuscript, and even print throughout the early modern period; and licentious sexual antics at court had long been used to reflect corruption of the body politic. Scandals ranging from allegations of Anne Boleyn’s affairs in the 1530s to the Stuart warming-pan scandal in the 1680s revolved around the sexual activities of courtly figures and consequently were state concerns that affected succession, not strictly private events used for public ends.<sup>49</sup> As we will see, the sensational rumors that emanated from the early Stuart court highlighted the political factions and lines of political influence that developed

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<sup>48</sup> By the mid 1670s, Marvell’s stance towards the king had shifted, and Marvell wrote *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government*.

<sup>49</sup> Alastair Bellany and Michael McKeon both also note the political and moral relevance of sexual affairs at court. See Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2; and McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 507. The warming-pan scandal developed surrounding the birth of James II’s Catholic male heir to the English throne: English Protestants dismissed the queen’s pregnancy as a fraud and contended that a boy child was “smuggled into the queen’s bedchamber in a warming pan as she pretended to give birth” [Rachel J. Weil, “The politics of legitimacy: women and the warming-pan scandal” in *The Revolution of 1688-1689: changing perspectives*, ed. Lois G. Schworer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 65; also see J. P. Kenyon, “The Birth of the Old Pretender” *History Today* 13.6 (June 1963): 418-426].



from sexual pairings.<sup>50</sup> But illicit publication of such scandals also served ideological agendas as the libels interwove sexual perversion with contemporaneous political misconduct. Accordingly, throughout the 1640s and '50s, royalist pamphleteers co-opted the use of alleged sexual misconduct as a means to expose their opponents' political and moral illegitimacy;<sup>51</sup> and this method of political attack continued after the civil war. Post-Restoration attacks on Charles II's sexual profligacy reflected and critiqued the political and moral corruption of the court,<sup>52</sup> and Melissa Mowry illustrates that throughout the late seventeenth century royalists used pornographic images of the prostitute, the common-woman, to warn of the social, political, and economic dangers of republicanism.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See Bellany, *Politics of Court Scandal* and his "Mistress Turner's Deadly Sins: Sartorial Transgression, Court Scandal, and Politics in Early Stuart England," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 58.2 (1995): 179-210; "Early Stuart Libels: an edition of poetry from manuscript sources," ed. Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae, *Early Modern Literary Studies* Text Series I (2005), <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/texts/libels/>>; David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James* (London: Routledge, 1993). Also see Love, *English Clandestine Satire*, 12-15, and Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press-Oxford University Press, 1965), 668.

<sup>51</sup> See David Underdown, *A Freeborn People: Politics and the Nation in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), chap 5, esp. 94-95. For more on the "sexual libels" of the '40s and '50s see Jason McElligott, "The Politics of Sexual Libel: Royalist Propaganda in the 1640s," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 67.1 (2004): 75-99. For more on the mirror relationship between the sexual and political order, see Bellany, "Mistress Turner's Deadly Sins," 198-200; Bellany, *Politics of Court Scandal*, 2-3, 156, 164; and Hammond, *Figuring Sex between Men*, 3 and chap 3. Also see Stone, *Crisis of Aristocracy*, 667-668.

<sup>52</sup> Steven Zwicker, "Virgins and Whores"; Zwicker, *Lines of Authority*, 90-119; Paul Hammond, "The King's two bodies: representations of Charles II" in *Culture, Politics and Society Britain, 1660-1800*, ed. Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 13-48; and Harold Weber, *Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 17 and chap 3. Also see Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and politics from the Restoration until the exclusion crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 80.

<sup>53</sup> Melissa Mowry, *The Bawdy Politic in Stuart England, 1660-1714: Political Pornography and Prostitution* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2004).

Sexual politics and related scandals plagued Charles II's notoriously libertine court.<sup>54</sup> For example, a pamphlet entitled *Articles of High-Treason, And other high Crimes and Misdemeanours, Against the Dutchess of Portsmouth* (printed 1679/80) accuses Charles II's French mistress, the Duchess of Portsmouth, of treason for using her sexual relationship with the king to influence his policy decisions.<sup>55</sup> According to the tract, the Duchess used her intimate relationship with the king to override Parliament's recommendations and to arrange for private meetings between the king and Catholic, French ministers. While their extramarital relationship is the backdrop of the *Articles of High Treason*, it does not take center stage, except briefly when the articles warn that the Duchess has claimed that her son is Charles II's legitimate child and therefore heir to the English throne. Given that Charles's affairs were well known—the Duchess of Portsmouth had her own apartment in Whitehall, which the tract explicitly references—the scandalous allegation is not in the sexual relationship itself but rather the web of influence the French mistress has over the English crown.

Even well before Charles II's libertine antics, however, verses lampooning sexual pairings at court circulated in manuscript as part of the news culture of the early Stuart reign. Such early verse libels often targeted noble women who married more than once, and they attacked female sexual and patriarchal transgressions.<sup>56</sup> For instance, upon Lady Penelope Rich's death in 1607—after she had “separated from

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<sup>54</sup> For nice summaries of Charles' sexual antics, see Hammond, “The King's two bodies,” and Zwicker, “Virgins and Whores.”

<sup>55</sup> I would like to thank Megan Schenkelberg for pointing out this text to me.

<sup>56</sup> See “Early Stuart Libels” F, Q, H; Lindley, *Trials of Frances Howard*, 104-107; and Cynthia B. Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Castlehaven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xiii-xiv.

[her first husband] Lord Robert Rich and then illegally married” the Earl of Devonshire—one libel proclaims:

Here lyes the Lady Penelope Rich

Or the Countess of Devonshire, chuse ye which

One stone contents her, low what death can doe

That in her life was not content with two. (Early Stuart Libels B14)

The libel memorializes her by invoking and chastising her sexual appetite, which, according to the logic of the libel, required and was not even satisfied by two husbands. Highly publicized affairs, such as Frances Howard’s divorce from Robert Devereux and her marriage to Robert Carr in the early 1600s, were directly tied to political maneuverings at court; and the political implications of such affairs were publicized through sexually explicit verse libels. In 1613, Frances Howard requested that her marriage to the Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, be annulled on the grounds that it was unconsummated due to his impotence with her (despite his sexual prowess with other women). The nullity trial and Howard’s subsequent marriage to the king’s favorite, Robert Carr, spawned numerous libels, many of which attacked Howard for her role in the proceedings. Such manuscript libels partake in what Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae call a culture of “sensational aristocratic scandal[s],” which also included scandals surrounding the Overbury murder and the Castlehaven trial.<sup>57</sup>

Bellany and McRae note that “[a]s the nullity commissioners weighed the merits of

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<sup>57</sup> “Early Stuart Libel” Q. In 1616, during Howard’s nullity trial to her first husband, Carr and Howard were found guilty of poisoning Sir Thomas Overbury in the Tower of London in 1613. In 1631, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Castlehaven, Mervin Touchet, was found guilty of arranging for one servant to rape his wife and for engaging in sodomy with another servant. See “Early Stuart Libel” H and Q; on the Castlehaven trial, see Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder*. David Lindley calls the Overbury affair, “the greatest scandal of the Jacobean age” (*The Trials of Frances Howard*, 1).

the [Howard/Essex] case, court gossips and London newsmongers discovered that the unhappy Countess was planning a second marriage once the first was broken . . .” (“Early Stuart Libels” F). Already, in the early seventeenth century, scandals were entering into the commercial marketplace through newsmongers, but these verse libels primarily remained in manuscript because they were highly illicit.<sup>58</sup>

Although Howard’s secret plans to marry Carr were discovered and made public, the extant libels appear to express outrage at the already public facts and to condemn the participants for their sexual indiscretions, such as Howard’s sexual looseness. One sexually explicit libel suggests that:

She was a lady fyne of late,

She could not be entred shee was soe streight:

But now with use she is soe wyde

A Car may enter on every side. (“Early Stuart Libels” F5)

The last line plays on the pun between her second husband’s name, Carr, and carriage; and the verse mocks Howard by contrasting her supposed virginity at the time of the nullity with her rapid marriage to and “use” by Carr.<sup>59</sup> The last line of the verse is particularly damning since it suggests Howard’s deviant sexual positions. The maneuverings of the nullity trail, however, were not without political implications: Howard’s father was the King James’s Lord Chamberlain and their family held significant power at court; during these proceedings, King James made Carr, already

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<sup>58</sup> On the ephemeral publication of such dangers of verse libel, see Bellany, *Politics of Court Scandal*, 97-111.

<sup>59</sup> Also see “Early Stuart Libels” F5 notes 4 and 5.

the king's favorite, into the Earl of Somerset; and the marriage created a new political alliance with influential ties to the king.<sup>60</sup>

Such illicit verses also frequently targeted politically powerful men by suggesting their homoerotic desires or homosexual activities.<sup>61</sup> In 1621, Sir Francis Bacon was at the center of a controversy surrounding licenses to sell thread. Bacon, the Lord Keeper, certified patents to individuals who would then license the sale of thread. Corruption surrounding how the patents were issued led to libels about Bacon's sexual proclivities. One laments, "He lov'd her well but alas he went behinde / . . . / He should have done his youth less: his Lady more" ("Early Stuart Libels" M and Mii4, lines 4-6). Around the same time period, "Listen jolly gentlemen" details King James's "good sport" at court with his men and their masques ("Early Stuart Libel" L5, line 18). James is described with his "merry boys that with masks, and toys / Can make him fatt againe" (lines 24-25). The libel paints an intimate, suggestive portrait of James's private leisure with his favorites, a portrait that complements contemporary rumors and descriptions of James's private retreats to his hunting lodges with his favorites.<sup>62</sup> By labeling James's intimacies as "good sport," the libel alludes to such retreats hidden behind the façade of the sport of hunting. Further emphasizing James's transgressions, this suggestive image of James stands in stark contrast to opening lines of the libel which explicitly portray the voracious

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<sup>60</sup> See "Early Stuart Libels" F; Bellany, *Politics of Court Scandal*, esp. p. 16 and chap 1; and Lindley, *Trials of Frances Howard*, 83.

<sup>61</sup> I follow Hammond here in using *homosexuality*, as opposed to *homoerotic*, to denote same-sex sexual encounters. This usage distinguishes between actual sexual encounters and sexual tensions or desires, and does not refer to modern notion of sexual identity that are attached to the term *homosexual* (the noun) as it developed in the nineteenth century. See Hammond, *Figuring Sex Between Men*, 8-9.

<sup>62</sup> On contemporary rumors surrounding James's sexual proclivities and his hunting lodge retreats, see Hammond, *Figuring Sex Between Men*, 130.

heterosexual appetites of Henry VIII, who “would sware, and . . . stare / . . . and swive while hee was a live / From the Queene unto the begger” (lines 5-8).

Furthermore, the close pairing of homoerotic encounters with the inner workings of court politics attempts to influence public opinion. James’s court of men implicated in “Listen jolly gentlemen” included the king’s favorite after Carr, George Villiers, who became the Duke of Buckingham in the 1620s and who had great influence over the King’s policy decisions. One anagram explicitly proclaims: “GEORGIVS. VILLERIVS. . . . prince and people deluder” (“Early Stuart Libels” Pi4).<sup>63</sup> Given the system of political patronage and influence at court, the activities of Howard, Carr, and Villiers can hardly be considered irrelevant to policy decisions. Thus, Villiers’s influence over the king becomes a legitimate cause of public concern and inquiry.

During the English civil war of the 1640s, the use of ephemeral tracts to influence public opinion exploded as censorship disintegrated and each faction put its argument into print. Recent scholarship concurs that pamphlets printed during the civil war became an essential tool in molding public opinion on political and religious questions and that “appeals to opinion become central to politics.”<sup>64</sup> As Harold

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<sup>63</sup> For more on the role of libels in public debate, see “Early Stuart Libel” N; Bellany, *Politics of Court Scandal*, chap 2; and Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20-24.

<sup>64</sup> Phrase from David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 5. See Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*; Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 1-2, 26. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus also point to the importance of the mid seventeenth century even though they note the development of public opinion in the sixteenth century; see their edition, *The Politics of the public sphere in early modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). Many critics’ arguments also implicitly suggest the power of public opinion by the mid seventeenth century: for example, see Gary Schneider, “Libelous Letters in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England,” *Modern Philology* 105.3 (2008): 475-509; Douglas R. Burgess Jr.,

Weber, Joad Raymond, and Jesse Lander have demonstrated, these biting, confrontational, polemical pamphlets became another front in the war: making use of advances in print technology and cheap print, pamphleteers exchanged blows at rapid fire as they attempted to sway public opinion towards their cause.<sup>65</sup> Borrowing the metaphor from Marvell's *Rehearsal Transpros'd* (46), Weber notes these "printed words had become as dangerous as bullets," and Lander contends that a defining characteristic of polemics (in contradistinction to other printed controversy) is that it was "understood . . . as the verbal equivalent of war."<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, Zwicker and Lander document the "polemicization" of late-seventeenth-century culture and discourse, particularly the literature.<sup>67</sup> Lander observes a "broadly conceived polemical culture, one in which antagonisms proliferate, refusing to remain within the traditionally defined realm of politics." "[A] narrow focus on constitutional arguments," he thus concludes, ". . . fails to capture the extent or terms of conflict."<sup>68</sup> The widespread dispersal and accommodation of controversy throughout public life suggests that this verbal combat was displaced and masked behind a multitude of

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"Piracy in the Public Sphere: The Henry Every Trials and the Battle for Meaning Seventeenth-Century Print Culture" *Journal of British Studies* 48 (October 2009): 887-913; Jesse M. Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. 11-17; McElligott, "Politics of Sexual Libel"; and Mowry, *The Bawdy Politic*. In contrast, however, Tim Harris warns against "attributing too much influence to the medium print" alone in shaping and creating public opinion; see "Understanding popular politics in Restoration Britain," *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration*, ed. Alan Houston and Steve Pincus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 128.

<sup>65</sup> Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*; Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, esp. 11-16; Weber, *Paper Bullets*, 10-12, 18. Lander, however, "reject[s] the narrowly instrumental vision of print implied by the weapon metaphor" and reminds us that "print transforms its users" (*Inventing Polemic*, 18).

<sup>66</sup> Weber, *Paper Bullets*, 18; and Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 13. Lander, however, notes that the practice of using "print as a weapon" predates the civil war (*Inventing Polemic*, 27).

<sup>67</sup> Zwicker, *Lines of Authority*, 9. From Lander's *Inventing Polemic*, see, for example, p. 55.

<sup>68</sup> Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 18.

possible façades. As Lander himself contends, “polemic permeated discursive, aesthetic, and social practice,” and Zwicker emphasizes that “the traffic between politics and art in this age allows us to see that all the work of the literary imagination is embedded in polemic and contest.”<sup>69</sup>

In this context, scandal emerged as yet another powerful weapon in political warfare. Royalists, in particular, put sexual scandal to use during the civil war and Interregnum: royalist newsbooks, by exposing the sexual foibles of the opposition leaders including Oliver Cromwell, Henry Marten, and Sir Thomas Fairfax, worked to humiliate the leaders and delegitimize their positions by repeatedly associating them with a “leitmotif of perversion.”<sup>70</sup> David Underdown even contends that mid-seventeenth-century readers would have “naturally” turned to the “metaphorical language” of “sexual imagery and slander” to conceptualize contemporary politics.<sup>71</sup> But whereas the verse libels of the early Stuart reign were often circulated in manuscript or ballad form because of their defamatory and illicit content, the polemicization of mid-seventeenth-century culture and breaks in censorship regulation allowed such rhetorical strategies to migrate into the mainstream commercial press—a practice that continued throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup>

Accordingly, as we have seen, the polemicization of sexual scandal in the print

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<sup>69</sup> Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 35; and Zwicker, *Lines of Authority*, 2.

<sup>70</sup> McElligott, “The Politics of Sexual Libel,” 86, also see 75 and 81-87; on Fairfax, see Underdown, *Freeborn People*, 101-103.

<sup>71</sup> Underdown, *Freeborn People*, 103.

<sup>72</sup> Randy Robertson similarly suggests the long-lasting repercussions of polemical culture throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in his argument that authors and political factions use the “*subtle art of division*—the artful insinuation of divisive polemic into a discourse ruled by the rhetoric of consensus” and “apparent consensus” to get past censorship laws [*Censorship and Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England: The Subtle Art of Division* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2009), 27-28 and 196, also see 20-22, 207].



marketplace extended beyond the royalist cause of the 1650s. While Marvell may not have been the first to use the rhetoric of scurrilous scandal, his redirection of this technique to quasi-public individuals helps document the movement and popularity of such rhetoric in the commercial press.

In addition, partaking in this general strategy of attack—of using sexual secrets to discredit one’s opponents—English Protestants throughout the early modern period developed a mode of attack against Catholics, discrediting them by linking them to sodomy, homosexual encounters, and excessive sexual desire in general. Alan Bray demonstrates that in Renaissance England the figure of the sodomite became a myth to explain disorder in the world, including anarchy and treason. The image became shorthand for what was to be feared, and Protestants used such cultural associations as propaganda to condemn Catholics through the discourse of anti-popery. Protestants created an “identification of heresy with sodomy . . . of religious deviation with sexual deviation”; the image of the debauched papist became an “explanation for misfortune.”<sup>73</sup> According to Peter Lake, identifying behavioral markers, such as sodomy, became a strategy for marking and distinguishing popery from Protestantism and thereby containing potential threats that were perceived of as foreign. Lake summarizes, “for many Protestants buggery became an archetypically popish sin, not only because of its proverbially monastic provenance but also because, since it involved the abuse of natural faculties and impulses for unnatural ends, it perfectly symbolized the wider idolatry at the heart of popish religion.” While such attitudes may be most closely associated with the early seventeenth century, threats

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<sup>73</sup> Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men’s Press, 1982), 19, 27, and on sodomy or buggery leading to anarchy, see p. 62; to treason, see p. 20; and to disorder more broadly, see pp. 25-28.

and rumors of popish plots continued to surface throughout the late seventeenth century as well.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, popery was not exclusively linked to homosexual encounters. Frances Dolan argues that “[a]dultery supplants sodomy” in the seventeenth century, and as Bellany demonstrates, the discourse of anti-popery was broad enough to encompass multiple forms of deviancy, such as lust and sorcery, “all of which could be linked to the master-sin of . . . acknowledged popery.”<sup>75</sup> Marvell thus combined this discourse of anti-popery with the disclosure of Parker’s sexual secrets more broadly to undermine Parker’s moral-religious standing.

### **Marvell’s *Rehearsal Transpros’d***

While Marvell adapted such early modern precedent to his own ends, his arguments in *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* were broadly dictated by the specific arguments in Parker’s preface. Since Marvell refuted Parker’s preface piece by piece, a formal structure of polemics known as animadversion, as will be discussed below, his arguments and strategies were governed by Parker’s. Yet Marvell expanded and developed Parker’s personal or *ad hominem* critiques to incorporate the early modern tradition of sexually scandalous attack. In the midst of religious polemics, he inserts descriptions of Parker’s alleged perverse sexual proclivities. For instance, Marvell, sexualizing the cleric’s use of the whipping rod, suggests that Parker abuses his ecclesiastical power in the punishment of Nonconformists in order to satisfy his

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<sup>74</sup> Peter Lake, “Structure of a Prejudice,” 75, also see 80, and 79-83, 94. Hammond also provides a look at anti-popery and charges of sodomy throughout the civil war and into the Popish Plot of the late 1670s; see *Figuring Sex Between Men*, 150-171.

<sup>75</sup> Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture*, 1999 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 89, also see 6, 96; and Alastair Bellany, “Mistress Turner’s Deadly Sins,” 199.

sexual desires: “they [the Nonconformists] must run the *Ganteloop* [gauntlet], or down with their breeches as oft as he wants the prospect of a more pleasing *Nudity*” (RT 82). Marvell’s polemical argument became so closely associated with this sexualized discourse that in 1673 the Anglican polemicist Edmund Hickeringill caricatured Marvell’s technique of using scandal to undermine an opponent. Hickeringill imagines how Nonconformists might respond to his writing: “*How shall we blacken him? was not the father of this E. H. some Jesuit? and his mother a Strumpet? Was not the whore-son born at Tripoly?*” Later Hickeringill condemns such lines of argument: “What *desperate* wretches then are those *devilish* people, that pretend to the greatest fight of Religion and Knowledge of God, and yet censure, rail, blaspheme, lie, slander, revile, and speak evil of Dignities and their Superiours, without any remorse or check of Conscience?”<sup>76</sup> The content of the charges which each side levied against the other was not exclusively sexual, but as Hickeringill suggests, sexualized attacks were increasingly inserted into religious and constitutional debates. For his part, in *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* Marvell not only sullies his opponent Parker with questionable associations, but he also maligns Parker as accusations of papist policy give way to accusations of sexual deviance or impurity.

Rather than having its own clear organizing structure, Marvell’s central arguments against monarchial absolutism emerge from his point-by-point engagement with Parker’s preface. Formally, Marvell’s *Rehearsal* is an animadversion, a method of response that “typically consisted of point-by-point refutation in the form of

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<sup>76</sup> Edm[und], Hickeringill, *GREGORY, Father-Greybeard, With his Vizard off: Or, News from the CABAL In some REFLEXIONS Upon a late PAMPHLET Entitled, The Rehearsal Transpros’d* (London, 1673), 267, 325.

quotations from the adversary's text followed by commentary."<sup>77</sup> This mode, which depends on the printing press to reprint quotations from the opponent's original tract, mimics dialogue between the tracts and suggests a "community of discourse."<sup>78</sup> The ostensibly dialogic form of animadversion requires the second author to mirror the content and structure of the initial text. As Marvell laments in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, "I am forced to defer that a little, because there being no method at all in his [Parker's] wild rambling talk; I must either tread just on in his footsteps, or else I shall be in a perpetual maze, and never know when I am come to my journeys end."<sup>79</sup> Marvell's response balloons from Parker's original 94 pages because Marvell uses a variety of clerical sources and religious-historical background material, including lengthy discussions on the Laudian church and the causes of the civil war, to refute Parker. But rather than engaging in extensive theological debates, Marvell turns attention to various personal attacks, especially calumnious titillating episodes.<sup>80</sup> Most prominently, Marvell lashes Parker for locating Geneva on the south, rather than west, side of Lake Lemane (RT 69); and while Parker admits that "*Matters of a*

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<sup>77</sup> Dzelzainis and Patterson, Introduction, 10. On the various "variations" or "modes" of animadversion, see their Introduction, 10-11, and Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 211-14.

<sup>78</sup> Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 205. On the relation to print technology, see Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 177-180.

<sup>79</sup> Andrew Marvell, *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Annabel Patterson, Dzelzainis, N. H. Keeble, and Nicholas von Maltzahn, Vol. 1 of 2 (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 124. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text and noted as "RT."

<sup>80</sup> Cf. to Thomas Wheeler and John Wallace who attribute Marvell's refusal to detail his own religious policies in favor of toleration as a political calculation in deference to the King's attempt to pass the Declaration of Indulgence; see Wheeler, *Andrew Marvell Revisited* (New York: Twayne—Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1996), 140, 142; and Wallace, *Destiny His Choice, The Loyalty of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 190. Cf. their reasoning to Raymond A. Anselment, "Satiric Strategy in Marvell's 'The Rehearsal Transpros'd,'" *Modern Philology* 68.2 (Nov. 1970): 140, 147; and John S. Coolidge, "Martin Marprelate, Marvell, and *Decorum Personae* as a Satirical Theme" *PMLA* 74.5 (Dec. 1959): 530-532.

*closer and more comfortable importance to [him] self and [his] own Affairs*” kept him from more quickly completing his preface and publishing the tract (P A2[r]), Marvell jabs that this item of “*closer . . . importance*” was a woman (RT 47). As the tract continues, Marvell further exposes Parker’s alleged sexual appetites and lusts, which include Parker’s attention to his (various) mistresses, his abortive seduction of gentlewomen at prayer, his autoeroticism, and the pleasure he receives from male nudity while whipping boys.

As the form of animadversion dictates, Marvell’s accusations are led by Parker’s own attacks against others. Although Parker does not use the discourse of sexual scandal, his anti-papal rhetoric and use of *ad hominem* attack encourage and even legitimize Marvell’s use of scandal. Marvell inverts the charge of popery that Parker levels against the Nonconformists, and then expanding this line of attack, Marvell draws on long-standing prejudices that associate Catholicism with sexual deviancy. In his preface, Parker first accuses the Dissenters of paving the path for the return of Catholicism. He insists that their “Tools to destroy the Church of England . . . [may] make a free and unobstructed passage for the return of Popery in Glory and Triumph” (P [e7v]). Although Marvell insists that Parker invents the specter of popery to justify his preface (RT 714-175), Marvell then turns the accusation of popery against Parker and the Anglican divines for insisting on the supremacy of the monarch to enforce religious conformity. N. H. Keeble, in one of the most sophisticated and compelling readings of Marvell’s overall project in *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*, argues that Marvell provides an aesthetic critique of Parker’s style in order to prove that style expresses ecclesiastical allegiances. Marvell endorses “the

moderate, the considered, the straightforward,” which “in its plainness, recalls the values of the primitive church” whereas Parker’s exaggerated, indecorous style is associated with tyranny over liberty and abuse of power.<sup>81</sup> Hence, Parker is aligned with popery—the very association he attributes to (and condemns in) the Nonconformists—and Marvell explicitly develops this association within the tract when he declares that Parker’s attempt to control the crown “is indeed something like the return of Popery” (RT 179). Marvell associates Parker’s clerical emphasis on ceremony, ritual, and supreme ecclesiastical power with Rome’s abuses of papal authority. In addition to linking Parker to Catholic hierarchy, Marvell also invokes the sexual attacks that were part of the discourse of anti-popery. As we will see, his sexual accusations against Parker expose a perverted religiosity; he frequently references Parker’s homoerotic inclinations and an autoeroticism that conflates religious and sexual ecstasy.

Marvell’s contemporaries designated his style of critique in *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* as railing, but this terminology is designed to dismiss and minimize the significance of both his sexual and religious attacks. In *S’too him Bayes* (1673), *THE TRANSPROSER REHEARS’D* (1673), and *SOBER REFLECTIONS, OR, A Solid Confutation Of Mr. Andrew Marvel’s WORKS* (1674) this complaint encompasses

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<sup>81</sup> N. H. Keeble, “Why Transprose *The Rehearsal*?” in *Marvell and Liberty*, ed. Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 259. Cf. Annabel M. Patterson, *Marvell: The Writer in Public Life* (Essex, England: Longman—Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 110. Also see Anselment, “Satiric Strategy in Marvell’s,” esp. 140-41, 147; Annabel M. Patterson, *Marvell and the Civic Crown* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 8; M. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyd Thomas, *Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 104; and Raymond A. Anselment, “‘Betwixt Jest and Earnest’: Ironic Reversal in Andrew Marvell’s ‘The Rehearsal Transpros’d,’” *The Modern Language Review* 66.2 (April 1971): 291. Coolidge discusses this in terms of the aesthetic of decorum; see “Martin Marprelate, Marvell, and *Decorum Personae*,” 526-32.

both Marvell's character assassinations and religious polemics. In *S'too him Bayes* the anonymous author condemns Marvell for his "Talent does not consist in Talking . . . but in railing at Bayes." *Sober Reflections* describes Marvell's "Workes being . . . beautified with choice pieces of Poetry, like a Cow-turn stuck with Gillyflowers," and suggests that "railing is as natural as habitual" to Marvell. Marvell's railing, however, is not only tied to his sexual jabs at Parker. The *Transproser Rehears'd* specifically denounces Marvell's "Scripture Railyry." This tract also lays out the most extensive analysis of Marvell's style, which includes rallying a "troop of Boyes and Women" on the street, rousing his readers' passions, and using labels, such as "Buffoons" and "Roman-Empire," to attack his opponents.<sup>82</sup> By categorizing these polemical arguments as railing, Marvell's opponents can quickly dispose of them on grounds of decorum, and avoid the logic of the argument.

In fact, both Marvell and Parker accuse the writers before them of railing as well. This posture of simultaneously condemning and employing railing is particularly appropriate for the form of animadversion since the form presupposes that the respondent uses the earlier author's argument as the basis of his own tract. Marvell repeatedly takes note of Parker's railing: Marvell warns that Parker will have to consider whether "the good that he hath done by Railing [at the Nonconformists] do countervail the damage with both he in particular and the Cause he labours, have suffered by it" (RT 126); Marvell insists, "I never saw a man thorow all his three

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<sup>82</sup> *S'too him Bayes: Or Some OBSERVATIONS Upon the HUMOUR of Writing Rehearsal's Transpros'd* (Oxon, 1673), 10; [Theophilus Thorowthistle,] *SOBER REFLECTIONS, OR, A Solid Confutation Of Mr. Andrew Marvel's WORKS, In a Letter Ab Ignoto ad Ignotvm* (London, 1674), 2, 3; *THE TRANSPROSER REHEARS'D: OR THE Fifth ACT OF Mr. BAYES's PLAY. . . .* (Oxford, 1673), 144, 31-33 and 49. All future references to *The Transproser Rehears'd* will be given parenthetically in text and noted by "TR." Also see Stubbe, *ROSEMARY & BAYES*, 11, and *A Common-place-Book*, 45.

Books in so high a Salivation [doing so much spitting]” (RT 127, see n468); and he concludes that Parker “turn[s] every thing [he] meet[s] with into Railing” (RT 171). He denounces Parker for resorting to railing when he is at a loss for other arguments and for using railing as bullets (RT 172). Marvell laments it as the state of discourse while exploiting it, and Parker similarly accuses John Owen, who wrote before him and directly occasioned his preface, of “belch[ing] in the face of the Sun such foul and uncleanly Railings” (P a2).

As the form of animadversion encourages Marvell to respond to and develop Parker’s initial charge of popery, Marvell similarly appropriates Parker’s use of railing and *ad hominem* attack, and he then develops these rhetorical tools into a devastating strategy of sexualized attack. In this formal sense, Parker broadly licensed or authorized Marvell’s use of personal attacks. In the preface, Parker defends his use of railings against Owen and the Nonconformists:

. . . it is a sad Unhappiness to have to do with such an unreasonable sort of People, when it is impossible to make a just Representation of the folly of their Pretences, without upbraiding it: No Argument in so palpable a Cause can be duly urged to its proper Head, without some Satyr and Invective; so far is it from being any excess of temper, that ‘tis downright Dulness and want of Wit, not to expose their Persons whilst we confute their Principles: for how is it to be avoided, but that such Men must appear contemptible to all Mankind, that have so little Wit to believe, or so much Confidence to maintain such monstrous and thick Absurdities? . . . (P [b8v]-c1r)



Parker justifies his use of railing as necessary in order to depict his opponent's positions accurately; invective is necessary to the debate. Moreover, rather than reflecting the author's "excess of temper," such attacks are merely part of the entertainment—the theological debate would be dull and listless without exposing the personal failings of the adversary. Overall, Parker insists that he must expose his opponent's policies and person to public censure in order to ensure that the public is free from Owen's grasp. Parker is confident that, once the public sees Owen in his "own Colours," in all his "Pride and Ambition," they will "return to themselves" (P [c2v]). Parker is particularly focused on defending his tactics. He maintains, "it can never be pretended that he [Owen] was treated any worse than he deserved" (P [c1v]). But this defense of scurrilous personal invective licenses the use of personal attack as a necessary and just means of polemical warfare. Parker positions it as both a harmless style of entertainment and an effective rhetorical strategy to persuade the public. His justification of *ad hominem* attack also draws on well-established precedent. The Martin Marprelate tracts of the late 1580s combined *ad hominem* attack (sometimes even scandalous details) and religious polemics.<sup>83</sup> Hirst also notes that religious conscience, "[b]ridging the public and the private as it did, it all too easily gave rise to the *ad hominem* arguments" of the time.<sup>84</sup> In this sense, Marvell's line of attack reflects and augments the subject of debate, bridging the public with the intimate. In light of Parker's own words, Marvell's focus on Parker's private sins is

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<sup>83</sup> In his analysis of the Marprelate pamphlets, Lander even references the scandalous account of a Presbyterian priest's polygamy, and notes that the habit of using "the damning anecdote" goes back to John Foxe (*Inventing Polemic*, 96-97). Lander also suggests that "attempting to separate argument from abuse" may be anachronistic and inappropriate for the early modern period (Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 95).

<sup>84</sup> Hirst, "Samuel Parker, Andrew Marvell," 152-153.

necessary to expose his hypocrisy and one could insist that Parker “was [never] treated any worse than he deserved” (P [c1v]).

### **Samuel Parker: Don Juan, “Sodomite,” or Anti-Christ**

Marvell’s calumnious accusations in *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* are more than merely passing insults at Parker. Drawing upon the early modern precedent of scandalous political attacks and Parker’s authorization of *ad hominem* attacks, Marvell provides sustained, scandalous revelations of Parker’s private secrets. Since these revelations are directed at a quasi-private individual, instead of the court or political leaders, they do not offer the same political critiques as their early modern precedents. In fact, these moments in Marvell’s tract break from and thereby distract from the dangerous policy debate at the heart of his dispute with Parker. In documenting Parker’s sexual deviancies, Marvell thus transforms civil war polemics to prevent his pamphlet from becoming another round of “paper bullets.”<sup>85</sup>

Perhaps most infamously, in the opening pages of *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*, Marvell first exposes Parker’s sexual appetite. Parker opens his preface by referencing the “*Matters of a closer and more comfortable importance*” that kept him from publishing until he could not but “*yield*” to his bookseller’s “*importunity*” to finish the tract (P A2). Marvell, turning this language against Parker, concludes that this “*Closer Importance*” must refer to “a Female” for it is “fit that all business,” even the demands of his bookseller, “should have given place to the work of Propagation.” After all, “Who could in reason expect that a man should in the same moments undertake the labour of an Author and a Father?” (RT 47). Yet in the end, a book, not

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<sup>85</sup> Term borrowed from Weber’s *Paper Bullets*.

a child, is produced. Marvell mocks Parker for using “*every fragment of time that he could get into his own disposal, to gratify the Importunity of the Bookseller*” (RT 47, also see P A2-[A2v]). Parker’s “Civility” to his bookseller is contrasted to his inattention to his mistress: “[h]is Mistris her self could not have endeared a Favour so nicely, nor granted it with more sweetness” (RT 47). Marvell’s scandalous reading of “Closer Importance” initially seems to suggest that Parker is appropriately led by his sexual appetite, that he delays his work to attend to mistress. For instance, Martin Dzelzainis and Annabel Patterson explain it as a “reference to Parker’s wife” and track the pages in which such references are made.<sup>86</sup> Yet Marvell’s satiric critique is more scurrilous than such a reading suggests. In fact, Marvell’s posture appears to approve of procreative sex, and Parker is ultimately disparaged for ignoring this duty. What starts with the implication of Parker’s appropriate sexual appetite grounded in procreation devolves into undue niceties towards his bookseller and results in the birth of polemics.

Marvell’s diction continues to play on the innuendos surrounding the procreation of Parker’s preface. Parker claims that his attempt to satisfy the “Gratification of his [bookseller’s] request” led to hasty publication; the text was “ravisht out of [his] hands” before he had time to “review or correct the Indecencies either of its stile or contrivances” (P A2-[A2v]). Marvell contends that Parker is becoming an “Enthusiast,” a term usually applied to Nonconformists. Then, picking up on Parker’s own oddly sexual language, Marvell suggests that by publishing the preface in this manner Parker “exposed himself in publick” and that Parker should

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<sup>86</sup> Dzelzainis and Patterson, Introduction, 12.

have “considered whether it were necessary or wholesom that he should write at all” (RT 48). Marvell concludes:

But there was no holding him. Thus it must be and no better, when a man’s Phancy is up, and his Breeches are down; when the Mind and the Body make contrary Assignations, and he hath both a Bookseller at once and a Mistris to satisfie: Like Archimedes, into the Street he runs out naked with his Invention. And truly, if at any time, we might now pardon this Extravagance and Rapture of our Author . . . (RT 48)

The text as a reflection or exposure of the author is specifically imagined as a full and unwholesome nudity. Rather than providing a window into the author’s soul or the inner-most recesses of his heart, the text exposes Parker with his breeches down, a vision reinforced by the image of Archimedes running naked out of his bathtub into the streets (see RT 48n45). The juxtaposition of Parker’s aroused “Phancy” and lowered pants and his simultaneous attempts to please both his bookseller and mistress further conflate Parker’s religious polemics and sexual desires. His hurried publication, paralleled by Archimedes’s rush to share his scientific advancement, ends not just in publication but “Rapture,” a climax that conflates his religious and sexual appetites.

Although the opening discussion on Parker’s “Closer Importance” initially casts the discussion in terms of his heterosexual desire, this line of argument quickly gives way to a homoerotic connection to Bishop Bramhall, whose work Parker appropriates. Through an eroticized religious devotion or enthusiasm, Parker’s heterosexual mistress is recast as a *clergyman*, and a dead one at that:

I shall say nothing severer, than that our Author speaks the language of a Lover, and so may claim some pardon, if the habit and excess of his Courtship do as yet give a tincture to his discourse upon more ordinary Subjects. For I would not be any means be mistaken, as if I thought our Author so sharp set, or so necessitated that he should make a dead Bishop his Mistress; so far from that, that he hath taken such a course, that if the Bishop were alive, he would be out of love with himself.

(RT 56)

Parker's enthusiasm, which duplicates the excess of lovers, distorts the Bishop in ways that the Bishop himself would not approve. The charge of buggery hangs in the air. The relationship is not totally unproductive since Parker does give birth to his preface, yet, according to Marvell's complaint, Parker succeeds merely in reproducing a distortedly enlarged image of his dead lover's accomplishments.

Parker's treatment of his beloved Bramhall is then likened to Catholic idolatry:

“[Parker] hath erected him, like a St. Christopher in the Popish Churches, as big as ten Porters, and yet only imploy'd to sweat under the burden of an *Infant*” (RT 57).<sup>87</sup>

While this sexualized image offers semi-veiled commentary on Parker's religious deviancies, using the common trope of text as progeny, it also implicitly critiques Parker's mode of authorship, which further distracts from the religious debate at hand. Jeffrey Masten has demonstrated how throughout the seventeenth century, authorship was increasingly understood as a single individual author who was conceived of as the father of a text; in contrast, collaboration, a form popular in

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. Long who reads Parker's excessive praise for Bramhall in parallel with Marvell's descriptions of the pope's appetite for power, which occurs a few pages later in the tract; see *Marvell, Nabokov*, 161.

the earlier half of the century, was conceptualized as a homoerotic union and creative production.<sup>88</sup> Masten's paradigm helps clarify Parker's transgressions. Rather than attending to appropriate hetero-normative relations with his wife or emergent notions of the singular author, Parker turns his attention to Bramhall's text and gives birth to a monstrous distortion. In appropriating and appending a preface to Bramhall's text Parker engages in collaborative authorship.<sup>89</sup> This appropriation is productive yet deviant. He distorts the Bishop's theological positions so they would be unrecognizable to Bramhall himself, but the real scandal is the very appropriation of the tract to begin with—the transgressive homoerotic, necrophiliac relationship itself. Marvell, however, is also implicated in this scandalous mode of authorship. Animadversion is inherently a collaborative undertaking since each respondent incorporates and builds on earlier texts, and Marvell's *Rehearsal* produces a literally distorted version of Parker's tract, as the initial 94-page preface is transformed into a 326-page repudiation.

As the satire continues, Marvell conflates Parker's religious and sexual desires throughout the tract, and this conflation becomes the defining trait of Parker's deviancy. Marvell extends this pattern in his description of Parker as a chaplain in a nobleman's household, an appointment Parker held for Gilbert Sheldon starting in 1667 (RT 75n210). Parker's position, his "Patrons favour," and his "Authority" among the other domestics of the household (RT 75) lead to questionable sexual

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<sup>88</sup> See Jeffrey Masten, *Textual intercourse: Collaboration, authorship, and sexualities in Renaissance drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. chap 1, chap 2, and pp.63-65.

<sup>89</sup> On different forms of collaboration, see Masten, *Textual intercourse*, 14. Masten does not examine Marvell's and Parker's texts specifically, but his broad definition of collaboration suggests that their texts are ultimately collaborations.

transgressions. His “amorous Complexion” and his pride prompt him to abuse his position with the gentlewomen of the town (RT 75), but again, this seemingly heterosexual appetite ends in a kind of religious rapture. Marvell characterizes Parker as a cock among hens (RT 75). Parker’s position as chaplain gives him the opportunity to mingle with the gentlewomen, who “were very much taken with him.” The attraction blossoms as “[t]he innocent Ladies found a strange unquietness in their minds, and could not distinguish whether it were Love or Devotion. Neither was he wanting on his part to carry on the Work; but shifted himself every day with a clean Surplice, and, as oft as he had occasion to bow, he directed his Reverence towards the Gentlewomens Pew.” Yet Parker’s attention is suddenly cut short: “Till, having before had enough of the Libertine, and undertaken his Calling only for Preferment; he was transported now with the Sanctity of his Office, even to extasy . . . he was seen in his Prayers to be lifted up sometimes in the Air” (RT 76). Pride leads to autoeroticism. His sexual appetite is abruptly diverted into religious devotion and satisfied by his own efforts. The pleasure he receives from his religious performance results in a climax and ecstasy. While not explicitly masturbatory, his own performance pleases him, and his seduction of both the gentlewomen and himself represents a perversion of religious worship. The description concludes by emphasizing Parker’s ever increasing hubris. The “Courtship [having] no other operation than to make him stil more in love with himself: and . . . [being] without Competitor or Rival, the Darling of both Sexes in the Family and his own Minion; he grew beyond all measure elated . . .” (RT 76). Yet, importantly, Marvell goes beyond simply chastising Parker for the sin of excessive pride. Marvell once again establishes

an expectation of heterosexual romance which is thwarted, and referencing Parker as the “Darling of both Sexes” foregrounds the dual homoerotic and heteroerotic desires circulating around Parker. Moreover, the account does not stop there. The very absence of rumors—“I do not hear for all this that he had ever practiced upon the Honour of the Ladies, but that he preserved always the Civility of a *Platonick Knight-Errant*” (RT 76)—emasculates Parker and suggests a sexual impotence with women.<sup>90</sup>

In this compilation of sins, Marvell draws on and transforms the rhetoric of anti-popery. The close association between sexual desire and religious rapture, in which the former climaxes in the later, perverts Parker’s religiosity, especially since the last example is literally cloistered in a church. While not the straightforward accusations of sodomy that are perhaps most famously connected to anti-popery, these sins partake in broader charges of popery that are not limited to a specific sexual behavior. Dolan contends that “priests were always accused of both cross-sex and same-sex relations,” and Underdown notes “puritan prejudices: against the Court, the aristocracy, and foreign countries (especially Catholic Italy) as devoted to every imaginable, and some unimaginable kinds of vices.”<sup>91</sup> In short, “Popery . . . was commonly represented as antireligion, a complete inversion of the moral order.”<sup>92</sup> Just as Marvell accuses Parker of inventing the return of popery as a means to attack the Nonconformists, Marvell then uses this same rhetorical posturing in his argument

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<sup>90</sup> In contrast, *S’too him Bayes* attempts to turn this moment into virtue for Parker “left them [the hens or gentlewomen] as *Innocent* as he found them” (39-40). And in *Rosemary & Bayes*, Henry Stubbe attempts to discount the entire anecdote since, “[w]hereas if we understand any thing of this *Noble-man*, no *Women* resort unto *his Chappel*” (8).

<sup>91</sup> Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, 86; Underdown, *Freeborn People*, 95.

<sup>92</sup> Bellany, “Mistress Turner’s Deadly Sins,” 187.



against Parker and his ecclesiastical policies. Parker is not a Catholic priest engaging in sodomy in the monastery or violating his vows of chastity with his supposed mistress. Nonetheless, the compilation of sexual transgressions primarily exposes Parker as morally and religiously corrupt. The satiric charge implicitly extends to the Anglican clergy at large; Parker is one example of the common Anglican cleric. Yet framed within the larger context of his personal transgressions—his impotent heterosexual relationships and his productive yet homoerotic coupling with Bishop Bramhall—the reader cannot escape the focus on Parker the man. Since these descriptions of Parker’s sins are concentrated in the first forty pages of Marvell’s tract, his personal failings immediately frame the reader’s perception. In reformulating the charge of popery against Parker the individual Marvell diverts attention away from his substantive disagreement with church leaders.

In other sections, Marvell’s critiques of Parker’s homoerotic desire more persuasively extend out to the clergy as a whole, but even in these instances, Marvell’s sexualized attacks do not fully escape the image of Parker the man. In rebuking Parker’s tests for loyalty and submission, which went beyond the monarchial and legal requirements, Marvell describes the rigorous tests of conformity to which a tyrannical Parker subjects Nonconformists (RT 82). Marvell’s critique is couched as a story about Richard Baxter, a Presbyterian Dissenter. According to the allegorical narrative, as a youth, Baxter stole fruit from Bishop Bramhall and now “must be whipt for’t” by Parker (RT 80). Before describing the punishment, Marvell warns his readers “not [to] suffer themselves by the touch of [Parker’s] *Penitential Rod* to be transformed into Beasts” (RT 81). Marvell then depicts the last stage of

Parker's test: his victims are "subjected to the *Wand* of a Verger, or to the wanton lash of every *Pedant*; that they must run the *Ganteloop* [gauntlet], or down with their breeches as oft as he wants the prospect of a more pleasing *Nudity*" (RT 82). Who is this "he" that desires and receives pleasures from this nudity? Since the power lies in "every *Pedant*," Marvell suggests that Anglican divines led by Parker whip these Nonconformists with their breeches down; thus, Marvell exposes every pedant's desire. But Marvell specifically introduces this gauntlet as part of *Parker's* "Tribunal" and *his* test (RT 82), which simultaneously encourages us to read the pedant and his desires as referring to Parker in particular. If men are transformed into beasts by such trials, is Marvell suggesting that Parker's "gross appetite" includes bestiality, a trait used during the civil war to condemn a political opponent for sexual and political corruption?<sup>93</sup> Parker and/or the divines more broadly hide behind religious policy to satisfy their sadistic homoerotic lust, and these references to breeches and nudity once again connect us back to the opening descriptions concerning the production of Parker's preface. Marvell's contemporaries noticed these interconnected accusations and recognized the power of such scandalous attacks. The anonymous author of *S'too him Bayes* even mentions Marvell's repeated references to breeches: "*Britches* again: So often *fumbling* with them? What, art a *Taylor*? Marry pray ----He ben't *worse*. *Gentlemen*, have a care of your *Pockets*."<sup>94</sup> Here the homoerotic pleasure is positioned as a projection of Marvell's own lust, but the critique implicitly proves the

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<sup>93</sup> In contrast, Long reads this scene as reflecting Parker's "gross appetite," but he turns Parker into the beast (*Marvell and Nabokov*, 163). On bestiality and anti-popery, see Underdown, *Freeborn People*, 94-95.

<sup>94</sup> *S'too him Bayes*, 42.

success and influence of Marvell's strategy. The tract adopts scandalous innuendo as a weapon of attack against a private individual, in this case Marvell himself.

In Marvell's tract, the sins are Parker's, and the connection to the Anglican clergy more broadly is both affirmed and troubled throughout. Dzelzainis and Patterson insist that Marvell's satiric attack is in fact aimed at the clergy and Parker's party, rather than Parker himself. They contend the aim was "not so much to shame individuals" but rather to critique clerical practices and ornamentation.<sup>95</sup> Marvell's attempt to defend Nonconformity and promote toleration suggests that he must take on the Church of England, and, of course, there are moments in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* in which Marvell's religious critique explicitly and clearly reaches beyond Parker to the clergy in general (*i.e.* 75, 91, 161, 166, and 191). It may be safer for Marvell to attack Parker as a means to expose the clergy generally, yet the scandalous details and rhetorical techniques in which Marvell couches the critique hinder the tract from fully escaping the confines of Parker the individual. This limitation is particularly true of Parker's sexual sins, which are primarily connected to him as a person—his mistress and his self-love—rather than his religious policies. In Marvell's *Last Instructions*, the long list of sexual profligacy at Charles's court clearly implicates the king and his entire court. The closing dream sequence even imagines Charles's "efforts to satisfy his sexual desires" on a virgin in distress—naked, bound by her own locks of hair, blindfolded, and gagged—that represents the state of England under Charles's rule.<sup>96</sup> In contrast, Parker's gentlewomen

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<sup>95</sup> Dzelzainis and Patterson, Introduction, 15; also see Keeble, "Why Transprose," 251, 259.

<sup>96</sup> Zwicker, "Virgins and Whores," 102, and on the multiple examples of sexual appetite at court, see 93-97.

parishioners remain un-ravished as Parker's heterosexual appeal is subsumed into his own solitary climax.

Furthermore, throughout the last third of the prose satire, one of Marvell's primary strategies is to position Parker against the Church. After declaring that the only truth to be gathered from Parker's preface is that "the man is mad," Marvell goes on to unravel Parker's argument. Marvell contends, "it is very strange that, conceiving himself to be the Champion of the Church of England, he should bid such a generall defiance to the Calvinists." Marvell insists Parker's "Phrensy ha[s] subverted both his Understanding and Memory" and that "many of the later Bishops nearer our times, did both hold and maintain those Doctrines which he traduces." Bishops, including Bishop Bramhall, find no substantive conflict between Anglican and Calvinist tenets (RT 78-79). Marvell suggests that Parker's fanatical intolerance, not the Nonconformist's conscience, is out-of-line with clerical teachings. Such arguments are undoubtedly a rhetorical posture to defend the Nonconformist's theological stances while trying to appease the state. Nonetheless, at these moments in the tract, Marvell drives another wedge between his representation of Parker and the clergy more broadly. Marvell even insists that Bramhall would "Censure" Parker if he were still alive (RT 96-97); and Marvell hypothesizes that, unlike Parker, the Bishop was reasonable enough to see weaknesses in his treatise and know not to publish it (RT 129). Although Marvell goes on to critique Bramhall, Laud, and other Anglican bishops, Marvell explicitly attempts to isolate and discredit Parker. Patterson notes Marvell's "pains to indicate the catholicity of his sources," and argues

that he uses sources “nobody could possibly accuse of Nonconformist sympathies.”<sup>97</sup> He creates a comprehensive and unified Protestantism with which the devout Christian, such as himself, his reader, and even the Nonconformist, can identify but which excludes Parker.<sup>98</sup>

Marvell’s attempt to implicate the Church of England more broadly is also hampered by his own musings on the efficacy of rhetorical persuasion. He doubts that religious polemic will bring religious harmony, and these reflections deflate and undermine the power of his own religious arguments. Faced with the futility of religious debate, readers are left with the titillating power of salacious personal details. Early in *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*, Marvell sarcastically praises Bramhall’s “most glorious Design, to reconcile all the Churches [Catholic and Protestant] to one Doctrine and Communion” and questions the Bishop’s motives with an aside that some may undertake such a design to consolidate their own power over such doctrine. He laments, “[the reconciliation of the Roman to the Protestant church] is a thing rather to be wished and prayed for, than to be expected from these kind of endeavours” (RT 58). While Marvell’s lament may be sarcastic, the limit of Bramhall’s power to effect such change is undeniable. Marvell continues, “Man must have a vast opinion of his own sufficiency, that [he] can think he may by his Oratory or Reason, either in his own time, or [any future time] . . . so far perswade and fascinate the Roman-Church.” The Roman Church has “interwoven” itself with

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<sup>97</sup> Patterson, *Public Life*, 126.

<sup>98</sup> Marvell’s diction positions him as a third party to the Nonconformists. He consistently refers to the Nonconformists in the third person to separate his own beliefs from theirs and to position himself as a rational and compassionate moderate. For examples, see *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*, 148, 149, 151, 152, 154, 167, and 182. On the unifying effects of anti-popery, see Lake, “Structure of a Prejudice,” 82 and his “Identification of the Pope as Antichrist,” 163.

secular interests and monarchical power, and only God, “in his own time, and by the inscrutable methods of his Providence” can bring about such change. “In the mean time such Projects are fit for Pregnant Scholars that have nothing else to do . . . but [Marvell] never saw that they came to use or Possibility” (RT 58). Marvell’s sarcasm is clearly directed at prideful pedants who think they can solve such divine matters. He mocks the very project of human reconciliation: he asks what they would do for Bibles if it were successful (RT 59) and insists that men who pursue such a project are “struck with a Notion, and craz’d on that side of their head” (RT 49). Nonetheless, despite such sarcasm, he is very much grappling with a serious limitation to the power of rhetoric. Men and all their rhetoric and reason alone cannot effect change and bring about religious harmony. Only God can restore such peace. This meditation on the limits of polemics anticipates Marvell’s most famous passage from *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*: “Whether it [the civil war] were a War of Religion, or of Liberty, is not worth the labour to enquire. . . . I think the Cause was too good to have been fought for. Men ought to have trusted God; they ought and might have trusted the King with the whole matter” (RT 192). This movement away from human agency towards divine cause suggests a futility that hangs over Marvell’s project.<sup>99</sup> This reflection on religious polemics contrasts with and thereby highlights the personal attacks against Parker. Polemics and rhetorical persuasion may not be able to change readers’ deeply held religious beliefs, but scurrilous attacks ostensibly avoid engaging in refined theoretical disputes. Instead, they gain their power by appealing to the readers’ appetite for titillation and by destroying the opponent’s reputation.

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<sup>99</sup> Dzelzainis and Patterson note that Marvell denies “human agency” (Introduction, 19).

Despite Marvell's doubts, his *Rehearsal Transpros'd* elicited numerous responses, particularly responses that adopted his use of scandal in political discourse, and these adversarial exchanges stand as significant precedent for the eighteenth-century use of scandal as a polemical tool against both political and cultural opponents. As Hammond documents, references to Marvell's impotence abound in these responses.<sup>100</sup> The author of the *Transproser Rehears'd*, insisting that he will "now in imitation of our Author proceed to [Marvell's] Personal Character," goes on to reveal that "Nature, or *Sinister Accident* has" castrated Marvell (TR 134). The tract imagines Marvell fishing and "lolling" in solitary enjoyment on the shore of Lake Lemane. In this scene, "old Joan," a pun on John Owen, is positioned as Marvell's "Mistresses," and while sunning himself, Marvel "on a sudden (varying his Postures with his Passions) raising himself up, and speaking all of the fine things which Lovers us'd to do. His Spirits at last exhal'd with the heat of his Passion, swop, he falls asleep, and snores out the rest" (TR 138). This scene, according to Hammond, "imagines Marvell as a lover, but only to mock him with the improbability of this scenario"; it "interprets any love-rhetoric from him as mere imitative posturing to occupy his solitude, and leading only to masturbation" as evidenced by a pun between Spirits and semen.<sup>101</sup> As discussed above, Hammond suggests these tracts are grounded in some kind of truth or contemporary rumor about Marvell. Yet more obviously and significantly this scene also replays the various insults Marvell originally leveled at Parker, which complicates how we read it as a reflection on Marvell's sexuality. In addition to positioning Marvell's religious influences as his

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<sup>100</sup> See Hammond, *Figuring Sex Between Men*, 189-199.

<sup>101</sup> Hammond, *Figuring Sex Between Men*, 191, 192n27.

mistresses, as Marvell does to Parker in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, this passage also rewrites Parker's autoeroticism in the nobleman's chapel. Here Marvell's religiosity is imagined as a romance, and through language Marvell arouses himself to some sort of quasi-religious, quasi-sexual climax. As Parker's heterosexual conquest is aborted for his own solitary pleasure, here Marvell's pleasure is also aborted. His "Spirits" are exhaled in the "heat of his Passion," but this release seems incomplete as he immediately swoons into a sleep where he "snores out the rest." Nonetheless, the fact that, 450 years later, these episodes led Hammond to contemplate the nature of Marvell's sexuality over and apart from the religious polemics motivating the attacks shows the power of scandal to obscure divisive conflict.

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Marvell's barbed sexual accusations participate in and complement his overall polemical strategy against Parker and illustrate the coherent intermingling of sexual scandal with constitutional-religious polemics. While Marvell draws on established precedents, his strategy redirects the discourse of scandal from traditional uses that attacked members of the royal court or even civil-war leaders through charges of sexual profligacy. His alterations are a reaction to the dangers of polemical contest in the seventeenth century and momentarily diffuse the focus on political animosities. Parker's deviancies may suggest the inversion of religious order, but the public exposure of Parker's private "secrets" do not reflect directly on the state per se, especially since at this time Charles supported Indulgence to the dismay of Parker and other Anglican clerics. Dzelzainis and Patterson read Marvell's attacks as wit and unique jest, and accordingly, they conclude, "by successfully introducing wit and



fantasy into an arena in which brute intellectual force was hitherto dominant, [*The Rehearsal Transpros'd*] had transformed the rules of the discursive game. . . . [T]he lesson Marvell had taught a generation of Restoration and Augustan writers in his destruction of Parker was that ‘a Mastery in fooling’ was the most potent weapon in the armory of the controversialist.”<sup>102</sup> But Marvell displays the effective use of sexual scandal more specifically, and the overwhelming response in kind suggests the cultural currency of such lessons.

Marvell’s *Rehearsal Transpros’d* kept the rhetorical strategies and sexualized attacks of the early-to-mid seventeenth century at the forefront of the Restoration consciousness and began to move such lines of attacks outside the confines of the court. While subjects might naturally be concerned to know with whom their king or queen was sleeping and while those relationships might influence public policies—both legitimate concerns for public debate and satire—Marvell’s strategy and his opponents’ responses encouraged and reaffirmed readers’ interest in the sexual activities of quasi-public individuals as well. This strategy of attack flourished, and as discussed earlier, by 1700 Congreve’s play *The Way of the World* centers on the power of scandal as it circulated in the commercial marketplace. In Congreve’s play, private individuals are motivated by the fear that their sexual indiscretions will be exposed to the world in newspapers and through hawkers. Of course, Marvell and his respondents were not the first or only authors to deal in scandal. But Marvell’s systematic strategy of attack and his pioneering new use of old precedents helped establish scandal as a malleable polemical weapon, one suited to undermine new targets and dampen the dangers of political debate. Throughout the next forty years,

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<sup>102</sup> Dzelzainis and Patterson, Introduction, 21.

the various adversarial uses of scandal continued to expand as popular late seventeenth-century secret histories similarly employed scandal to make politics safe.

## Chapter 2: Titillating Distractions: Delarivier Manley and Politics as Sexual Scandal

As the previous chapter illustrates, allegations of sexual improprieties have always circulated illicitly around the royal court, and similar lines of adversarial attack were inserted into constitutional-religious polemics tracts throughout the mid-seventeenth. Yet a flurry of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century secret histories, such as Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684-87) and Delarivier Manley's *Secret Memoirs and Manners of several Persons of Quality, of both Sexes. From the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean* (1709), popularized the circulation of purported sexual secrets in print and legitimized scandal in the marketplace and in public discourse. Unlike Marvell who embedded brief moments of direct sexual attack within his explicit constitutional-religious arguments, these successful commercial texts continuously moved between veiled political critique and scandalous tales. Not only does Manley's *New Atalantis* recount purported sexual intrigues of political figures, such as a count who tricked his mistress into embracing another lover in order to free himself for marriage, but it revels in the titillating details of the scene: "with an amorous sigh she gently threw her self [sic] on the bed, close to the desiring youth; the ribbon of his shirt-neck not tied, the bosom (adorned with the finest lace) was open, upon which she fixed her charming mouth."<sup>103</sup> The popularity and commercial success of such prose narratives testify to the emergent cultural currency of scandal in the early eighteenth century.

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<sup>103</sup> Delarivier Manley, *New Atalantis*, ed. Rosalind Ballaster (New York: New York University Press), 21. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text.

John Richetti, acknowledging the commercial importance of such narratives, dubs them “*Popular Fiction Before Richardson*.”<sup>104</sup> But beyond the mere popular appeal of titillating entertainment, Manley’s narrative provides a political critique of the ruling Whig politicians and their influence at court. Manley strategically uses the scandalous details to distract from the partisan conflict at hand, while still providing a veiled political critique. Whereas the civil war had demonstrated the dangers in explicit polemical contest, Manley’s rhetorical strategy makes political debate safe by redirecting potentially threatening public inquiry towards questions of private intrigue, personal relationships, and sexual secrets. Despite, or more precisely because of, the overwhelming emphasis on amatory details in *The New Atalantis*, Manley contends for historical significance as an author who helped transform political discourse by sanctioning public inquiry into a politician’s personal life and thereby offering a safer way to conceptualize political dispute. This chapter clarifies her authorial claims and political intentions by examining *The New Atalantis* as a secret history with *English* precedents and models, such as civil war romances and Behn with her deeply political tracts.

Manley’s *New Atalantis* is inherently a political tract. Despite possible similarities in content, secret histories are not the same as erotic narratives of sexual desire, prostitution narratives, or pornography, all of which might also be scandalous. Rather, secret histories, also variously referred to as scandal chronicles or *roman à clefs*,<sup>105</sup> use coded names in order to narrate the reputed private lives of public figures

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<sup>104</sup> John J. Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: narrative patterns, 1700-1739*, 1969 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>105</sup> As discussed below, there is slippage between the terms, and there is critical dispute over the conventions of each genre. I will argue, however, that Manley’s *New Atalantis* is a secret

and thereby undermine those figures' public credibility. These texts provide veiled political critiques as they explicitly chronicle the sexual indiscretions of (relatively) contemporary politicians and royals, and they retell (relatively) contemporary sexual and political scandals. Published in two volumes in 1709, Manley's tract sought to influence public opinion in anticipation of the upcoming 1710 election when the Tories hoped to reclaim political power in Parliament and displace the powerful Whig influence at Queen Anne's court. Manley is careful not to emphasize sexual and political scandals among the royals that directly bear on the question of legitimate succession, such as the Exclusion Crisis or even the later Warm-Pan Scandal of 1688, which contested the legitimacy of James III's birth.<sup>106</sup> Instead she offers a thinly veiled account of the (alleged) corrupting influence that the Whig Juntos exerted on the later Stuart monarchs, especially Queen Anne. Manly focuses in particular on court favorites, such as Anne's lady of the bedchamber and groom of the stole, Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, who was a strong proponent of the Whigs;<sup>107</sup> Anne's ministers of state, such as John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, Sarah's husband; and other politicians, including party leaders and parliamentarians.

Manley's *New Atalantis* provides a survey of the recent political history of the island Atalantis (England) inter-spliced with salacious exposés of seduction and

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history.

<sup>106</sup> There are some notable exceptions, such as suggestions of William III's and Queen Anne's homoerotic relations (both to be discussed below), and Charles II is often alluded to as his mistresses are involved with other lovers. But even these scandals that directly connect back to the royals do not raise questions surrounding the legitimacy of the monarch's offspring. Rather, the more explicit references to William and Anne provide titillating details of transgressive sexual desires.

<sup>107</sup> James Falkner, "Churchill, Sarah, duchess of Marlborough (1660–1744)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. by Lawrence Goldman, Jan. 2008. 11 Feb. 2012 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5405>>.

betrayal. The framing plot is straightforward: searching for instructions to guide the education of her ward, the goddess Astrea joins her mother Virtue on a tour the island New Atalantis to observe its institutions and the manners of its people. They quickly meet Lady Intelligence who escorts them on their journey to the capital and uses the recent death of the King (William) as an opportunity to tell them the political history of the island. Along the journey Intelligence relates purported secrets from the private lives of the various people they encounter, a format which leads to an endless series of discrete private revelations that disrupt the larger narrative frame. Rather than directly revealing the Whigs' corrupt political dealings, Intelligence tells of their alleged affairs, illegitimate children, and abandoned lovers. These exposés are framed as the revelation of true secrets within the text; they scandalize the individuals and reveal their moral and corresponding political corruptions. Thus the narratives show how court favorites such as John Churchill used sexual intimacies to gain increasing political influence with successive monarchs.<sup>108</sup>

These salacious amatory narratives have long dominated critical reception of Manley as an author despite a growing chorus of critics who now regularly acknowledge her importance as a political writer.<sup>109</sup> Ros Ballaster coined the term

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<sup>108</sup> For instance, critics read Manley's depiction of John Churchill's early betrayal of his mistress Barbara Palmer (the incident referenced in the opening paragraph of this chapter) as indicative of his later betrayal of James II and as a potential threat to Queen Anne. See Rachel Weil, *Political passions: Gender, the family and political argument in England, 1680-1714* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 176; and Rachel Carnell, *A Political Biography of Delarivier Manley* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 174.

<sup>109</sup> For example, see Carole Fungaroli Sargent, "How a Pie Fight Satirizes Whig-Tory Conflict in Delarivier Manley's *The New Atalantis*," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 44.4 (Summer 2011): 515-533; Carnell, *A Political Biography*; Ruth Herman, *The Business of a Woman: The Political Writings of Delarivier Manley* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003); Melinda Alliker Rabb, "The Manl(e)y Style: Delariviere Manley and Jonathan Swift," in *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*, ed. Donald C. Mell (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 125; Eve Tavor Bannet, "'Secret History': Or, Talebearing Inside and Outside

“amatory fiction” to describe texts such as Behn’s *Love-Letters* and Manley’s *New Atalantis*, and her study has been influential in shaping criticism on Manley as an author. While acknowledging the political component of amatory fiction, Ballaster maintains that the “amatory plots . . . attempt to articulate sexual and party political interest simultaneously.” Therefore, rather than merely unveiling the political allegory or sexual ideology of the text, she insists they require a “constant movement between sexual and party political meaning.”<sup>110</sup> In particular, she suggests that Manley and Behn claimed a space for “the female writing subject as political agent” in their amatory fiction: their explicit focus on “active female sexual desire” veils the more “transgress[ive] . . . female political ambition” (*Seductive Forms*, 120, 116). With her focus on the illicit tales of seduction, the “feminocentric” nature of the texts, and their French romance precedents, she emphasizes the micro-politics of female authorship and the amatory nature of the texts. She thereby implicitly reinforces the critical tendency to privilege the salacious side of Manley’s texts.<sup>111</sup> Richetti’s *Popular Fiction Before Richardson* similarly emphasizes Manley’s romance narrative above other qualities of the tract and has also unduly influenced her critical

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the Secretorie,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68.1-2 (March 2005): 384; Elizabeth Kraft, *Women Novelists and the Ethics of Desire, 1684-1814: In the Voice of Our Biblical Mothers* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 51-52. Carnell’s 2008 study provides the most sustained and persuasive argument on Manley’s significance as a political author, but whereas I focus on Manley’s literary strategies and presentation of her own authorial authority, Carnell primarily examines Manley’s “development as an intellectually engaged political thinker [and writer]” (*A Political Biography*, 4).

<sup>110</sup> Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women’s Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 16, 19. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text.

<sup>111</sup> Ballaster defines “‘feminocentric’ [narrative] frame[s] . . . [as ones that] simultaneously address and construct an explicitly ‘feminine’ or ‘feminized’ realm.” Elsewhere she also emphasizes that these narratives consider “the question of women’s role in the production and consumption of art.” (Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, 42, 66).

reputation.<sup>112</sup> Manley's accounts of her own life, such as the history of her bigamous marriage embedded in *The New Atalantis* and her salacious autobiography (*The Adventures of Rivella*, 1715), have further contributed to such critical tendencies.

Beyond the micro-politics of female authorship, however, in *The New Atalantis* Manley contends for historical significance for herself, and we should recognize her achievement as a political author who helped transform public discourse by encouraging the personalization and privatization of party politics. It is not just a question of how Manley negotiated and exploited the constraints and demands of being a woman writer, but how she asserted her importance as an author. Instead of positioning herself as a marginal figure trying to achieve power in a female sphere, her text jumps into the partisan fray. Manley's opening dedications to the "well-known Jacobite" Henry Somerset establishes her Tory agenda from the outset,<sup>113</sup> and the timing of her publication intentionally coincided with the election of 1710, which came at a crucial moment of resurgence for the Tories. Critics even credit *The New Atalantis* in helping the Tories return to power.<sup>114</sup> But Manley's influence reaches beyond the election at hand. By celebrating and modeling the personalization of political discourse, works such as Manley's helped authorize and legitimate a new way for the public to engage with and conceptualize political debate.

But why, if claiming a legitimate public role for herself, would Manley construct her political allegory in the guise of illicit sexual affairs? John Dryden's

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<sup>112</sup> Even Richetti's revised edition, which amends his initial, dismissive stance towards the seductive tales, still focuses on Manley's use of amatory tropes; see *Popular Fiction before Richardson*, chap 4.

<sup>113</sup> Carnell labels him a Jacobite and calls attention to Manley's dedications; see *A Political Biography*, 168.

<sup>114</sup> For example, see Ballaster, *Seductive Forms* 128; Carnell, *A Political Biography*, 1; and Sargent, "Pie Fight Satirizes Whig-Tory Conflict," 530.



*Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) and later Behn's own *Oroonoko: or the Royal Slave* (1688) illustrate that authors could use allegory to comment on the court and political crises without using scandal as the basis for that allegory. Dryden's use of biblical allegory in particular seems to be a more obvious model for such grand political claims. Moreover, while sexual affairs may have obvious bearing on questions of royal succession and the lineage of nobles, how do private sexual secrets become the province of party politics in *The New Atalantis*? And how does Manley deploy scandalous narratives for polemical ends? Whereas Ballaster's argument suggests women turned to sexual allegory as one of the only avenues open to them to assert their political authority, Behn's *Oroonoko: or the Royal Slave* suggests otherwise. Michael McKeon offers a valid explanation for why authors critiquing the *monarchy* might choose an amatory frame and the genre of secret history; but it does not adequately help us understand Manley's generic choice, for her tract takes aim at party politics more directly than the monarchy. Noting that secret histories are the "private revelation of high public secrets" in that the texts disclose political secrets to individual readers, McKeon insists such secrets "will be understood in terms of sexual secrets" because monarchical succession depends on the birth order of a monarch's legitimate children.<sup>115</sup> As McKeon alludes to, sexual politics and scandalous political secrets certainly became the subject of public inquiry during and after Charles's libertine court: publicity surrounding his mistresses and controversies regarding monarchical succession pushed questions of sexual secrets and legitimate

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<sup>115</sup> Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), xxii and 472, also see 507 for further discussion in terms of Behn's *Love-Letters*. Cf. to Richard Braverman *Plots and Counterplots: Sexual politics and the body politic in English literature, 1660-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xii.

governance together and into forefront of public consciousness.<sup>116</sup> But rather than investigating the king's sexual secrets and questions of succession—questions in which sexual secrets legitimately and directly matter in the outcome—Manley's *New Atalantis* maps such concerns onto parliamentary elections and party politics at large. Party politics did *not* necessarily or inherently rely on this link between sexual secrets and political legitimacy, and yet Manley's secret history used scandal to comment on contemporary party politics.<sup>117</sup>

Manley's specific use of scandal allows her to air grievances and expose (moral and political) corruptions while sidestepping the deep factional divisions that persisted. By overtly focusing on sexual secrets, *The New Atalantis* makes polemics safer because it diverts attention away from heated political disputes and towards titillating private details. In particular, Manley's placement and elaboration of amorous intrigue distracts both the narrative and reader from the political conflict at hand. It thereby obscures the potentially divisive political critique and shapes the overall tone and emphasis of the tract. With this usage, scandal gains literary and cultural power as an appropriate means to conceptualize political disagreement. It encouraged the privatization and personalization of political debate and the

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<sup>116</sup> On the political consequences of Charles' licentious court, see James Grantham Turner, "Pepys and the private parts of monarchy" in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration: Literature, Drama, History*, ed. Gerald Maclean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 95-110. Bullard suggests that Whig secret histories of the 1690s critique the Stuart court by focusing on the king's mistresses and the court's association with sexual licentiousness; see Rebecca Bullard, *The Politics of Disclosure, 1674-1725: Secret History Narratives* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 45.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. to Bullard who argues that during the eighteenth century "sexual intrigue becomes less important to [secret histories'] arguments than political scheming" (*Politics of Disclosure*, 2-3).

sexualization of political leaders.<sup>118</sup> Melinda Alliker Rabb is one of the few critics to offer a developed analysis of the literary function of Manley's scandalous details. She argues that Manley's "excesses in the erotic works" comprise Manley's "own style of irony," and she contends that the "artificiality of [Manley's] characters" works with her irony to emphasize that they are "not fully human"—part of her political critique.<sup>119</sup> But Manley's salacious stories do not only function as ironic condemnations. Scandal offered other strategic advantages as well. Kate Loveman shows that amatory intrigue was commercially appealing and that tracts that were too straightforwardly political or contained "an excess of political plotting" did not sell as well. Readers wanted "the sensational faux-revelations" and sexually explicit scenes.<sup>120</sup> While Loveman's evidence and findings center on the late 1680s and '90s, her conclusions reasonably apply to authors such as Manley, who wrote a few decades later and used similar techniques. But beyond such commercial

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<sup>118</sup> Robert Darnton similarly concludes that scandal in illicit libels encouraged politics to be viewed through the individual as "[it] reduced power struggles to the play of personalities" and "avoided complex questions of policy and principle." "Public affairs therefore appear in libel literature as the product of private lives," but he traces the emergence of this discourse in late eighteenth-century France [Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 5]. Furthermore, while he insists that the libels deserve study, he still implicitly categorizes them as low literature (see *Devil in the Holy Water*, 5, 360). In contrast, this project shows how scandal was incorporated into a wide variety of texts that contended for cultural and historical significance.

<sup>119</sup> Rabb, "The Manl(e)y Style," 131, 128. Cf. to McKeon, *Secret History*, 590, and Sargent, "Pie Fight Satirizes Whig-Tory Conflict," 530. Cf. Rabb's literary analysis to Ruth Herman who insists Manley's "business" is politics, but then purposefully examines Manley's writings "in the context of contemporary parliamentary politics" (*The Business of a Woman*, 11). Catharine Gallagher extensively analyzes Manley's use of irony and allegory, but her focus is how Manley constructs a legal defense against libel and how these techniques move towards the emergence of fiction/fictionality. See Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), chap 3.

<sup>120</sup> Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008), 117.

considerations, the placement and extent of Manley's amorous intrigue is central to understanding her rhetorical and polemical strategies. Her romantic stories overwhelm the political content. This distraction, however, serves Manley's polemical purpose as it models and trains readers in a new way to evaluate party politics and enter into political discourse. Through its narrative strategy of focusing on titillating secrets, Manley's secret history promotes the personalization, privatization, and sexualization of politics.

Historians and literary critics alike have emphasized the importance of both literary forms and language (or "vocabularies") in crafting, attacking, and legitimizing political arguments throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>121</sup> Such discourse changes according to political needs, and this chapter demonstrates that scandal, particularly the supposed revelation of private indiscretions in secret histories, works as such a system of discourse by the early eighteenth century. Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker contend that the political, cultural, and thereby "literary imagination" were deeply intertwined throughout the seventeenth century. They examine changes in the "authorized language" throughout the period to illustrate how language both shaped and reflected politics. Specific allusions, rhetoric, or vocabularies composed "an agreed set of languages" or "authorizing languages" from which "all political life derived its legitimacy." Sharpe and Zwicker identify six such

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<sup>121</sup> J. G. A. Pocock explains such discourse as "the principal vocabularies or 'languages' which were available and exploitable for the conduct, discussion, vindication and criticism of political action and the principles on which it was seen to be founded" [Pocock, ed., with the assistance of Gordon J. Schochet and Lois G. Schworer. "Editorial introduction," *The varieties of British political thought, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1]. On literary forms, see Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. 1-2, 4, 12-13. Also Cf. Todd Butler, *Imagination and Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008), esp. 2-3, 15-16.

languages systems: “the languages of Scripture and the classics, of history and precedent, of custom and law.”<sup>122</sup> But scholars repeatedly note that the events of the mid seventeenth century, particularly the civil war, stand as a decisive turning point in political discourse. For instance, Sharpe and Zwicker point to reason as an emerging authorizing language by the end of the century.<sup>123</sup> Howard Nenner argues that fear of reigniting another civil war “temper[ed] the language of opposition” throughout the Restoration as the rhetoric shifted from “apocalyptic zeal for political and religious liberty” to “an idiom of religious conservatism and political restraint.”<sup>124</sup> Numerous critics similarly argue that the discourse of politeness and an emphasis on reasoned, measured, and decorous responses emerged in response to civil war polemics.<sup>125</sup>

By the 1680s, however, amorous discourse and plots of sexual scandal, desire, seduction, and betrayal emerged as another such polemical system of language<sup>126</sup>—one initially authorized by sexualized civil-war polemics and Charles’s libertine Restoration court; one that runs directly counter to the new emphasis on reason; and one that displaces the traumas of the seventeenth century by obscuring the partisan and divisive nature of current political contests under a layer of titillation. This

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<sup>122</sup> Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, eds. “Politics of Discourse: Introduction” in *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 1, 2, 8. Similarly, Murray G. Pittock, in his recovery of Jacobite literature of the “Augustan era,” examines the authorized language of Jacobitism [Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9].

<sup>123</sup> Sharpe and Zwicker, “Politics of Discourse,” 8 and 298n27, also see 10.

<sup>124</sup> Howard Nenner, “The later Stuart age,” in Pocock’s *The varieties of British political thought*, 182. Sharpe and Zwicker offer a similar conclusion, see “Politics of Discourse,” 16.

<sup>125</sup> See Introduction, notes 11-15 above.

<sup>126</sup> Bullard, reaching a similar conclusion, suggests that “generic conventions,” not just “individual words or even key phrases,” functioned as authorizing languages (*Politics of Disclosure*, 25).

language of scandal does not deflate political crisis by addressing politics in a more reasoned or restrained way but rather by shifting the overt focus of attention altogether toward the private and intimate. Ballaster is, of course, correct that by claiming to reveal private sexual secrets in a public manner and in the public sphere of politics, these texts create and authorize a space for women to be both the political and sexual authorities. But the implications are broader. The readers were not only women; in fact, the preface of the anonymous *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians* (1705) specifically imagines its reader as male.<sup>127</sup> This system of discourse thus suggests a new manner for all readers and politicians to approach sensitive political debates.

In the early eighteenth century, when Manley was writing, factional debates were still highly charged and threatening affairs. Since the war of words was accompanied by a war of bullets in the mid seventeenth century, new polemical strategies were necessary to broach these ongoing debates. Despite disciplinary divisions that artificially separate the turmoil of the civil wars from the peaceful restoration of the monarchy in the 1660s and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the threat of divisive political debates lingered into the early eighteenth century. In hindsight the civil wars of the mid seventeenth century stand out as the obviously violent period of disruption. But as critics increasingly note, fear of repeating the

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<sup>127</sup>[Joseph Browne], *The secret history of Queen ZARAH, and the Zarazians* . . . ([London]: 1705), A3. Authorship is now commonly attributed to Joseph Browne; see J. A. Downie, "What if Delarivier Manley Did *Not* Write *The Secret History of Queen Zarah*?", *The Library* 7<sup>th</sup> Series 5.3 (September 2004): 247-264. Although Ballaster focuses on "the specific address that Behn, Manley, and Haywood make to female readers," she exposes the "'myth' of the female reader" in such prose fiction and admits the possibility of male readers (*Seductive Forms*, 29, 2, 18). The popularity and effectiveness of Manley's satire also points to its wide readership.

1640s persisted throughout Queen Anne's reign as instability and political factions persisted, albeit in new forms. Jonathan Scott, in particular, shows how politics in late seventeenth-century England was heavily influenced by the memory of the 1640s.<sup>128</sup> Steven Pincus argues that the "Glorious Revolution"—a label he contests—was "more radical than previously supposed," and elsewhere he and Peter Lake argue that revolutionary changes continued to occur in both constitutional and socio-economic contexts until the 1720s.<sup>129</sup> Rachel Weil similarly suggests that Queen Anne's reign was not as stable as previously thought; Nicholas Phillipson argues that the very discourse of Augustan manners emerged to contain ongoing partisan debates about the structural relationship between monarchy and parliament; and Murray Pittock insists that Jacobitism continued to be a more substantial threat than traditional histories of the period acknowledge, especially when considering Jacobite sympathizers rather than activists.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, these ongoing struggles were carried out by newly formed and ensconced political parties, as the period is commonly known as the first age of party or the rage of party.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), esp. 4-8 and in passing throughout. Also see Nicola Parsons, *Reading Gossip in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 72-77, and Bullard, *Politics of Disclosure*, 3-4.

<sup>129</sup> Steven C. A. Pincus, *England's Glorious Revolution, 1688-1689: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 4. Pincus and Peter Lake, "Rethinking the public sphere in early modern England," in *The politics of the public sphere in early modern England*, ed. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), esp. 13, 17.

<sup>130</sup> Weil, *Political passions*, 164. Nicholas Phillipson, "Politeness and politics in the reigns of Anne and the early Hanoverians," in Pocock's *The varieties of British political thought*, esp. 211-216. Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 2, 3, 12. Carnell's reading of Manley as one such possible sympathizer supports Pittock's argument. See Carnell, *A Political Biography*, 4, 168-170, 177; also see Weil, *Political Passions*, 180-181.

<sup>131</sup> Braverman even refers to "[p]arty politics" as "a continuation of civil war by other means" (*Plots and Counterplots*, 9).

Manley's secret history the *New Atalantis* offers narratives of sexual liaisons, seduction, and betrayal that are rhetorically positioned as scandalous revelations about the private lives of political figures, and these very moments of revelation titillate and distract. Her generic and rhetorical strategies thus accommodate the need to forget the instabilities of the past and present. Instead of recounting the moment of revolution or specific partisan debates, at crucial moments in the narratives, she shifts to private intimacies, and the danger passes as reader and text are engaged in the salacious private secrets of these public figures. Critics have implicitly registered this structure without considering its significance or function. Rachel Carnell briefly notes that in *The New Atalantis* Manley elides the political-constitutional questions of 1688, such as whether James "abdicated" or whether "William was the rightful successor"; and she comments "the strongest political commentary is offered in brief paragraphs almost lost between lengthy, often salacious anecdotes about characters whose actions seem of little consequence."<sup>132</sup> But these scandalous tales are pivotal to Manley's strategy. This personalization, privatization, and sexualization of otherwise partisan, divisive, and potentially destabilizing conflicts work to distance current debate from the dangerous war of words and bullets of the past century, and it offers a language of private scandal to serve as political polemics.

### **Manley's Secret History: Defining the Genre and Identifying Manley's**

#### **Precedents**

Defining the genre of secret history and identifying its literary precedents clarify the polemical nature of the genre and establish the literary and political

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<sup>132</sup>Carnell, *A Political Biography*, 175.



traditions that Manley evokes by casting her political critique as secret history. Critics disagree on exactly how to classify the various amatory narratives of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and they often fail to define their terminology, which both leads to conflicting categorization and obscures the significant traditions that secret history perpetuates. Scholars who exclusively emphasize Manley's reliance on French heroic romances mute the polemical nature of her literary choices. Proper attention to English precedents, especially civil war polemics that used similar strategies, clarifies her intent. Her titular allusion to Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* also attempts to establish the importance and significance of her work by positioning it in relation to men's elite literature.

Most of the generic confusion occurs regarding the overlap and distinctions between *roman à clef*, scandal chronicles, and secret histories. Secret histories purport to reveal state or political secrets and therefore are inherently polemical.<sup>133</sup> Because of their often allegorical or coded narrative structure, they are closely identified with the French *roman à clef*, and because of their claim to reveal individuals' scandalous secrets, they are closely related to the French *chronique scandaleuse* or scandal chronicles, which are commonly defined by their focus on contemporary scandals, particularly aristocratic sexual scandals.<sup>134</sup> As a result of these formal overlaps and borrowings, the precise distinctions between all these forms become more theoretical than practical or functional. Rather than seeing these three terms as competing,

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<sup>133</sup> Although critics recognize secret history as polemical, they disagree on whether the genre can be used by both Whigs and Tories. Cf. Annabel Patterson, *Early Modern Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 184-186; Bullard, *Politics of Disclosure*, 25, 110; Carnell, *A Political Biography*, 161, 168; and Parsons, *Reading Gossip*, 38-40, 9-10.

<sup>134</sup> On the contemporary focus of scandal chronicles, see Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, 56; Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 113, and Bullard, *Politics of Disclosure*, 9-10, 90-91.

separate forms, it is more productive and accurate to understand *secret history* as an umbrella term for a broad polemical genre, one that easily incorporates formal conventions from the *roman à clef* and scandal chronicle. As Michael McKeon explains, the genre “presupposes the idea of a manifest and official but necessarily partial version of things,” and when “read aright, what appears to be an exotic tale or history turns out to have present and public application.” He rightly argues for a broad understanding of the genre “to include not only the narratives of the Restoration and early eighteenth century that explicitly call themselves ‘secret histories’ but also those (like the *romans à clef*) that signal their secrecy through allegorical, amatory ‘romance’ plots that sanction techniques of close reading to uncover their deepest public meaning.”<sup>135</sup> Manley set her text in this vein. Bullard insists that Manley was not actually constructing her text as the revelation of secrets since, for example, she used well-known scandals and “old stories” from the previous century.<sup>136</sup> Yet Manley’s full title, *Secret Memoirs and Manners of several Persons of Quality, of both Sexes. From the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean*, asserts that the text is the revelation of private secrets, and elsewhere Bullard herself admits that most secret histories recycled gossip from print or oral circulation.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, Manley’s publication on the cusp of the 1710 election suggests that she was in fact offering the public access to the corrupt secret workings of the government.

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<sup>135</sup> McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 470, 471. Eve Tavor Bannet similarly suggest the need for a broad understanding of the term as she compellingly demonstrates that “historical” tracts and “scandalous allegorical romance[s],” such as scandal chronicles, offered “the same ideological and political” truths despite their “different representational mode[s]” (“Talebearing Inside and Outside the Secretorie,” 379).

<sup>136</sup> Bullard, *Politics of Disclosure*, 90-91.

<sup>137</sup> See Bullard, *Politics of Disclosure*, 9-10.

Critics often employ definitional arguments to exclude amatory texts such as Manley's *New Atalantis* from the serious political work of secret history. Eve Tavor Bannet explains that critics use the narrower French romance terms in particular as a way to dismiss highly erotic secret histories.<sup>138</sup> But minute generic divisions cannot be maintained given the variety and versatility of English secret histories. Robert Mayer tries to distinguish between different types of secret histories based on their focus on history, their polemical nature, or their use of fiction. Although he insists that early modern "[r]eaders were quite capable of sorting out the three different types," his own extended discussion shows the overlaps and ambiguities. His discussion on Manley's *New Atlantis* as a fictive secret history downplays her polemical purpose, and he concludes by interchangeably referring to the text as a *roman à clef*.<sup>139</sup> Similarly, Annabel Patterson distinguishes between different types of secret history: notably, the scandalous political *roman à clef*, with its focus on morality, and the "mo[re] important" political secret history, which, if it includes sexual scandal, does so to "reveal how sexuality is merely one of the tools of political strategy."<sup>140</sup> But as we will see below, many of Manley's portraits show how courtiers use sexual intimacies for political gain, which problematizes Patterson's distinctions.

Trying to separate out these minute differences is thus counter-productive. It forces readers to dismiss or discount certain aspects of a text like Manley's *New Atlantis* in favor of other traits without clear or productive reasons. Critics like

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<sup>138</sup> Tavor Bannet, "Talebearing Inside and Outside the Secretorie," 375.

<sup>139</sup> See Robert Mayer, *History and the early English novel: Matters of fact from Bacon to Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 94, also see 97, 152-153. Mayer also notes the lack of critical definitions of the form; see *History and the early English novel*, 96.

<sup>140</sup> Patterson, *Early modern liberalism*, 184, 194-195, also see 184-186.

Bullard who narrowly define the tract based on a strict definition of contemporary politics elide a significant portion of Manley's political critique. Such definitional rigidity does not allow for the political continuities between the decades that Manley explicitly and intentionally highlights; it artificially limits our understanding of the political authorship Manley constructs for herself. Her references to Charles II's court are integral to her exposé on the current political corruptions. John Churchill's political dealings start under Charles's reign. Manley must trace the origins of his power to prepare readers for his later behavior and to illustrate the means by which court favorites use their personal connections to enhance their advancement under and influence over successive monarchs.

Recognizing *The New Atalantis* as a secret history, as opposed to trying to assess its specific relation to the *roman à clef* or scandal chronicle, also allows us to see the wide variety of literary and political precedent on which Manley drew. Her text steps into an established and substantial political forum. French heroic romance may be one influential source, as Ballaster and Richetti argue; but it is only one, and one that disproportionately ties our understanding of Manley to her sex and the micro-politics of female authorship.<sup>141</sup> Even Manley's indebtedness to romance was not strictly limited to French heroic romance. Nigel Smith traces the progression between English chivalric romance and French heroic romance throughout the seventeenth century. His focus on the political utility of romance suggests how the post-Restoration *roman à clef*, with its interest in the political sphere, actually draws on

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<sup>141</sup> See Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, esp. 42-66; and Richetti, *Popular Fiction*, 119-126. Cf. to Tavor Bannet who goes as far to cast doubt on these French influences; see "Talebearing Inside and Outside the Secretorie," 384n22.

earlier English romance traditions.<sup>142</sup> Critics also increasingly trace the genre from Procopius's sixth-century Byzantine historiography, *Anecdota*, which was translated into English in 1674 under *The Secret History of the Court of the Emperor Justinian* and which mixes sexual scandal and political critique.<sup>143</sup> This classical precedent further emphasizes the historical significance and intent of the genre, a precedent overlooked by too exclusive a focus on French heroic romance and women's "feminocentric" narratives.

Moreover, the inescapable overlaps between secret history and romance actually highlights an English, *royalist* tradition of using romance and amatory plots to provide political critiques during the Interregnum, a tradition most critics do not account for in their genealogies of secret histories.<sup>144</sup> By recognizing this lineage, we can more accurately see the claim to historical and political significance that Manley makes with her generic choices. Historians and literary critics have demonstrated that in mid seventeenth-century England romance was a polemical tool, and they have documented the royalists' use of romance to attack the Interregnum government. Victoria Kahn, Lois Potter, Jason McElligott, Paul Salzman, Elizabeth Sauer, and others suggest that the use of sexual libel and/or romantic narratives were a staple of royalist polemic during the mid seventeenth century—polemical strategies that are

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<sup>142</sup> Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 235, 361, also see 242 and 249.

<sup>143</sup> See Bullard, *Politics of Disclosure*, 1 and chap 1; Mayer, *History and the early English novel*, 95; McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 470; and Tavor Bannet, "Talebearing Inside and Outside the Secretorie," 376.

<sup>144</sup> Bullard argues that by the 1690s "secret history developed into a peculiarly English form of historiography" (*Politics of Disclosure*, 27). She shows how secret histories went back and forth between English and French translations, but she doesn't focus on the influence of romance, particularly royalist civil war romances, on the genre (*Politics of Disclosure*, see for example pages 45, 49).

also examined in Chapter One.<sup>145</sup> Saucer examines mid-century romances that were “[n]o longer distanced from historical realities,” and she specifically notes that “the overlay of governmental affairs and sexual politics . . . transformed the genre.” While she does not explain how we should understand the relationship between such romances and the secret histories of the late seventeenth century, she illustrates how royalists, such as Richard Brathwaite, used charges of sexual immorality and effeminacy to critique various political leaders, including Fairfax, Cromwell and even Charles I.<sup>146</sup> Similarly, critics such as McElligott have recovered a variety of royalist newsbooks that purport to reveal Interregnum’s leaders’ alleged sexual indiscretions, such as the Cromwell’s marital infidelities, Henry Marten’s whores, and Fairfax’s emasculation at the hands of his strong-willed wife.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Victoria Kahn, “Reinventing Romance, or the Surprising Effects of Sympathy,” *Renaissance Society of America* 55.2 (Summer 2002), 625-661; Lois Potter, *Secret rites and secret writing Royalist Literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), esp. chap 3; Jason McElligott, “The Politics of Sexual Libel: Royalist Propaganda in the 1640s,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 67.1 (2004): 75-99; Paul Salzman, *English Prose Fiction 1558-1700: A Critical History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 112; Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), esp. 160, 190-202. Cf. Amelia A. Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century English Romance: Allegory, Ethics, and Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 4-11. Smith shows how both the royalist and republicans used romance; see *Literature and Revolution*, 234-249. Also see Derek Hirst, “The Politics of Literature in the English Republic,” *The Seventeenth Century* V.2 (Autumn 1990): 133-155.

<sup>146</sup> Elizabeth Sauer, “Emasculating Romance: Historical Fiction in the Protectorate,” in *Prose Fiction and Early Modern Sexualities in England, 1570-1640*, ed. Constance C. Relihan and Goran V. Stanivukovic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 196, 195, and see 204-205. Potter similarly contends that “[t]he fact that some of the harshest portraits of incompetent kingship occur in the romance did not prevent it from being the most popular royalist form” (*Secret rites and secret writing*, 76).

<sup>147</sup> McElligott, “The Politics of Sexual Libel,” 75, 82-87; on Fairfax, see David Underdown, *A Freeborn People: Politics and the Nation in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 101-103; on Cromwell also see Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645-1661* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2, 10.

By acknowledging this English tradition, we can begin to reconcile the apparent tension between secret history's emphasis on openness and the Tory commitment to royal prerogative. While Sharpe and Zwicker contend that "[t]he very fact of war necessitated the language of code and cipher,"<sup>148</sup> Victoria Kahn concludes that for royalists romance "becomes an analytic tool for reflecting on the causes of the war and the contemporary crisis of political obligation"; and Potter documents how romance narratives and the coded allegories of *roman à clef* were particularly useful and effective means for the ousted party to sell their propaganda to the reading public.<sup>149</sup> Patterson and Bullard argue that secret history's emphasis on revealing state secrets inherently conflicts with Tory ideology of monarchical privilege,<sup>150</sup> but this evidence that royalists used coded romance as a key polemical tool helps explain how, later, Tories like Manley embraced contemporary coded histories such as secret history. This English tradition demonstrates that the genre fundamentally provided its readers with an alternative entry point into dangerous political discussions.

With her titular allusion to Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), Manley further clarifies her literary endeavor. By directly claiming Bacon as precedent, Manley signals an elite, philosophical (male) model of English authorship;<sup>151</sup> and while her titillating vignettes work to make politics safer by diverting attention from

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<sup>148</sup> Sharpe and Zwicker, "Politics of Discourse," 16.

<sup>149</sup> Kahn, "Reinventing Romance," 627; Potter, *Secret rites and secret writing*, see for example, 77, 79-80, 97, 107-109. Similarly Kahn suggests that in the 1650s romance helped royalist "make sense of the causes of the civil war" and functioned "as a compensatory fiction for" their defeated cause ("Reinventing Romance," 626); for similar arguments, also see Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 235, and Hirst, "The Politics of Literature," 137.

<sup>150</sup> See note 133 above.

<sup>151</sup> In contrast to my emphasis on Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Tavor Bannet documents how Manley alludes to and uses Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*: she frames her secret history as a "sequel to . . . [Clarendon's] narrative history" ("Talebearing Inside and Outside," 384). Manley thus further asserts the importance and significance of her narrative.

hostile partisan debates, contemporaries still recognized the polemical nature of her work. Manley's appropriation of Bacon's utopia offers an ironic critique to Bacon's vision. Inquiries into ideal governance are replaced by exposés on a corrupt system of personal influence at court, and scientific inquiry is replaced by gossip, scandal, and intrigue.<sup>152</sup> Women narrators also dominate Manley's remade *Atalantis*. Although literary scholars have highlighted Manley's amatory narratives and therefore her relationship to the emerging novel, Manley's contemporaries privileged her philosophical claims for the narrative. Eleanor Shelvin astutely notes that Manley's contemporaries shorted Manley's title to the abbreviated *New Atalantis*, thereby "indicat[ing] a cultural recognition of the work's place within an English textual tradition of political philosophy dating back to [Bacon's text]." <sup>153</sup> Shelvin and Nicola Parsons also examine the use of the term *Atalantis* in titles after Manley's—studies which demonstrate that contemporaries recognized Manley's polemical aims. Shelvin documents various Whiggish appropriations of the title and shows how Defoe's rebuttal to Manley's *New Atalantis* (his *Atalantis Major*) marks her text as clearly political; Parsons emphasizes that, after Manley's influential tract, the term *atalantis* became a trope used to denote secret histories, particularly Tory secret histories.<sup>154</sup>

Manley offers a new political discourse—one focused on the private, individual, and

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<sup>152</sup> Eleanor F. Shelvin explains that Manley's spelling of *Atalantis*—an "orthographic corruption and aural distortion" of Bacon's *Atlantis*—"marked for readers and hearers alike the text's ensuing perversion of [Bacon's tract]" ["The Warwick Lane Network and the Refashioning of 'Atalantis' as a Titular Keyword: Print and Politics in the Age of Queen Anne" in *Producing the Eighteenth-Century Book: Writers and Publishers in England, 1650-1800*, ed. Laura L. Runge and Pat Rogers (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 166.]

<sup>153</sup> Shelvin, "The Warwick Lane Network," 166. Shelvin also notes that Bacon's title plays on Plato's *Atlantis*; see "The Warwick Lane Network," 167.

<sup>154</sup> See Shelvin, "The Warwick Lane Network," 171-172; and Parsons, *Reading Gossip*, 38-40, 9-10.



titillating and therefore safer than mid seventeenth-century constitutional-religious polemics—but one that still consciously marks itself as part of the polemical contest.

### **Secret History in Contemporary Context**

In my emphasis on secret history, I do not mean to suggest that obscured or coded political discourse was the only kind to flourish in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Overtly polemical tracts remained, of course. In direct opposition to the secret histories, those tracts, especially those that reflect on Charles II's court, often *explicitly* highlight the connection between sexual morality, political legitimacy, and the dangers of repeating the 1640s. Hence, before we examine how the discourse of sexual scandal in secret histories works to temper political dangers, it will be useful to illustrate briefly how explicitly polemical tracts work in contrast. The anonymous *Articles of High-Treason, And other high Crimes and Misdemeanours, Against the Dutchess of Portsmouth*, in print by January 1680, lists twenty-two charges of treason against Charles's chief mistress of the time, the French Louise de K roualle, the Duchess of Portsmouth. As discussed in Chapter One, the twenty-two charges primarily accuse the Duchess of undue access to and influence over King Charles. Although charges are leveled against the Duchess of Portsmouth, they reflect upon the king and his perceived vulnerability to his mistress's charms. The opening charge focuses on the fact "That the said Dutchess hath and still doth cohabit and keep Company with the King." After accusing the Duchess of putting the king's life in danger due to the "nauseous and contagious Distempers" in her blood, the focus quickly shifts to her political influence over Charles. Through her private contact and

influence over the king, the tract asserts that “[s]he hath labored to alter and subvert the Government in Church and State now establish by Law,” and that she has worked to “nourish, foment and maintain” an alliance between England and France.<sup>155</sup>

Overall the tract insists that the Duchess’s influence threatens to undermine Parliament’s recommendations and prescriptions. Charles sexual immorality thus threatens to corrupt his political policies.

The sexual relationship provides the Duchess with her influence over the king, but details of their sexual intimacies recede throughout most of the document, and instead the tract explicitly focuses on the Duchess as a political and religious threat to England. After the opening charge, which suggests that the Duchess’s (sexual) disease threaten the king’s life, the tract only returns to their sexual relationship once. The twentieth charge accuses the Duchess of starting a rumor campaign to convince the public that she was actually married to the king and that, consequently, their son, Charles Duke of Richmond, is the legitimate heir to the English throne. According to the charges, her son represents an especially grave threat since she will undoubtedly raise him as Catholic. These rumors bring “great dishonor” to the king, but more importantly, they constitute a “manifest peril and danger [to] . . . these Kingdoms, who may hereafter by such false and scandalous stories, and wicked practices, be embroiled in distractions, if not in blood and Civil Wars, to the utter ruine of His Majesties Subjects.” Here, scandalous sexual relationships explicitly threaten to bring about another civil war as the French Duchess threatens to turn the monarchy

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<sup>155</sup> *ARTICLES of HIGH-TREASON, And other high Crimes and Misdemeanours, Against the Dutchess of Portsmouth* (1680), Microform, *Early English Books*, Reel 1414:47.

Catholic. In fact, it is only at this moment while focused on sexual secrets that the tract suggests that the Duchess's treason could lead to civil war.

The sexual scandal heightens the political and physical dangers whereas, in stark contrast, in Manley's popular secret history scandalous details work to diffuse such political threats. Much like the *Articles of High Treason, The New Atalantis* accuses prominent individuals, in this case Whig proponents such as Sarah Churchill, of undue access to and influence over Queen Anne. Although the crises of the 1680s, including the Exclusion Crisis and Revolution of 1688 have passed, critics suggest that Manley's narrative broadly condemns arbitrary power<sup>156</sup>—a debate ultimately tied to the hostilities of the 1640s. Yet, unlike the *Articles of High Treason*, there are few direct links to questions of treason, civil war, or crimes against the state. There are moments of explicit partisan commentary, but the coded nature of secret history, which replaces politicians with fictional characters and political secrets with sexual ones, means that the amatory frame overwhelms and redirects the reader's focus of attention.

### **Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters***

Critics commonly agree that Behn's *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684-1687) served as a model for Manley.<sup>157</sup> A brief examination of

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<sup>156</sup> Weil notes that Manley's novels reveal a deep discomfort with the outcomes of 1688; see Weil, *Political Passions*, 18. Cf. Rosalind Ballaster, "Manl(e)y Forms: Sex and The Female Satirist," in *Women, Texts and Histories, 1575-1760*, ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992), 220-221. Bullard argues that the genre of secret history, with its revelatory narratives, always argues against arbitrary power, but she does not classify *The New Atalantis* as a true secret history; see *The Politics of Disclosure*, esp. 3, 6, 88-101, 184-185.

<sup>157</sup> See, for example, Toni Bowers, "Behn's Monmouth: Sedition, Seduction, and Tory

Behn's text demonstrates that Manley departed from Behn's narrative structure, but that Behn served as a model in her re-conceptualization of political crisis in terms of personal, romantic relationships. Writing just a few years after the Exclusion Crisis, in *Love-Letters* Behn approaches the crisis, particularly the illegitimate Duke of Monmouth's attempts to take the crown, through the scandalous love story of Silvia and her brother-in-law Philander, a love story which retells Ford Lord Grey's real-life scandalous relationship with his sister-in-law Henrietta Berkeley. Behn seamlessly intertwines the romantic plot with the political one: the main characters are involved in both plots; readers learn details about the treasonous plot through dialogue and encounters in the romantic one; and the two plots are often considered analogous. The most compelling literary analyses of Behn's three-volume tract show how she maps public or political inquiries onto the private realm through stories of seduction and betrayal. Much as I aim to do here in relation to Manley, McKeon and Toni Bowers provide insightful readings on Behn's *Love-Letters* that, in effect, explain why Behn casts her political commentary in terms of a sexual allegory. They each demonstrate how conflicts in the seduction story are analogous to the questions of treason and loyalty surrounding the Exclusion Crisis. They both also emphasize that Behn's attempts to deny any correlation between the amatory and political plots explicitly remind readers of the political implications of her work.<sup>158</sup> Bowers even concludes by

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Ideology in the 1680s," *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 38 (2009): 18, 38; Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, 114, 123; and Kraft, *Women Novelists*, 61-62.

<sup>158</sup> See McKeon, *Secret History*, esp. 508; and Bowers, "Behn's Monmouth," esp. 33. McKeon explicates Behn's parallel "between the familial authority of the father and the political authority of the king" (*Secret History*, 508), and Bowers shows how questions of seduction and victimization reflect and comment on political predicaments the Tories faced throughout the 1680s.

vaguely proffering that later Tories, including Manley, adapt Behn's paradigm.<sup>159</sup> But Manley stops short from presenting the same analogous relationship between the political and amatory narratives. Yes, the tales of seduction and betrayal comment on and expose politicians' corruptions and more broadly reveal their dangerous influence at court; but these scandalous exposés are primarily episodic in the narrative frame they interrupt (as discussed above and as we will see in detail below). Instead, it is Behn's rendering of the Exclusion Crisis that proves instructive for Manley. At the crucial moment of war, the battle is undermined by Cesario's (the Duke of Monmouth's) romance with the (literally) bewitching Hermione. The danger of war is displaced by a disgraceful romance and a disreputable woman. While Behn explicitly and rather extensively investigates the constitutional questions at heart of the Exclusion Crisis, the public crisis is imagined to be resolved because of uncontrollable passions and through scandalous means.

In using romantic scandal to end both the political crisis and the text, Behn privileges the private and salacious narrative over the political one, modeling the technique Manley will adapt twenty-five years later. It leaves the reader to revel in Hermione's bewitching love and Cesario's capitulation to a woman's desires. Critical emphasis on the influence of Behn's *Love-Letters* on the eighteenth century novel—a relationship McKeon and Bowers both acknowledge and emphasize to various degrees—even highlights the success and dominance of the private narrative. Nonetheless, Bowers is particularly insistent that by the “end of part 3, Cesario's story usurps the amatory plot.” She maintains: “attention to ‘love’ can only seem to readers to have outweighed attention to its supposed opposite, ‘war,’ until we

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<sup>159</sup> Bowers, “Behn's Monmouth,” 38.

perceive how often in this novel the two overlap, indeed are much the same.”<sup>160</sup> But her slippage between “readers” and “we” highlights the problem. Did love outweigh the war for Behn’s readers, or is it only today, with our explicit and methodical critical analysis of the text, that *we* read the two as equal? This question is not to imply that Behn’s readers did not understand the political and romantic analogy in *Love-Letters*. For the allegory to have any cultural power, Behn’s readers (and Manley’s too) must have recognized the parallels and the embedded political critique. But what interests and which reading propelled the success of the tract and led to at least seven additional editions over the next 80 years?<sup>161</sup> In fact, McKeon analyzes *Love-Letters* within the history of the novel as part of epistemological and cultural shift that authorizes the private as a legitimate subject, a reading that also suggests the primacy of Behn’s amatory story.<sup>162</sup>

While the political plot—Cesario/Monmouth’s rebellion—runs throughout the entirety of Behn’s three volume tract, his affair with Hermione only commences in the third installment, yet it immediately dominates this plot line. Although currently married to another woman, he and Hermione live together abroad and ultimately proclaim themselves legitimately married. Much of the illicit intrigue and sordidness to the affair, however, stems from Hermione’s unnatural dominance over her lover. Love itself becomes a kind of black magic. Behn explicitly emphasizes Hermione’s homely appearance and advanced age. Characters directly question Cesario’s infatuation with her. Nonetheless, her love “reduc[es] him to . . . Slavery,” alters his

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<sup>160</sup> Bowers, “Behn’s Monmouth,” 31, 33.

<sup>161</sup> On the success of *Love-Letters*, see Janet Todd, ed., “Textual Introduction,” *The Works of Aphra Behn*, 2 vols. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993), 2: xi.

<sup>162</sup> See McKeon, *Secret History*, 545.

noble character and “charm[s]” him.<sup>163</sup> As the plot advances, Hermione also literally uses black magic to bewitch the prince and ensure his continued devotion. Her councilor brings her a charm—a toothpick case—which will guarantee and even increase his attachment to her as long as he carries it (400), and his subsequent cowardice in battle demonstrates her reigning power. Cesario vacillates between his desire “to give himself wholly up to her Arms” (400) and his need to prepare for the invasion, which would necessitate leaving his beloved behind. Ultimately Hermione encourages the separation because of her own ambitions to be queen (411). But their parting foreshadows their fates as Hermione is left “half dead” and Cesario is “little better himself” (425). He laments, “That he had rather have forfeited all his hop’d for Glory, than have left that Chamber of his Soul” (425).

In the moment of military defeat these private emotions overwhelm his bravery and leave him exposed to ridicule, an ending which suggests the power of the private over the political. In recounting the invasion, Behn first notes Cesario’s admirable “Skill,” “Conduct,” and determination in battle (428). Even when Cesario’s meager troops finally battle the Royal Army, he “acted the *Hero*, with as much courage and bravery, as ever *C[a]esar* himself could Boast.” But as he is abandoned by his troops and surrenders, he fails to fulfill his final role and “fall on his Sword” because thoughts of Hermione “still gave him Love to life.” His regrets even center on Hermione and her thwarted ambitions (432). Most ignobly of all: the next day, he is captured by “one single Man” and a commoner at that (434). Behn’s narrator strictly insists that the Prince’s cowardly actions are “not to be imagin’d . . . [as]

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<sup>163</sup> Aphra Behn, *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister (1684-7)* in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, ed. Janet Todd, 2 vols (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993), 2: 325. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text.

carelessness, or little regard for Life . . . But [that] Love had unman'd his great Soul, and *Hermione* pleaded within for Life at any Price, even that of all his Glory; the thought of her alone blacken'd this last Scene of his Life, and for which all his past Triumphs could never atone nor excuse" (434-435). Accordingly, Cesario's execution is described almost exclusively in terms of his love for Hermione as well.<sup>164</sup> Instead of asking forgiveness for his treason, he attempts to justify their affair and redeem his beloved. The narrative then pans back to Hermione and recounts how she died from a broken heart after hearing the news of his fate (438-439). After these details, Behn provides two short paragraphs that similarly document the fate of the other major characters, and then the tract simply ends. Granted, the very last paragraph describes the political reconciliation between the king and Cesario's fellow plotter, Philander, but the ending primarily emphasizes the extravagant and melodramatic behavior of ill-fated lovers. Of course, there is much ridiculousness to Behn's description; but whether her mocking critique is purely scathing or not,<sup>165</sup> this closing focus on Cesario's personal intimacies privileges the power of romantic love and private relationships in explaining public crises.

### **Manley's Titillating Distractions**

Twenty-five years after Behn's *Love-Letters*, Manley's most famous and "best-selling" secret history, *New Atalantis* (1709), subordinates a politicized

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<sup>164</sup> Cesario's great naivety in refusing to take his own life was thinking that he would be allowed to live and return to Hermione (*Love-Letters*, 437).

<sup>165</sup> Bowers persuasively explains that Behn provides a sympathetic account of the Prince despite her Tory stance on the Exclusion Crisis; see "Behn's Monmouth," esp. 19, 23, 36-38.



narrative frame to a series of episodic scandals.<sup>166</sup> As previously mentioned, Astrea descends from the heavens upon the island, New Atalantis, in order to observe the manners and virtues (or corruptions) of the world so that she can return with these lessons and instruct a prince under her care (8). This opening frame immediately reveals the royalists leanings of the tract. Astrea was frequently associated with Queen Elizabeth, an image of monarchy the Stuarts subsequently adopted;<sup>167</sup> and Carnell reads both this use of Astrea and the opening “conceit of a future succession—represented not as a crisis of succession but as a crisis of education”—as suggestions of Manley’s strong Tory, if not Jacobite, leanings.<sup>168</sup> Upon arriving in New Atalantis, Astrea immediately encounters her mother Virtue, who is doomed to wander the corrupt island (5). The two allegorical figures make their way guided by Lady Intelligence, “first lady of the bedchamber to Princess Fame” (13). Intelligence directs the travelers’ (and readers’) journey throughout the narrative, and along their travels to the city and court, Intelligence reveals to them (and us) the secret stories of the people they pass. But as Intelligence’s name suggests, her gift is her knowledge of others’ secrets, and throughout Astrea and Virtue’s journey, she tells the scandalous stories of romantic intrigue that underlie everyone’s public personas of respectability. As Intelligence explains, “scandal” is her “beloved diversion” (99), and sexual scandals are her forte. Almost every story uncovers secret romances and affairs.

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<sup>166</sup> On the popularity and political effectiveness of *The New Atalantis*, see Carnell, *A Political Biography*, 1, 161; Ballaster, “Manl(e)y Forms,” 233-234; Parsons, *Reading Gossip*, esp. 8, 29, 42, 55, 60, 69.

<sup>167</sup> Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 15. Ballaster also notes that Astrea “recall[s] the eponymous heroine of the popular French romance by D’Urfé, *L’Astrée* (1607), the poetic persona of Manley’s best-known female predecessor in British scandal fiction, Aphra Behn, and Juvenal’s notorious satire on women in which the departure of Astrea, goddess of justice, signals the corruption of the entire sex” (Ballaster, “Manl(e)y Forms,” 227).

<sup>168</sup> Carnell, *A Political Biography*, 169

While many of the characters correspond to actual political figures, the scandals also provide lessons in love, betrayal, and/or ambition and commentary on incest, polygamy, or marriage.

The most sustained plot or narrative focus throughout *Astrea and Virtue's* journey is the story of John Churchill and his manipulative use of sexual intimacies and personal relationships for political favor and influence. The tract opens with Churchill, known in the text as Count Fortunatus, jockeying for power in Anne's court immediately following William's death. We learn that he was "raised by the concurrent favour of two monarchs, his own, and his sister's charms, from a mere gentleman, to that dignity," and that he uses Anne's relationship with his wife, Sarah (or Jeanitin in the text), to secure their power. As Lady Intelligence explains, "all will be managed in the new reign by their advice" (14). While their power over the queen is certainly part of Manley's overall critique, the text quickly glides over such explicit political details, and instead highlights the ways in which the system of favoritism at court under the later Stuarts in general (not just Anne) is grounded in sexual pleasure and secret intimacies. The Count first rose to power when Charles II's mistress, Barbara Palmer (here the Duchess de l'Inconstant), fell "full of native love and high desire, for an object so entirely new and charming . . ." (14). She took him on as a lover, and according to Intelligence, the Count used her power at court to establish himself in Charles's bedchamber and army. Here politics is sexual, and Weil suggests that Manley "wisely" focused on the scandalous affairs of Churchill's private life, rather than his unimpeachable military accomplishments.<sup>169</sup> Manley briefly summarizes the Exclusion Crisis and Revolution of 1688, but these political crises are

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<sup>169</sup> Weil, *Political Passions*, 176.

represented through the Count's personal intimacies and ambitions. In 1688, the Count abandons James II when he sees that the king was losing the support of the people:

[he] had no interest in the young Caesario, a Prince of little depth [Monmouth], entirely in the hands and interest of a factious party. He [the Count] trembled to think, if he [Caesario] prevailed, himself [the Count] must either fall, as a favourite of the foregoing monarch's, or spend the remainder of his life in inglorious obscurity; he therefore cast about, and with the cabal of the principal lords of Atalantis in concert sent to Prince Henriquez [William] to invite him over to their relief, from oppression and holy fears of slavery. (24)

The Churchills are Manley's primary political target, and the political questions are most overt in her portrait of their ambition. Yet even these political questions, such as debates on arbitrary government and fears of the return of popery, are quickly cast aside as Intelligence concludes that the Count "betrayed" his "master" to avoid personal ruin (24-25).

Manley strategically refuses to turn the narrative away from personal and salacious details even when the logic of her own political critique suggests she could. Much of *The New Atalantis's* overt political engagement occurs in *brief* narrative segments that outline the historical developments that are necessary to understand the various characters we encounter. Intelligence suggests that William's great strength was steering clear of party politics: he "suffered two potent and opposite factions to break themselves against one another . . . [and] he wisely involved himself with

neither” (47). Continuing, however, Intelligence explains how the kings’ favorites retain power and wealth beyond their monarch’s death: “The servant often dies for his master . . . whilst the favourite takes care to get him an estate sufficient to make him formidable and to persuade the new successor and people to leave him in repose . . .” (47). But such explanations of a favorite’s enduring power undermine the tract’s earlier suggestion that all politics is sexual. Churchill, according to Intelligence’s earlier account, uses sexual influence to secure political power initially, but here Intelligence suggests that such sexual connections become meaningless as power begets more power. Such logic would suggest that at some point the secrets of John Churchill’s past affair with Barbara Palmer, Charles II’s mistress, no longer have any legitimate relevance to the question of his political power under Queen Anne. By the time the narrative catches-up to contemporary political debates and moves beyond the mid 1600s and its focus on questions of succession, the sexual and political could be divorced, yet the text refuses to set the amorous component aside.

In the next episode, the travelers encounter Hans Willem Bentinck, one of William’s personal advisors from abroad who was therefore “deeply unpopular with the English people as a perpetual reminder of the influence held over William from abroad” (273n74). But again, Manley uses private details of Bentinck’s life to divert attention from the critique on the powerful foreigners in William’s court. The titillating exposé overwhelms the political, and questions of personal relationships supplant questions of legitimate rule as appropriate public discourse. Intelligence describes Bentinck, the “Duke,” unlike the Count in his extreme loyalty to William but similar in his “greediness of gain” (26). But rather than illustrating why William

was lucky to have such a loyal advisor, as the opening description would suggest, Lady Intelligence offers instead “a short sketch of the amour he had with a lady . . .” (26). The story begins by describing how the Duke became William’s favorite and provides Intelligence with an opportunity to describe William’s coronation on the English throne (27), but again the narrative quickly shifts to the Duke’s personal and highly sexualized relationships. The Duke first ingratiates himself to William when the prince falls ill with a fever and the Duke is the only one who sacrifices himself to save his prince: the Duke “thr[ew] off all his clothes, got into bed to the Prince, embrac[ed] closely his feverish body, from whence he never stirred, till the happy effects of his kind endeavours, were visible” (26).

We then move on to the amatory story promised, in which the Duke falls in love with a lady, Stuart Werburge Howard or Mademoiselle Charlot in the story, a minor ward left under his care. Whereas Manley devotes just two pages to describing the Duke’s influence with William and William’s “invasion” of England, she devotes seventeen pages to describing the Duke’s affair with and ultimate betrayal of young Charlot (29-45). The Duke tenderly educates Charlot in subjects appropriate for a young woman, and his sudden passion for her comes as a surprise even to himself. But when Charlot confides about their relationship to a companion, Martha Jane Temple or the Countess, the Countess seduces the Duke away from young Charlot and secures him in marriage. Intelligence suggests that Charlot’s education in the “dangerous books of love” is to blame, for such books “explain the mysteries of nature” (37). Yet Astrea suggests an alternative moral: that “no woman ought to introduce another [woman] to the man by whom she is beloved” (45). With such

explicit and satiric moralizing, the political debate surrounding the appropriate role of foreign influence at court is lost among the scandal—unlike the *Articles of High Treason* which remains consistently focused on the Duchess of Portsmouth's threat as a French Catholic.

Such tales continually disrupt the overarching political critique of court favorites. While it may be tempting to draw a connection between a guardian abusing his power over his ward and the abusive arbitrary power of the court, *New Atalantis* does not offer a one-to-one allegory between sexual secrets and political commentary. For the moral of the amatory tale to correspond directly to the political critique, the tyrannical guardian would be the powerful favorites, and the helpless, powerless ward would correspond to the monarch or nation. While Manley's tract suggests that favorites dominate the court, it does not represent the monarchs as naïve or completely powerless; instead, the underlying critique against the Churchills and other powerful Whig Juntos calls on Anne to displace them from court. Weil argues that the focus on deceived women and inappropriate couplings emphasizes the "vulnerab[ility]" of Anne's reputation, like that of other women, to slander. For instance, she reads Manley's depiction of a Cabal of women and the uncertainty regarding their possible same-sex desires as a veiled attempt to comment on rumors surrounding Queen Anne and her sexual relations with a favorite, Abigail Masham.<sup>170</sup> It is less clear, however, how Manley's repeated discussions on bigamy and incest connect back to the queen, except in the most general terms of betrayal and deceit. Instead, the tales of guardians seducing and betraying their wards directly

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<sup>170</sup> Weil, *Political Passions*, 170 and 182, also see 170, 173, and on the women's cabal, see 177-180.

corresponds to Manley's representation of her own life story as she narrates it in the *New Atalantis*. Manley (under the name of Delia) tells of her own ruin, at age fourteen, at her cousin and guardian's hands: how after he nursed her back from death's door, she married him only to find out after the marriage that his first wife was still alive (223-225).<sup>171</sup> Once again, these moments redirect the text away from directly engaging in substantial political debates. These scandalous stories suggest the appropriate and safe way to approach political crises is to focus on personal connections and personal betrayals—a major shift from the religious and constitutional debate seen throughout the seventeenth century.

In *The New Atalantis* Manley's narrator self-consciously reflects on the need for a new political discourse. Early in tract, as Astrea comments on poetry, Intelligence launches into a critique of polemical writers in this new age of party politics. According to Intelligence, political factions and literary criticism intersect to the detriment of society. Intelligence laments to Astrea:

There are so few in this warlike illiterate age that understand the true beauties of poetry, the happy few that can distinguish themselves (in a just indignation at its ignorance) are silent. The critic is degenerated from his first original; 'tis now only understood as speaking of a person of spleen and ill-nature, who professes against being pleased at any thing but his own compositions . . . He never applauds, though in the right place, but often condemns in the wrong. And these (by

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<sup>171</sup> Interestingly, Delia, not Intelligence, narrates her own ruin. But she admits that her secrets have long been known, and her account helps refute rumors that she either knowingly agreed to bigamy or was never really married to her cousin (225). For more on Manley's treatment of her own reputation, see Weil, *Political Passions*, 174-175.

faction and party) are leading men among the ignorant, who are fifty to one the greater number. This silent resentment from the real worthy (those that can rescue declining poetry) gives the greater liberty to the poetaster to fire the town, and over-swarm it with their bombast. (60)

Intelligence's critique is literary, but it is laced with political implications. In this "warlike illiterate" age, party hack writers shape men's minds, and this factional polemical "bombast" dominates the marketplace. The pamphlet wars of the seventeenth century have devolved into party hacks throwing insults back and forth, and Intelligence's critique suggests the need for a new style and language of writing to replace such simplistic, ignorant barbs.

Manley, a partisan polemicist herself, implements this new method by quickly leaving faction crises to focus on romantic ones and also by invoking such crises from the personal perspective from the beginning. Most notably, Manley's retelling of the brutality of the civil war and its aftermath comes out indirectly and only in service to a story of sexual ruin—her own story of a bigamous marriage, according to *The New Atalantis*. To provide background for the explanation of her misfortune and public ruin, Delia (Manley's fictionalized representation of herself) recounts her family's fortune in the seventeenth century and the devastating effect of the civil war. This frame ensures that her readers understand the civil war not in terms of constitutional-religious debates, but in terms of the personal loss and suffering of private individuals. Delia begins by establishing how her family's fortune was destroyed in the 1640s:



The inhuman civil wars that rent asunder the kingdom of Atalantis involved my grandfather's possessions in its ruins and when afterwards that a calm succeeded and the royal line was restored, unhappy counsels prevailed. Those that had been sufferers were the least regarded, through a dangerous wise maxim of the then minister, who told the young unthinking monarch [Charles II], he must encourage and employ his enemies to try to make them his friends . . . Thus the suffering loyalty of our family, like virtue, met little else but it self for a reward. My father had, indeed, a military employment which, though not of half the value of that paternal estate which was lavished in the royal service yet, upon his decease, we were sensible of the loss of it. He left behind him three daughters and a son. My brother was killed in his marine command in the late war under Henriquez's [King William's] government. Thus all the support we had remaining fell in the defence of an ungrateful people who never consider the unhappy relicts of a family desolate and neglected, never extend their regards to those that remain monuments of their injustice. . . What then can remain with their ruined offspring but stubborn discontent, heart burnings and complaint of their undoing? (223)

Delia is also quick to point out that her uncle, a Cromwellian supporter, did not fare much better (223), but her narrative emphasizes the ongoing reverberations of the civil war on early eighteenth-century Tories. She acknowledges the religious and constitutional debates behind the civil wars—correcting herself that her family's loss

“in defence of their gods and of their country” was “glorious,” not simply “honourable” (223)—but the personal effects of these public crises are central to her story. She even brings the lingering anger over her family’s treatment into more contemporary times: her brother died under William’s rule in 1693 (299n447), and the desolation and despair leaves her generation “ruined” in “stubborn discontent.” She thus acknowledges the “inhuman[ity]” of the civil wars themselves, but also highlights the inhumanity of Charles II’s advisors who mistreated his loyal, royalist supporters. The polemical critique of the post-Restoration policies (as seen in the treatment of her family) is structured as a narrative of personal discontent and ruin, and it ultimately shifts away into a longer narrative of sexual ruin. This familial misfortune leaves Delia under the care of her deceitful cousin, who lures her into marriage under the false pretext that his first wife had died. Delia processes and recounts the traumas of the seventeenth century in terms of personal loss and insult—in the same manner that she recounts her own personal, sexual ruin.

Manley includes a lengthy account of the Glorious Revolution in the second volume of *New Atalantis*, but she ultimately subordinates discussion of substantive constitutional issues to the sexual secrets of court favorites and Whig leaders. After a brief illustration of the problems of gambling, Intelligence tells the story of Count Biron, Sidney Godolphin, who served in various roles at court, from a page under Charles II to Lord Treasurer under William and Anne, and whose political allegiances seemed to shift as he increasingly sided with Whig causes late in Anne’s reign.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> See *New Atalantis* 295n395 and n400; and Roy A. Sundstrom, “Godolphin, Sidney, first earl of Godolphin (1645–1712),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2009. 20 August 2010

Although the entire tale implicitly serves as a critique of Godolphin and court politics, once again, the partisan critique and the narrative of revolution is transformed into the Count's amatory tale. Intelligence begins her narrative by decrying the Count's duplicity and political vicissitudes designed to advance his own interests (189). This less than subtly veiled critique continues as Intelligence describes Godolphin as a perfect representative of his birthplace, Utopia (Scotland),<sup>173</sup> for she describes the Utopians as helpless "divided, not only among themselves, but each man in himself." She catalogues the problems any prince will have trying to rule among such a people: "They change parties, they change monarchs, with the same ease that they shift their linen, with as much fondness for the new as contempt for the old. No obligations, no interest can fix them, for . . . [they become] wanton with plenty . . . and call out loudly for a revolution" (190). Critical of Godolphin for switching support to the Whig party as needed to advance his policies, the portrait of Scotland also suggests disapproval of the Whigs' success in passing the Act of Union in 1707.<sup>174</sup> Yet the description of Utopia also necessarily recalls England's own divisions in both contemporary partisan politics and the recent civil wars, as references to Utopians disposing of monarchs clearly recalls the 1640s and 1688. Intelligence even notes that the princess of Utopia takes the throne "after a break in the line" (191).

In tracing the dynasty of the current monarch, Princess Ormia (actually James II), Manley continues her commentary on the Revolution of 1688.<sup>175</sup> This

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<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10882>> .

<sup>173</sup> Godolphin was born in Cornwall, not Scotland; see Sundstrom, "Godolphin, Sidney," ODNB. But as Ballaster notes, Manley "employs some complex disturbances of geography and chronology" (and gender) in her retelling of the history (*New Atlantis*, 295n3398).

<sup>174</sup> See Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, 295n401

<sup>175</sup> Ballaster suggests that James is represented as a woman because James disguised himself

commentary is a bit of a diversion from the story of Count Biron, but it is remarkable within *The New Atlantis* for its extended, explicit engagement with constitutional issues. Utopia's monarchy, according to Intelligence's report, is transmitted through female succession. Yet Ormia's son-in-law (William III) eyes the crown, and Ormia desires to "break the laws and custom and make the succession masculine" to bestow the crown on her only son. Despite the Utopians' pleasure in change, their love for opposition is stronger, and they object to the change in succession. Thus, Ormia and her ministers must raise an army and resort to "arbitrary" methods as they attempt to implement the new law; consequently, Ormia gives "unlimited power" to Biron and authorizes him to "revoke or dispense" of the laws governing succession as necessary (191). As Biron carries out his orders, the Utopians see how the court "subvert[s] their known laws, destroy[s] their constitution, and were in a way (should they succeed) not only of breaking the succession, but of making the monarchy unlimited and arbitrary" (192). Manley's parable clearly mirrors the Revolution of 1688, which disrupted the order of succession and gave the throne to James's eldest daughter, Mary, and her husband, William III. Manley's critique against arbitrary power cuts both ways, however: in the parable, James's rule may be in danger of turning into personal rule like his grandfather's, yet in 1688 it was the powerful ministers and politicians who orchestrated William's arrival and actually succeeded in upending the established order of succession.

Even with this page-long digression on the question of succession, the narrative then suddenly returns to the personal ambitions and sexual jealousies of

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as a woman as he fled England during the civil war and that Manley "exploit[s] this internal joke" (*New Atlantis*, 296n406).

Biron, and Manley spends seven pages detailing his scandalous intrigues. His heart becomes “inflamed” by the Marchioness of Caria, Sarah Churchill, who has already positioned herself as Princess Anne’s favorite (192). As Biron attempts to “suppress the fire, because he saw but little hopes of a return” (192), he becomes increasingly jealous of the Marchioness’s relationship with the Duke of Candia, Charles Talbot. Biron feels a tension between his political relationship with the Marquis de Caria and his passions, but passion overwhelms him:

these very wise reflections served only to show him that, however all the politician as the world esteemed him and as he would be thought, Love still found he was but a man like others and as easily disarmed. He needed only to show him the Marchioness’s fair eyes to make him confess himself a mortal . . . the least glance or word from Madam de Caria had force to make him lay down at her feet all pretensions that interfered with her arbitrary right of beauty, her despotic sway, her undoubted capacity of making him either blessed or miserable. (193)

As Biron finds his role as politician overwhelmed by his sexual desire, the political narrative is overwhelmed by the amatory one. In Biron’s self-reflection politics uneasily give way to passion, and he eventually realizes that the Marchioness’s position in Olympia’s court may help advance his political ambitions (193). The language of politics is fused with the language of romance. The Marchioness’s beauty commands absolute power over him: he is made to confess his weakness; he is forced to surrender at her feet; her arbitrary and despotic power over him determines his fate. The danger of arbitrary law is sublimated into danger from the arbitrary rule of a

lover. The threat of unconstitutional rule and civil unrest is displaced onto Biron's personal, individual threat of sexual frustration, jealousy, and despair.

Biron's passions are scandalous in that he covets his peer's wife, and his method of tricking the Marchioness into a sexual relationship only deepens the intrigue and titillation surrounding the affair. Biron's desires are initially frustrated because of the Marchioness's (not so secretive) relationships with the Duke of Candia (192, 194). Motivated by sexual jealousy, Biron exposes his romantic rival to the Marquis as a political rival. He suggests that the Duke is getting too influential with Olympia through his close relationship with the Marchioness. Biron's jealous intrigues, however, do not stop there. Upon learning of the Marchioness's plan to disguise herself as a country girl and visit a gardener's house, Biron surmises this must be a ploy to meet her lover, the Duke; he disrupts their appointment and then takes the Duke's place in the affair. The entire intrigue reads like Eliza Haywood's amatory fiction *Fantomina*, not to be published for another sixteen years in 1725. Biron treats her like the country girl she appears to be. He "smother[s] her with kisses, [takes] the liberty of her bosom and some other irregularities, which her Ladyship could not so well defend her self from, nor yet seemed to be much displeas'd at," and realizes that she "might be brought, under the disguise she wore, to do him that favour, which would cost him a length of assiduity, expense of time and oaths, in her own person." Accordingly, he gives her gold, which "was no sum to bribe Madam de Caria at her own lodging or in the circle, yet it was a very great one for a country girl," and in the end he ravishes her. Pleased with "her feeble resistance" in which she "did not call out . . . but . . . resisted as far as her strength

would permit,” Biron takes her (197). Sure of the secrecy of her true identity and trapped by the expectations of her disguise, the Marchioness does not have many options, and the sexual encounter is described in terms of the Count forcing himself on her—part of the early eighteenth-century amatory tradition. Biron then reveals that he knows her true identity; they begin a love affair, and he replaces the Duke in her affections (198).

After this seven page interlude, when the narrative suddenly returns back to Princess Ormia who “[s]till . . . purposed her design” (199), the reader can be forgiven for not immediately remembering to which “design” the narrative refers. (It is Ormia’s plan to alter the line of succession.) The amatory tale has literally interrupted the political commentary to the point of forgetting. Intelligence then finishes the narrative of Ormia’s downfall, which we rejoin as all of her courtiers, including the Marquis de Caria, desert her (199). Intelligence insists, “All her [Ormia’s] other woes seemed but little to her in comparison to the Marquis’s desertion. . . . She remained astonished! speechless! full of horror and diffidence!” (202). Here, in Intelligence’s overly melodramatic account of Ormia’s woes, Manley mocks Churchill, his circle of influence, and James’s dependence on him. As a storm at sea threatens Ormia’s life during her escape, she concludes, “Ah, wretched thirst of arbitrary power! To what have you exposed me? Let all monarchs be warned by me, a fatal sea mark I, to point the danger! Let ‘em never endeavour to divide their own interests from that of their people’s! Never carry their laws to an unjust extent!” (202). Manley, the Tory, holds the monarch up for critique for governing in a manner that threatened the law of the land and made him/herself vulnerable to revolt.

Nonetheless, the narrative elides the most dangerous moments of potential civil war and unrest. It cuts away from Ormia's early attempts to raise an army and assert her new rule of law in order to hear of Biron's sexual adventures. When it returns to Ormia's designs, we briefly hear that her son-in-law is forming an army in Utopia (199). But we quickly move on to Ormia being deserted by her followers, and we focus in on her the *personal* nature of the Marquis's betrayal. The opening and concluding remarks remind us of the danger that ensues when a monarch threatens to divorce himself from the will of his people and therefore his own self interests, yet the narrative passes over any threats of violence or instability. Instead, the moments of transition, both the early struggle over succession and the end of James's tenure on the throne, are primarily supplanted by a focus on personal relationships, especially sexual secrets.

Throughout *The New Atalantis* similar narrative patterns recur as discussions of party factions are displaced and muted by the personalization of political discourse. Manley intimately intertwines the story of Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke's rise and fall from political office with his penchant for romantic intrigue. "He had a troublesome place of profit in the government [as Secretary of War, 1704], a thing quite out of his road," according to Intelligence (96, 281n203). "He loved writing, indeed, but not that sort. It engrossed too much of his time; he could not spare it from his mistress and the muses, but to quit it with the better grace, he took the laudable and singular pretence of being disgusted because a friend of his, who had procured it [for] him, was discharged from an office upon which his, in some measure, depended" (96, 282n208). In real life, party factions contributed to the circumstances



surrounding his retirement. St. John, a Tory parliamentarian who often sided with Whigs,<sup>176</sup> resigned from his post as Secretary of War in 1708 after his benefactor Robert Harley was forced to resign from office by Whig leaders Churchill and Sidney Godolphin.<sup>177</sup> But in *The New Atalantis* St. John's voluntary resignation is set outside the immediate trappings of party politics. Intelligence vaguely implicates St. John in some party maneuverings, suggesting that he had publicized too many secrets of Whig corruption to keep his position after Harley's resignation (96). The satirical portrait, however, depicts St. John as someone too engrossed in romance and poetry to be burdened with serious governmental duties, not someone taken down by partisan in-fighting. Accordingly, in the end, we are left with a description of St. John visiting doctors for medicine when his mistress leaves him for "other adventures" (96). Partisan disputes momentarily threaten to rise to the surface, but they are quickly dampened again as Manley offers a portrait of St. John as an overly indulgent, romantic, and weak gentleman, rather than a cunning politician playing both sides of the aisle. Rather than simply making all politics sexual, once again Manley replaces partisan crisis with romantic ones.

In a shift in tone from the rest of the tract, the first half of Volume Two provides explicit moralizing on general amatory lessons. Some of the stories may have broad implications for Anne's rule, but the narrative frame becomes even more amatory and less overtly political. The first volume left Manley vulnerable to charges

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<sup>176</sup> See *New Atlantis*, 282n208; for more on St. John's flexible associations with the Tory party, see H. T. Dickinson, "St John, Henry, styled first Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2008. 12 August 2010 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24496>>.

<sup>177</sup> See *New Atlantis*, 282n208, and Dickinson, "St John, Henry," ODNB.

of libel although the (thinly) veiled names offered legal protection.<sup>178</sup> In the preface to Volume Two, Manley thus insists the portraits in *New Atlantis* are “invention” and “satires,” and she quotes from Dryden in defense: “What is most essential, and the very soul of satire, is scouring of vice, and exhortation to virtue” (132). Perhaps to accommodate and refute legal claims, or perhaps because much of the history has already been given in Volume One, the second volume starts by highlighting the prevalence of secret affairs and illegitimate children. In light of the Exclusion Crisis and Warming-Pan Scandal there are certainly political undertones to such exposés, and Manley catalogues the various mistresses and illegitimate children of Charles II and other court favorites. But much of the explicit satiric moralizing centers on the general prevalence of affairs (ex. 141, 146); the power of reputation (ex. 137, 141, 146); and the new, common techniques for minimizing the consequences of exposure, such as the gentleman who diffuses one scandalous revelation by taking on another mistress of ill-repute, for who would believe that he could carry on both affairs at the same time or that a lady of quality would “share” her lover with such a woman (141). Overall the secret history begins to slip into sections of narrative that more closely resemble general romance or amatory plots with descriptions focused on the moment of a woman’s undoing and the subsequent discovery of her secret.<sup>179</sup> Manley also turns to the exploration of polygamy, incest, inheritance, and the like.

Paradoxically, while cultivating a public interest in and use of sexual scandal, in these general reflections of Volume Two, Manley also offers the reader warnings

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<sup>178</sup> See Gallagher, *Nobody’s Story*, chap 3, and Ballaster, ed., “Introduction,” *New Atlantis*, xv.

<sup>179</sup> See, for example, the story of siblings and lovers Urania and Polydorous (142) where the coded identity is not clear (*New Atlantis*, 291n340).

on that very discourse. The former emphasis on the undue and arbitrary power of court favorites is initially replaced by a more general critique of artifice and deception in society at large. While Intelligence blames hypocrites for deceptions that must be revealed, Virtue suggests that the general taste for scandal itself is also in need of reform, a critique which implicates Manley's own text as well. When the traveling companions come across a Lady, Harriat, in the midst of labor and in need of a midwife, Intelligence is eager to divulge the Lady's secrets. She implores Astrea and Virtue "to follow [her] to a convenient distance, out of the hearing of this miserable woman" so that they hear the story without making her more miserable (136). Virtue suggests that they must first help the Lady, but Intelligence resists, and Virtue inquires, "Is scandal so bewitching a thing in your court that you cannot delay divulging what you know, though at the expense of danger?" (137). Intelligence, however, continues to brush aside the pleas for help and asserts her moral ground to tell the story. She asks: "is it criminal to expose the pretenders to Virtue? . . . Did I wrong the good! accuse the innocent! that indeed would be blameable, but the libertine in practice, the devotee in profession, those that with the mask of hypocrisy undo the reputation of thousands, ought pitilessly, by a sort of retaliation, to be exposed themselves . . ." (137). Even Astrea remains unconvinced, however. Interestingly, it is not the public exposure of private scandals itself that Virtue necessarily finds so troubling; rather, it is the blind rush to provide such exposés. Intelligence and Manley both risk being too rash in their desire to reveal private secrets.

Harriat's history further exposes the danger of society's fascination with gossip and scandal.<sup>180</sup> Harriat collects unsubstantiated, salacious gossip (152) and shares such secrets freely (153). In retribution a Duke who falls subject to her gossip sets his fellow rake, the Prince de Majorca, to seduce and ruin her. The only way Majorca can finally seduce the maid, however, is through scandalous gossip: "he thought of attempting her in her own way and sacrificed the reputations of several who had obliged him and his friends (for he was forced to tell her all that he knew or had heard), and then the lady, out of excess of gratitude for giving in to her darling foible, obliged him to his wish. A strange kind of paradox to trust him with her honour for betraying that of others!" (153). Harriat's encounter leaves her pregnant, but sexual pleasure is conflated and confused with the pleasure Harriat receives from the revelation of others' private indiscretions. The Lady is titillated by secret information, not by physical intimacy, yet the result is the same: when we first meet her, we find her alone in the throws of childbirth on the side of the road as she attempts to hide her own indiscretions.

Manley both teaches readers to turn public discourse towards questions of personal relationships and intimate secrets and warns them of the dangers of such preoccupations. She harnesses scandal for her own polemical ends, but recognizes its power to overwhelm and also to corrupt. As Chapter Three will illustrate, just a few

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<sup>180</sup> Oral gossip, of course, operates and circulates much like the written scandals revealed in Manley's text, except on a smaller scale as it must travel person to person, rather than through mass production on the printing press. Manley's warning regarding the public's taste for scandalous gossip may reflect, in part, her own personal history and battles with gossip. There are references to the damaging power of gossip throughout the *New Atalantis*, but Harriat's story is the most in-depth look at the phenomenon. Weil suggests that the desire to accumulate scandalous gossip on others without revealing one's own scandals is a central moral of the text; see *Political Passions*, 174-175.

years later, Richard Steele and Joseph Addison's *The Tatler* and *Spectator* similarly warn their readers against the voracious public appetite for such titillating secrets. Repudiating Manley's aim, they explicitly condemn individuals who become enraptured in the private lives of political figures. The extent of their engagement with scandal, however, suggests how readily the public had adopted this new public discourse that Manley helped to authorize and legitimize.

### Chapter 3: Curbing Scandalous Exchange: Re-examining the *Spectator* and *Tatler*

Addison and Steele's essay periodicals the *Tatler* and *Spectator* implicitly illustrate that the personalization and privatization of political discourse, which Manley helped authorize, had quickly become commonplace in both the early eighteenth-century marketplace and the emergent public sphere. The papers' emphasis on decorum, aesthetics, and fashion points to the new tone that they sought to establish in the public sphere; but their critiques on contemporary political discourse and scandalmongering reflect the actual public dialogue. In depicting the widespread behaviors in need of reform, the papers implicitly acknowledge the public's voracious appetite for scandal. The *Tatler*'s editorial eidolon, Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff, explicitly laments, "There is no Particular in which my Correspondents of all Ages, Conditions, Sexes, and Complexions, universally agree, except only in the Thirst after Scandal."<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, the issues that rail against the public taste for scandal show Addison and Steele's distrust of the public's ability to hold rational-critical dialogues. According to the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, even when not explicitly sexual in content, public inquiry and debate often embrace innuendo and are on the brink of devolving into scandalous gossip. The papers thus use decorous public censure to restrain impassioned and salacious public discourse.

The critique of scandal in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* illuminates the pleasures of consuming scandal and thereby gives insight into the popular appeal and commercial

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<sup>181</sup> From issue no. 164 (April 27, 1710) of *The Tatler*, ed. Donald Bond, in 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 2: 411. All other references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text by title and issue, volume and page number (ex. T164, 2:411).

viability of the form. In various issues, Addison and Steele examine how authors manipulate stylistic markings to tease their readers with the promise of scandal in order to sell papers: dashes and asterisk ostensibly block out the identity of the person under discussion and alert readers to the presence of scandalous information. In other issues, Addison and Steele consider how rumors and gossip circulate in conversation. Through these descriptions, we see that the pleasure of consuming scandal comes from being in the know—from being able to access these coded names, from being privy to illicit information. Ultimately, of course, the pleasure is all a ruse. The commercial success of the tracts depends on most readers being easily able to decode the signs, but scandal offers readers the sense of having privileged access to public figures or one's own acquaintances. Scandalmongering authors and gossips may take the brunt of Addison and Steele's critique, but the reading public is not immune from their criticism. Scandal makes readers complicit in the process: readers seek out, consume, and thus encourage the spread of scandal. Moreover, by recognizing the obscured names, readers implicate themselves, showing that they are already immersed in the discourse of scandal.<sup>182</sup>

The issues that center on the public's appetite for scandal and the role of scandal in public dialogue call into question the Habermasian emphasis on rational debate as a hallmark of the eighteenth-century public sphere. According to Jürgen Habermas's classic study, Addison and Steele's periodicals and the coffeehouse milieu, where they were read and discussed, embodied a public sphere that trained

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<sup>182</sup> While the scandalous reports that Addison and Steele emphasize use asterisks and dashes to veil names and thereby rely on the reader to provide the final identification, not all scandal implicates the reader in this manner. For instance, Marvell directly targets Parker, as discussed in Chapter One, and as we will see in Chapter Four, Pope both names his targets and uses a variety of sobriquets.

private citizens in critical, rational debate;<sup>183</sup> and this culture of public discourse in turn encouraged and enabled citizens to debate and influence the state's policies. Critics have since revised Habermas to highlight class and/or gender restrictions in the public sphere,<sup>184</sup> but Addison and Steele's fundamental distrust of public exchange, as seen in their ongoing critiques of a public enamored with scandal, reveals their skepticism of the public's ability to engage in rational-critical debate. While Anthony Pollock and Brian Cowan similarly argue for a new understanding of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*'s relationship to the Habermasian public sphere, they focus on the alternate modes of participation that Addison and Steele cultivate for the public. Pollock insists that, rather than developing a public space for rational debate, the *Tatler* and *Spectator* cultivated a "spectatorial" mode that produced individual affective responses, such as sympathy and commiseration.<sup>185</sup> Brian Cowan argues that Addison and Steele "were not so enthusiastic about the potential for public politics." He shows how they offered reforms that would "[make] masculine coffeehouse

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<sup>183</sup> On the coffee-house milieu, see, for example, Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Trans. By Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M. I. T. Press, 1992), 32-33, 42-43; Steve Pincus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture," *The Journal of Modern History* 67.4 (Dec 1995): 807-34; Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 95-99.

<sup>184</sup> See Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From The Spectator to Post-Structuralism*. (London: Verso, 1984), 16, 10; Erin Mackie, *Market à la Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in The Tatler and The Spectator* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Kathryn Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture: The construction of femininity in the early periodical* (London: Routledge, 1989); Shawn Lisa Maurer, *Proposing Men: Dialectics of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth-Century English Periodical* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). Cf. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1992), esp. 116.

<sup>185</sup> Anthony Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1755* (New York: Routledge 2009), 10-11, also see 4-6 and chaps 1-2. Also see Tedra Osell, "Tatling Women in the Public Sphere: Rhetorical Femininity and the English Essay Periodical," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38.2 (2005): 283-300.



society . . . safe for worthy conversation” and thereby provide a moral standard that promulgated “Whiggery as moderate, progressive, and polite.”<sup>186</sup> Yet Addison and Steele’s preoccupation with scandal and their distrust of the public’s tastes reveal an alternate strand in the papers as well: they express distress at the state of the emerging public sphere and suggest that the public’s distorted fixations can only be managed through a system of restraint.

The very fact that Addison and Steele are able to publish a periodical that systematically critiques and laments the nature of public conversation demonstrates the existence of a public sphere, for as Erin Mackie argues, the public sphere emerges in and from this very distance between the *Tatler* and *Spectator*’s ideal “notion of polite conversation and the [actual] talk of the town.”<sup>187</sup> But in this space they offer their readers prescriptions meant to promote uniform tastes and manners rather than to encourage critical debate. Mackie similarly notes Steele’s “intention [in the *Tatler*], not to engage with [his readers] in a debate among equals, but to prescribe his thoughts and opinions to them.” But she interprets this desire to “correctively manage” dialogue at the coffeehouses as an attempt to produce a “sensible . . . reformed, rational” public.<sup>188</sup> In contrast, I emphasize that many of the prescriptions provided throughout the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, particularly when Addison and Steele consider their readers’ obsessive interests in scandal and political news, carve out only a limited, constrained role for private citizens in public dialogue. Only a few

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<sup>186</sup> Brian Cowan, “Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37.3 (2004): 346, 357, 358.

<sup>187</sup> Erin Skye Mackie, “Being Too Positive About the Public Sphere,” *The Spectator: Emerging Discourses*, ed. Donald J. Newman (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 95, and see 88, 97, 91, 82.

<sup>188</sup> Mackie, “Being Too Positive,” 91, 90, 92, respectively.

persons are authorized to speak. They play on their readers' tastes for scandal as they seek to silence their readers' voices and mold the public sphere by censoring the indecorous behavior they saw.<sup>189</sup>

Addison and Steele's papers show that the public's desire to interpret all intelligence in terms of private innuendo means that scandal always threatens to reduce public debate to gossip.<sup>190</sup> Accordingly, this chapter first documents how they diligently attempt to separate their papers from the scandal-mongering periodicals of the time. The *Spectator* in particular is invested in distancing itself from any hint of scandal. Addison and Steele use the shift from tattling to spectating to assert that their portraits do not reflect actual people, but rather serve as generalized satiric critiques and therefore cannot be reduced to gossip about someone in particular. But the poses of tattling and spectatorship—of viewing and reporting on Londoners—means that neither paper can ever fully escape the hint of scandal. The chapter then turns to their representations of scandal in public discourse. In the *Tatler* in particular, Addison and Steele demonstrate the ascendancy of gossip over news. In issue no. 155 an Upholsterer's obsession with the news reveals that he conceptualizes politics by

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<sup>189</sup> For instance, Erin Mackie reads Addison and Steele's description of Eubulus as an "ideal coffeehouse arbiter" who is "presented for emulation" ("Being Too Positive," 94, 95). While Steele certainly presents Eubulus as the ideal coffeehouse patron, he encourages emulation through direct mimicry. Eubulus's example silences and replaces rational debate rather than refining and managing it. As Mr. Spectator relates, Eubulus is "so great an Authority" that the other patrons are "dejected" or elated only on the basis of Eubulus's evaluation of the day's news; "they hope or fear, rejoice or despond as they saw him do at the Coffee-house" [No. 94, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Bond, in 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 1: 210-211. All other references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically by title and issue, volume and page number (S49, 1:210-211)]. The coffeehouse patrons do not engage in discussion on the merits of Eubulus's judgments. They do not discuss how he reaches his conclusions. They merely adapt his opinions as their own.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. to Cowan who notes how "coffeehouse discourse" was associated with gossip but basis his analysis in terms of the untrustworthiness of the news and in terms of similarities to "women's domestic gossiping" ("Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse," 353-356).

imagining political leaders' private lives and thereby illustrates how public conversation devolves into gossip. In no. 168, Mr. Bickerstaff entertains suggestions on how to regulate the musings of amateur politicians in the coffeehouse: the answer is a pulpit system designed to minimize political debate through intimidation. The scheme literalizes the restraint and censorship that the *Tatler* endorses as the proper model of public discourse. In the *Spectator*, Addison and Steele examine the use of scandal in contemporary periodicals, and in nos. 567-568 in particular Addison provides an in-depth look at these commercial practices. He examines the mechanics of asterisks and dashes that authors use to alert their readers to scandal, and he insists that the discourse of scandal interferes with important national debates. His discussion emphasizes the ongoing danger of factional dispute even into the eighteenth century. Whereas critics commonly read the papers in relation to eighteenth-century party politics,<sup>191</sup> Addison and Steele's descriptions evoke the civil war as well and point to the fears that continue to linger seventy years later. Issues nos. 567-568 implicitly suggest that authors who want to capitalize on such dangers can turn to the discourse of scandal to inflame the passions while, paradoxically, others can embrace scandal to obscure such divisions by distracting readers from serious national concerns.

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<sup>191</sup> See for example, Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions*, 42; Lawrence E. Klein, "Sociability, Solitude, and Enthusiasm," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 60.1/2 (1997): 153-77; and Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the culture of politeness: Moral discourse and cultural politics in early eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2, 7-9, 11-14. Also see notes 226-229 below.

### Separating the *Tatler* and *Spectator* from The Fray . . . and Each Other

Addison and Steele's papers evolved out of the news culture, including scandalmongering, that they sought to reform. As we will see, in this culture, news, scandal, and gossip were not fully differentiated. As Catherine Gallagher notes, stories must be "about Somebody" in order "to be scandalous,"<sup>192</sup> and as such, news about particular people always threatened to become gossip. Given this looming threat and the public's widespread appetite for titillating secrets, Mr. Spectator's and Mr. Bickerstaff's overt attempts to distance their own "tatlings" from scandalmongering and gossip are critical to their social critiques, especially since gossip was traditionally associated with women's "trivial" activities.<sup>193</sup> Ultimately, however, the papers cannot escape the shadow of scandal, for as their titles indicate, they use the very structure of scandal and gossip in their attempts to construct and enforce a culture of decorum. Scandal operates similarly to gossip in that they both police behavior, stigmatize an aberrant individual, and thereby have repercussions for a community. They depend on established public norms of decorum; therefore, they depend on the presence of others to see and react to the exposed secret behavior.<sup>194</sup>

Scandal assumes and thereby calls into being a community that positions the

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<sup>192</sup> Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 138. Whereas Gallagher illustrates the consequences of writing about "nobody" (versus "somebody") for women authors and the development of the novel, I suggest these consequences and concerns extend into the print marketplace at large.

<sup>193</sup> Cowan, "Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse," 356. Also see Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture*, 96-98; Cf. Patricia Myers Spacks, *Gossip* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), chap 2.

<sup>194</sup> On the function of gossip, see Harold Love, "Gossip and Biography," *Writing Lives: Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 93, 91, 97. Also see Samuel Johnson, "Scandal," "Scandalize," "Scandalous," "Scandalously," and "Scandalousness," *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 Vols. (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), 2: 23E-4. Cf. Spacks, *Gossip*, 30, 5, 34, 46, also see chap 2.

indecorous individual as an outsider. Rather than persuading the reader through logical argumentation, the revelation of the scandalous breach takes for granted a unified community: by inviting the reader to laugh at or enjoy the humiliation of the exposed character, the scandalous revelation presupposes a set of shared values; and in responding accordingly the reader, at least momentarily, marks herself as a member of that community.<sup>195</sup> Addison and Steele want to use this unified stance to encourage their readers to accept their social critiques and prescriptions for reform. But the sensational exposure threatens to overwhelm the regulatory function of the revelation. Gallagher's concept of literary "nobodies" and "somebodies" can help us understand why the papers cannot overcome this structural trap. Their poses of spectatorship and tattling ultimately insist that the papers record real events based on the editors' observations of actual individuals, including eminent public figures.<sup>196</sup> This structure creates the promise of a titillating secret which undermines the reader's ability to invoke moral censure. This trap is particularly troubling for the *Tatler*, and in response, the structuring framework of the *Spectator* is premised on the rejection of scandal. Yet neither can fully escape the allure of scandal.

Although often studied and referred to together, the papers should be recognized as two separate entities. In April 1709, Steele, then editor of the

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<sup>195</sup> I would like to thank the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Reading Group in the Department of English at the University of Maryland for their help in developing my ideas on the community building function of scandal.

<sup>196</sup> Mackie explains that Addison and Steele use the very "passions" that they attempt to reform; Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 27-29, also see 2 -3. Whether or not Addison and Steele were in fact commenting on or inspired by behavior they witnessed in public, both papers claim to generate their content from such empirical data. Manushag N. Powell's analysis implicitly indicates the ways in which they were reflecting "somebodies"; see Powell, "See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil: Spectation and the Eighteenth-Century Public Sphere," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45.2 (2012): 258-259, 262.

government sponsored newspaper, the *London Gazette*, established the *Tatler* as a thrice-weekly paper that included numerous sections, including “Gallantry, Pleasure, and Entertainment,” “Poetry,” “Learning,” and “Foreign and Domestick News” (T1, 1:16). In addition to other occasional authors, Addison eventually joined Steele in the project, and over time, the paper dropped its interest in news and its multi-section structure as it grew into the single-essay format.<sup>197</sup> Mr. Bickerstaff was Steele’s “tattling” editorial eidolon: a sixty-four-year-old gentleman physician who takes up the role of “Censor of Great Britain” (T162, 2:402 and T89, 2:63). While Bickerstaff’s role as censor may ostensibly refer to the critiques and guidance he offers in order to promote moral and decorous behavior, his title recalls censorship of the press, a connotation that becomes more ominous and prominent in issues that struggle to reign in and eliminate unacceptable public debate. After the *Tatler* stopped production in January 1711, Addison and Steele started the *Spectator*, a daily publication, in March 1711, which ran until December 1712 and again in 1714. Both Mr. Bickerstaff and Mr. Spectator provide reflections on their observations around town—that is, they purport to provide a true representation of life in London. Formally, with its single-essay format, and its focus on the literary, aesthetics, and taste, the *Spectator* appears to have taken off where the *Tatler* ended, with the change in titles signaling a shift in emphasis from tattling to viewing. But, as we will see, this shift from tattling to spectatorship marks a key difference between the papers and their relationship to scandalous public discourse.

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<sup>197</sup> See Robert Waller Achurch, “Richard Steele, Gazetteer and Bickerstaff,” *Studies in the Early English Periodical*, ed. Richmond P. Bond (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), esp. 51-54, 59-62. Cf. C. N. Greenough, “The Development of the *Tatler*, Particularly in Regard to News,” *PMLA* 31.4 (new series 24.4) (December 1916): esp. 650-55.

The papers emerged out of a news culture steeped in titillating private details. As M. A. Shaaber explains, in its early forms, “[news] was not easily distinguishable from other topical material.”<sup>198</sup> As news began to circulate in print in the early modern period, it took many forms, and the understanding of news as factual, objective reporting was not yet in place.<sup>199</sup> Instead, as “prose replaced poetry [in the 1600s] as the adequate language for describing the ongoing events of the world,” according to Lennard Davis, news stories created a new “sense of time”:

a “median past tense” mediating between the past (reserved for narratives and history) and the present (which was most likely confined to spoken language, poetry, drama)—and this tense would be uniquely a journalistic one implying that what one was reading had only a slightly deferred immediacy.<sup>200</sup>

News was a narrative; it told a story which purported to be about a recent event and as such was grounded in a historical moment. In the 1600s and early 1700s, news encompassed a broad range of such narratives, including (among other topics) war, diplomacy, empire, commerce and trade, natural disasters, criminal trials, Parliamentary politics and legislation, and the monarchy. Accordingly, news even

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<sup>198</sup> M. A. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England, 1476-1622* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), 7.

<sup>199</sup> See Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), chaps 3-4. Cf. Paul J. Voss, *Elizabethan News Pamphlets: Shakespeare, Spenser, Marlowe and the Birth of Journalism* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2001), 1-2, also see 4, 54-55. On the history of these journalistic traits throughout the seventeenth century, see Martin Conboy, *Journalism: A Critical History* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), esp. 22, 29, 31, 60.

<sup>200</sup> Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 71, 73.

took in narratives of gossip and scandal.<sup>201</sup> While sensational stories such as murder trials and witchcraft were popular, papers also covered royal persons and court festivities, such as royal marriage ceremonies.<sup>202</sup> Furthermore, public interest in such news items was not limited to the royal family.<sup>203</sup> As Joseph Frank explains, by the mid seventeenth century, papers were publishing “human-interest stories, such as the account of a girl who disguised herself as a soldier so she could stay near her lover.”<sup>204</sup> From this historical context, we can see why Addison and Steele had to distinguish the *Spectator* from popular contemporary periodicals in order to cultivate a new standard of taste in their readers, a key component in their project of ethical and aesthetic reform.<sup>205</sup>

In its original form the *Tatler*, however, comments on contemporary news, politics, and other topical items that threaten to be read as gossip about particular individuals. Mr. Bickerstaff even occasionally slips into providing explicitly scandalous reports himself. In addition to reprinting the story of Doctor Margery (John) Young, the story of a young woman who gives birth to a bastard child and then disguises herself as a man to practice medicine (T226, 3:176-80), Bickerstaff also tells the story of his own invisible nocturnal wanderings, which were made possible

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<sup>201</sup> John Sommerville, *The News Revolution: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 125; Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 81-83; Conboy, *Journalism*, 6, 39, 78; Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper*, 8, 13-17, 23-28.

<sup>202</sup> See, for example, Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper*, 23-26, 138-41, 13; and Conboy, *Journalism*, 50, 78.

<sup>203</sup> See, for example, Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper*, 6, 13, 28; and Conboy, *Journalism*, 6.

<sup>204</sup> Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, 1620-1660* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 30; also see Bob Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street: An Illustrated History of English Newspapers to 1899* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 165, 183.

<sup>205</sup> Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 207, also see 224. Cf. to Osell, “Tatling Women,” 294.



by the powers of Gyges's mystical ring (T243, 3:245-48).<sup>206</sup> According to Bickerstaff's retelling of the fables found in Plato's *Republic* and Cicero's *De Officiis*, Gyges found the ring in the center of the earth, and if the ring is put on with the stone facing one's palm, the wearer becomes invisible. In Plato and Cicero, one's use of the ring reveals his true virtues.<sup>207</sup> In his self-proclaimed first use of the ring, Bickerstaff visits the room of a sleeping female rake and picks up her intimate clothing—her petticoat, her girdle, her stockings—which lay strewn about the floor. He wanders into three other rooms, where he finds people sleeping, lying awake in bed, or preparing for death, and finally heads home after stopping by a poet's garret and chasing off a man breaking into a neighbor's house. Bickerstaff insists that, in compliance with the rest of the *Tatler*, he uses this mystical power “to get a thorough Insight into the Ways of Men, and to make such Observations upon the Errors of others as maybe useful to the publick.” (T243, 3:246). But these wanderings are quite invasive and reflect the very fine line between Bickerstaff's seemingly good-natured “tatling” and spying. His intimate portraits verge on becoming scandalous exposés.

In closing, Bickerstaff attempts to distance himself from the invasive power of the ring—he realizes the ring's ability to uncover the scandals and secrets of his neighbors, and he attempts to situate women as the ones who desire and exploit such knowledge. He imagines he could marry the “finest Lady in this Kingdom” if he gave her this ring because it “would give her all of the Scandal in the Town[.]” But, instead, he “resolve[s] to lend it to [his] loving Friend the Author of the *Atalantis*

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<sup>206</sup> Cf. to Mr. Spectator's contemplations on the motives behind scandal and the popularity of scandal in nos. 567 and 568, also see nos. 256, 262, 348, 427, 451, 457, and 594.

<sup>207</sup> The explanation of the fable in Plato and Cicero, referred to as “Tully” by Bickerstaff, comes from *Tatler* no. 138 (25 Feb 1710) (2:294-295).

[Delarivier Manley], to furnish a new *Secret History of Secret Memoirs*” (T243, 3:248). Given Manley’s attacks on Whig politicians and Addison’s Whiggish stance,<sup>208</sup> it is unlikely that Bickerstaff actually wishes her well. The whole issue can be read as a satire on Manley and the scandalous revelations in her amatory fiction, as discussed in Chapter Two. While never explicitly condemning scandal, by invoking Plato and Cicero’s fable, Addison suggests that Manley’s writings are compatible with magical, invasive secret observation. But this ending does not adequately undermine the knowledge imparted by the ring, as needed for the satire to be complete; the social commentary Bickerstaff provides from his nocturnal wanderings complements the lessons of his “tatlings” at large. From his invisible stroll, Bickerstaff chronicles a male-coquette’s “nocturnal Pains”; he observes that “most of those whom [he] found awake, were kept so either by Envy or by Love”; he critiques the poets’ simple rhymes; and he documents both a wife’s over-eager preparation for her husband’s death and her husband’s preoccupation with the stock-market even as he waits for death (T243, 3:246-47)—themes which reappear in various forms throughout the *Tatler*.

In contrast, the *Spectator* was founded on the rejection of scandal. Addison, behind the visage of Mr. Spectator, frequently insists on separating the paper from other popular publications of the time. In issue no. 262 (December 31, 1711) Addison summarizes the differences:

my Paper has not in it a single Word of News, a Reflection in  
 Politicks, nor a Stroke of Party; . . . no fashionable Touches of  
 Infidelity, no obscene Ideas, no Satyrs upon Priesthood, Marriage, and

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<sup>208</sup> On Manley’s *New Atalantis*, see Chapter Two.

the like . . . no private Scandal, nor any thing that may tend to the  
Defamation of particular Persons, Families, or Societies. (S262, 2:517)

Rather than explaining what his paper offers, Addison differentiates the *Spectator* from other papers through negation by listing all of the items his journal excludes. These topics, including party politics, satire, and scandal, may be popular, but Addison positions the *Spectator* as above such “obscene” essays and “Defamation.” Perhaps most notably, Addison insists his paper does not contain “a single Word of News.” Elsewhere Mr. Spectator asserts that his papers only critique the sin, not the sinner. He claims to avoid circulating rumors by “consider[ing] the Crime as it appears in a Species, not as it is circumstanced in any Individual” (S16, 1:72). In a later paper, he elaborates. He insists that, as he sets an observation down onto paper, he is careful to protect the identity of the subject in questions: “When I place an imaginary Name at the Head of a Character, I examine every Syllable and Letter of it, that it may not bear any Resemblance to one that is real.” He even takes extra care with eminent public figures (S262, 2:518). His portraits ostensibly serve as general lessons for the public, not instances of gossip themselves; he only provides generalized representations in his paper—that is, he suggests he depicts “nobodies” in his papers. He *attempts* to position his representations as nobodies, as those that “escape reference” and that ostensibly serve as general lessons for reform, rather than as a basis for gossip.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> I borrow this concept of “nobodies” from Gallagher, *Nobody’s Story*, 137. Gallagher, however, explains that “nobody” is a character “explicitly without a physical referent in the real world” (*Nobody’s Story*, xv)—a condition Mr. Spectator’s representations do not meet (despite his suggestions otherwise).

The shift from Bickerstaff's tattlings to Mr. Spectator's observations strengthens Addison and Steele's insistence that the *Spectator* is different from contemporary papers, including their own *Tatler*. Mr. Bickerstaff observes public life and then retreats to his study to publish, or tattle, his observations. Mr. Spectator follows the same basic pattern, but the change in titles attempts to reposition Mr. Spectator's revelations as a clinical, third-party gaze, as opposed to the tattling of malicious rumors. As Manushag Powell emphasizes, in the *Spectator*, Addison and Steele insist on the "studied neutrality of their gazing and reportage," and they accomplish this pose through Mr. Spectator, the "nameless, insubstantial or transparent eidolon," who "abnegates all but the most basic facets of his identity—his class and sex."<sup>210</sup> Powell thus argues that "Mr. Spectator refuses the reciprocity of the gaze," which as Powell duly notes "had annoyed Steele in his guise as Bickerstaff," and Powell acknowledges that Mr. Spectator's "eavesdropping . . . might from other pens have been mere gossip."<sup>211</sup> But whereas Powell emphasizes Addison and Steele's abnegation of their central character, Mr. Spectator's new relationship to his subjects is the key to producing scandal-free observations. Powell's argument implies that Mr. Spectator is "nobody," but the real key to Mr. Spectator's detached

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<sup>210</sup> Powell, "Spectation and the Eighteenth-Century Public Sphere," 256, 257, and 261. Cf. to Michael Ketcham who argues that the spectatorial mode of the *Spectator* is constructed on the premise that "the social observer looks outward toward the behavior of others and turns inward toward his own reflections . . . [in order to understand the others'] inward motives" [Ketcham, *Transparent Designs: Reading, Performance, and Form in the Spectator Papers* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 9]. Cf. to Donald Bond who emphasizes the details of Mr. Spectator's memories that come out over the issues; see Bond, ed., Introduction, *Spectator*, 1: xxxi-xxxii. These details may give Mr. Spectator a history and depth as a character, but they do not specifically reveal his identity.

<sup>211</sup> Powell, "Spectation and the Eighteenth-Century Public Sphere," 257-258, 264. Powell points to Bickerstaff's complaints in the last issue of the *Tatler* of a tailor who accosts him to complain about his pronouncements on lace hats. More significantly, however, Bond documents the "political and personal" attacks against Steele (Introduction, *The Tatler*, 1: xxix, also see xxii-xxiii).

spectatorship is that he discusses “nobodies” in his paper. If his portraits depict no one person, as he insists, they cannot devolve into gossip and scandal.

Yet, despite Mr. Spectator’s attempts to deny any scandalous innuendo, his paper’s very title promises otherwise, and readers did not overlook the promise of scandal in his observations. A week before explaining how he protects his subjects, particularly public figures, Mr. Spectator acknowledged that the success of satire such as his depends on the eminence of the subject, for satires on “the common Stamp” are not received with the same “Reception and Approbation” (S256, 2:495). Readers want to attach what they read to specific individuals whom they can identify. In a later issue, Mr. Spectator even admits that the public’s general enthrallment with his portraits rests on the fact that readers can imagine that the private secrets belong to their acquaintances. He laments, “A Man who has a good Nose at an Innuendo . . . never sees a Vice or Folly stigmatized, but finds out one or other of his Acquaintance pointed at by the Writer” (S568, 4:541).<sup>212</sup> Mr. Spectator’s very tactic of using a generalized portrait combined with his pose of spectatorship allows the pattern of conversational gossip to be duplicated in the print marketplace: readers can freely attribute these unidentified satirical portraits (and the private secrets revealed in them) to their individual acquaintances or eminent public figures, and the pleasure comes in attempting this match. Tellingly, *The Female Tatler*, an essay-periodical and competitor to the *Tatler* from July 1709-March 1710, encountered similar problems despite its insistence that its portraits were to correct the general “vices” in society,

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<sup>212</sup> For another example, see *Spectator* no. 348.

rather than “reflect upon any person whatsoever.”<sup>213</sup> In one issue, an acquaintance of the editor complains that the paper is too reserved in relating scandal; she insists that women “want diversion,” and that she “love[s] to find an acquaintance exposed or a neighbor ridiculed . . . whether they deserve it or not.” She complains that the paper “give[s] one very rarely to know who they aim at, and that is what we [women] hate.”<sup>214</sup> The commercial success of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* and its competitors lay in their ability to titillate readers and create a loyal audience. The text appears or attempts to withhold knowledge, yet its appeal lies in the readers’ sense that they can access this supposedly “secret” knowledge. Although Addison and Steele attempt to operate outside this discourse of scandal, their papers cannot fully escape it.

### **Censoring Impassioned Debate in the Public Sphere, *Tatler* Nos. 155 and 268**

Despite Bickerstaff’s barb at Manley’s scandalous tactics in *The New Atalantis*, Addison and Steele invest time in curbing such appetites in men in particular. In their eyes, the close association between scandal and news, even political news, means that public dialogue itself is too mired in personal details to continue unchecked. They address the need to restrain and curb current public discourse in several issues of the *Tatler*, and these issues highlight their distress at the current form of public debate in the emergent public sphere. In *Tatler* no. 155 (6

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<sup>213</sup> *Female Tatler*, no. 1 (8 July 1709) in *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator*, ed. Erin Mackie (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1998), 132. On the history of the *Female Tatler*, see Osell, “Tatling Women,” esp. 292; Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 129; Fidelis Morgan, ed., “Introduction,” *The Female Tatler* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1992), vii-xi; and M. M. Goldsmith, ed., Introduction, *By A Society of Ladies: Essays in The Female Tatler*, by Bernard Mandeville (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1999), 11-74.

<sup>214</sup> *Female Tatler*, no. 98 (24 Feb 1710) in Mackie’s *Commerce of Everyday Life*, 134.

April 1710), Bickerstaff describes an Upholsterer, the “greatest Newsmonger” in his neighborhood, so engrossed in finding and discussing the news that he neglects his business to the “Ruin of his Shop,” and his wife and children go hungry (T155, 2:369-70). Addison’s portrait critiques how the Upholsterer conceptualizes and engages in political discourse, particularly his personalization and privatization of politics, as seen in his inquiries into the Great Northern War in Sweden (1700-21). His behavior reveals the dangerous proclivity of relying on illicit secrets as the basis for understanding world events. In *Tatler* no. 268 (26 December 1710), Bickerstaff contemplates ways to reign in amateur politics at the coffeehouses. He reprints a letter he supposedly received from readers at Lloyd’s coffee house in London. In it the readers complain about the “great Mischiefs daily done . . . by Coffee-house Orators” (T268, 3:350). Reminiscent of the Upholsterer, the unregulated (political) passion of the coffeehouse orators succeeds in “the breaking of many honest Tradesmen, the seducing of several eminent Citizens, the making of numberless Malecontents, and to the great Detriment and Disquiet of Her Majesty’s Subjects” (T268, 3:352). The readers at Lloyd’s propose to remedy this ill by creating a structured, policed forum for public oration in every coffeehouse: each coffeehouse should install a pulpit from which all debates, lectures, and speeches must be given. Although the critique takes aim at amateur politicians, these men represent a larger danger since they threaten to “seduce” other Englishmen. Even the best Englishmen—“honest Tradesmen” and “eminent Citizens”—harbor a desire for such impassioned political debate. Society must restrict political exchanges between citizens to ensure productivity and avoid potential civil unrest. Both the news-mongering Upholsterer and coffeehouse debaters

are fixated by their passions, and their portraits show that those seduced by scandal hijack national debates.

Through the Upholster, Addison demonstrates how the public's desire for the latest information reduces serious national issues, such as religious conflict and political affairs abroad, into private secrets and scandal. This portrait thus illustrates how the circulation of news in public debate is patterned after the circulation of rumor. While critics often read the Upholster as a critique on newsmongering, the paper's commentary is not limited to the public's obsession with newspapers.<sup>215</sup> The Upholster starts out in search of newspapers, but the papers disappear in the middle of Bickerstaff's account.<sup>216</sup> Conversation becomes the primary mode of exchanging information, and such dialogue or debate is positioned as being as unreliable as the conflicting newspaper accounts. For example, as Bickerstaff and the Upholsterer stroll, they come across a small group of "Politicians" whom they join in conversation. Their discussion soon turns to religion, specifically questions of "Religious War" and whether "the Protestants would not be too strong for the Papists" (T155, 2:371-72). This moment, however, stands out because, in an issue so commonly cited as a critique against the newsmongers, the newspapers fade from

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<sup>215</sup> For such readings, see Achurch, "Richard Steele," 35; Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 218-22; Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions*, 60; Cowan, "Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse," 349, 351-52; also see Greenough, "The Development of the *Tatler*," 652. Cf. to Richmond P Bond, *The Tatler: The Making of a Literary Journal* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 147; and Maurer, *Proposing Men*, 21.

<sup>216</sup> The issue begins by chronicling the Upholsterer's reading habits. Every day he reads of a variety of Whig and Tory papers. Cowan contends that because the Upholsterer's "favorite" newspapers include numerous Tory papers while only one Whig paper "caught his eye," the Upholsterer is "clearly identified [and mocked] as a Tory sympathizer" ("Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse," 352-53). Although Addison was a champion of Whig politics, the portrait of the Upholsterer is not so cut and dry. The Upholsterer rises before dawn each day to read the Whig *Post-Man* (T155, 2:369), and this paper is the first habit Bickerstaff notes in his narration. If any single newspaper is positioned as the Upholsterer's favorite, it is this Whig paper.



view during this critical discussion. The conversation is supported with “facts” from one of the men’s personal travels and professional experience, but not from news stories. News leads to conversation which, as we will see, comes to resemble gossip.

Significantly, the Upholsterer often inquires into the personal lives of the monarchs involved in the Great Northern War. His inquiries are grounded in the privatization and personalization of political discourse, as discussed in Chapter Two. His understanding of foreign policy is based in his emotional connection to the private lives of monarchs and politicians, a basis which precludes the possibility of true rational-critical debate. Bickerstaff recounts that the Upholsterer “was much more inquisitive to know what passes in *Poland* than in his own Family” (T155, 2:369). His sympathies and emotional energies lie with the foreign heads of state, and his desire for news of these political figures is framed as a personal or private connection. To borrow Joseph Roach’s phrase, the Upholster has the “illusion of proximity” to these public figures: while celebrities’ and monarchs’ “images [necessarily] circulate widely in the absence of their persons[,] . . . the very tension between their widespread visibility and their actual remoteness creates an unfulfilled need in the hearts of the public.”<sup>217</sup> According to the logic of the paper, however, this illusion corrupts public debate. The emphasis on the private life of somebody in particular quickly gives way to gossip and innuendo. The Upholster first accosts Bickerstaff in a whisper with a series of questions, and because of his fascination with the King of Sweden, he wants to know if “there is any thing in the Story of his Wound” (T155, 2:370). Bickerstaff insists that the King’s injury to his heel was simply the result of chance, but the Upholster approaches the story as a rumor that

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<sup>217</sup> Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 44, 17.

needs to be confirmed. His whispered question creates an expectation of an intrigue or scandal. While the Upholsterer's personal inquiries steer clear of explicitly sexually scandalous stories, his thirst for the news is both fueled and satisfied by innuendo.

Hints of such illicit rumor pepper *Tatler* no. 155, and ultimately even Addison's Bickerstaff is not immune to the allure of these rumors. While trying to unravel the mysteries of cryptic newspaper stories, the Upholster explains that one paper reports:

*That there are private Intimations of Measures taken by a certain Prince [the King of Sweden], which Time will bring to Light. . . . [Yet another paper insists,] The late Conduct of a certain Prince affords great Matter of Speculation. This certain Prince, says the Upholsterer, whom they are all so cautious of naming, I take to be – Upon which, tho' there was no body near us, he whispered something in my Ear . . . (T155, 2:371)*

The discussion of news stories resembles contemporaneous secret histories—amatory texts in which names of prominent individuals are also withheld even as they are identified through innuendo.<sup>218</sup> Bickerstaff initially dismisses this illicit “news” as inconsequential and beneath his interests, but his stance quickly changes.

Immediately after this conversation, Bickerstaff and the Upholsterer encounter a group of Politicians in the midst of a conversation. Before turning to the question of religious war, they consider the “Storm gathering in the Black Sea, which might in Time do Hurt to the Naval Forces of [England].” The “chief Politician” explains that

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<sup>218</sup> For a discussion of the *Spectator*'s relationship to secret histories, see Rebecca Bullard, *The Politics of Disclosure, 1674-1725: Secret History Narratives* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), chap 5.

“those extraordinary Revolutions which had lately happened in these Parts of the World, . . . have risen chiefly from Two Persons who were not much talked of; and those, says he, are Prince *Menzikoff*, and the Dutchess of *Mirandola*.” Bickerstaff concludes, “He back’d his Assertions with so many broken Hints, and such a Show of Depth and Wisdom, that we gave our selves up to his Opinions” (T155, 2:371-72). Again, at this moment actual newspapers disappear. The stories are substantiated with innuendo and “Opinions.” Yet Bickerstaff’s “we” shows that even Addison’s narrator, the champion of cultural reform, falls into line with the Upholsterer and is taken in by such rumors. In fact, when Bickerstaff begins to leave, the Upholsterer calls him back “with a Whisper” upon which Bickerstaff “expected to hear some secret Piece of News, which [the Upholsterer] had not thought fit to communicate” to the group (T155, 2:372). By the end of the issue, printed news gives way to scandalous gossip: a focus on monarchs as individuals, the reader’s personal connection to the stories, and circulation through whispered exchanges. While no explicit correction is offered, the Upholsterer and his ruined family stand as examples of the dangers of such public dialogue. Not only does this portrait indicate Addison’s deep distrust of the public ability to engage in rational debate, it similarly illustrates the corruption of public discourse through innuendo and misinformation.

Steele’s issue on the implementation of a pulpit system to regulate debate within the coffeehouses in *Tatler* no. 268 similarly depicts and critiques the distorted nature of current public discourse, but in this issue Steele offers a corrective program of restraint and censorship—a program that also points to his suspicions of the emergent public sphere. Bickerstaff receives the recommendation for a pulpit system

in a letter from patrons of Lloyd's coffeehouse where such a pulpit system is allegedly in place. First, a waiter ascends the pulpit to read aloud the news from "every Paper"; then politicians moved by "publick Spirit" may enter the pulpit, one at a time, to affirm or oppose a particular article. In fact, any man who "presume[s] to cavil at any Paper that has been read, or to hold forth upon it longer than the space of one Minute, . . . [will] be immediately ordered up into the Pulpit[.]" Politicians take the pulpit to engage with the merits and arguments of an article. The next politician can "confirm or impugn his Reasons," and most importantly for the liberal ideal of the open public sphere, "any Person, of what Age and Rank soever," may take the pulpit (T268, 3:351). Furthermore, since such a space or pulpit for the speaker must be constructed in the coffeehouse, the system must be endorsed by the owner of the coffeehouse, and if such pulpits are erected across London, they would create a recognizable, available, sanctioned system of public dialogue.

At first glance, the pulpit appears to promote, even institutionalize, critical-rational debate, yet the form of the pulpit system actually undermines the Habermasian ideals of an open public sphere and free rational debate. The floor is ceded to one orator at a time, which imposes order on potentially chaotic dialogue, but the hierarchal sequence reveals the limits of universal equity. A person of any "Age or Rank" may have access to the pulpit but only after all the politicians have spoken, and this lay person is undoubtedly of a certain socio-economic status given *his* patronage of a London coffeehouse (and the pronouns indicate that this lay speaker is specifically imagined as a man). Since any of these speakers—politicians or private citizens—must take the pulpit to speak, the pulpit may project a sense of

authority onto the orator. But who enforces the rules of the pulpit? Who is the one controlling and policing this seemingly open forum of debate? The “customers” from Lloyd’s coffee house who write to Mr. Bickerstaff with this suggestion assume a position of authority. They moderate the conversation on the floor of the coffee house by “order[ing]” men who talk “longer than the Space of one Minute” up to the pulpit (T268, 3:351). Furthermore, they admit that they take these steps to “put a Stop to those superficial Statesmen who would not dare to stand up in this Manner before a whole Congregation of Politicians, notwithstanding the long and tedious Harangues . . . which they daily utter in private Circles” (T268, 3:351-52). The moderators thus order men to the pulpit to intimidate and inhibit excessive conversationalists, not to encourage individuals to voice their own judgments. The intimidation tactic reveals that civic debate is not for all private citizens and politicians alike. Instead of modeling or producing properly reformed conversations, the pulpit silences supplementary debate by individuals who are engrossed in political concerns.

The letter from Lloyd’s customers obscures or minimizes the fact that the pulpit system is actually an instrument of public restraint and intimidation. It is presented as an instrument of ordered exchange, and those who operate the pulpit position themselves as protecting their fellow Englishmen. When Bickerstaff endorses the idea, however, he emphasizes the need to control private diatribes over any other benefits of the pulpit system. He “heartily concur[s]”:

. . . I am very desirous that proper Ways and Means should be found out for the suppressing of Story-tellers, and fine Talkers in all ordinary Conversations whatsoever, . . . in every private Club, Company, or

Meeting over a Bottle, there be always an Elbow Chair placed at the Table; and that as soon as any one begins a long Story, or extends his Discourse beyond the Space of one Minute, he be forthwith thrust into the said *Elbow Chair*, unless upon any of the Company's calling out *to the Chair*, he breaks off abruptly, and holds his Tongue. (T268, 3:352)

Bickerstaff's regulation extends into "all ordinary Conversations" between individuals; any speech over a minute becomes a harangue to be silenced for the pleasure of others. Although Bickerstaff presents the armchair as an extension of the pulpit system, here, in this intimate conversation between men in a club or over a bottle, the armchair serves as a dumping ground, a space where the orator can be placed in order to be ignored. Bickerstaff's description focuses on empowering others to silence a speaker by threatening to relegate him to the chair. Any extended exchange of ideas, political or other, is silenced.

Bickerstaff's enthusiasm for the Elbow Chair may subtly mock the pulpit system—there is an obvious absurdity to the suggestion—but his hearty endorsement for the prohibitions on public discourse rings true. These proscriptions complement Bickerstaff's ongoing critique of lengthy diatribes as seen in *Tatler* no. 264, and in its entirety this issue of the *Tatler* (no. 268) repeatedly reinforces the idea that each conversationalists should only talk for one minute at a time since extended conversation is unpleasurable to other.<sup>219</sup> Bickerstaff states that he desires "quickly to reduce the insignificant Tittle-tattles, and Matter-of-Fact Men, that abound in every

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<sup>219</sup> For other examples in this issue, see Epictetus's maxim and the satire from Horace (T268, 3:353-55). The proscriptions in this issue also support Bickerstaff's ongoing fight against lengthy diatribes as seen in *Tatler* no. 264 (3:335-38).

Quarter of this great City” (T268, 3:353), but his proscriptions are determined by length of speech, not by quality or content.

Obviously these talkers violate Bickerstaff’s own model of “tatling” in which he *mutely* observes men and women in public and then retires home to write up and publish his findings. Critics note that the public sphere has its own “absolute” standards or rules of discourse, and conforming to those rules allows one to participate in public exchange.<sup>220</sup> From this perspective, the reform project of *Tatler* itself provides a non-coercive means of regulation. But, producing a silencing effect similar to the one-minute rule, Bickerstaff’s own model of public muteness is the endorsed means of exchange. Consequently, entry into public discourse remains limited to a select few: published authors, politicians, and those shadowy-figures of power represented by the anonymous “customers” at Lloyd who write in to the paper and monitor the pulpit.<sup>221</sup>

### **Mr. Spectator Against Scandal in the Print Marketplace**

Whereas these *Tatler* issues primarily focus on the debased nature of public debate, the *Spectator* is particularly interested in the way authors stylistically present news in order to create the appearance and allure of scandal. Several issues of the *Spectator* examine the popular techniques in reporting that Addison finds so

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<sup>220</sup> Eagleton, *Function of Criticism*, 9 and see chap 1, esp. pages 15-17. Also see Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics*, 80; Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” 119; and Klein, *Shaftesbury and the culture of politeness*, 5, 12-13.

<sup>221</sup> Technically, as officers of the state, politicians are excluded from the Habermasian public sphere, a “public sphere constituted by private people” (Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 30). Although Fraser theorizes about capitalist democracies under sovereign parliamentary systems not yet in place in Addison and Steele’s England, she questions this strict separation; see “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” 134-36.

troubling, and these tactics all center on ways in which contemporary periodicals reduce news to scandal. Most explicitly, issue no. 457 (August 1712) contemplates the idea of a “*News-Letter of Whispers*” where the content of the paper is comprised solely of scandal (S457: 4:111). In issues nos. 567 and 568 (July 1712), Addison provides extended commentary on the scandalous tactics contemporary authors employ. In issue no. 567, Mr. Spectator defines and condemns scandalous news stories based on formalistic qualities, and he provides a mock libel of those popular reporting techniques. His description of scandal centers on the printed page and the manner in which an event is made titillating by how it is conveyed in print. Then in issue no. 568, an unrecognized Mr. Spectator enters into a coffeehouse-discussion on the merits of the mock libel in issue no. 567—a conversation which allows Addison to expand his critique on the state of discourse in the public sphere. Similar to the *Tatler* issues above, these issues expose the problems caused when individuals rely on scandal to inform national debate, and this exposition further reveals Addison’s distrust of the public to conduct rational exchanges. Mr. Spectator explains that scandal plays on the readers’ sectarian passions, which highlights the potential dangers that may be aroused by factional debate and rouses fears associated with the civil war. Yet, despite these dangers, his critique also illustrates that scandal can make public debate impotent because it re-directs debates away from substantive concerns and focuses on titillating details. Superficial debate may be undesirable and inadequate for discussing the concerns of the country, yet paradoxically it protects the country from descending into another civil war. Scandal is both potentially damaging *and* trivial.



*Spectator* no. 457 mocks the privatization of political discourse and demonstrates how the circulation of scandal in print figuratively becomes the circulation of gossip. A reader writes to Mr. Spectator to propose a “*News-Letter of Whispers*,” defined as “those Pieces of News which are communicated as Secrets” which he thinks will be popular because these stories communicate “private History . . . [and] they have always in them a Dash of Scandal.” Such stories would cover sexual and political scandals, including “Twilight Visits paid and received by Ministers of State, Clandestine Courtships and Marriages, Secret Amours,” among other topics. Furthermore, this same reader notes the presence of whispering in coffeehouses, and explains that the “Incentive to Whispering is the Ambition which everyone has of being thought in the Secret, and being looked upon as a Man who has Access to greater People than one would imagine” (S457, 4:111-13)—the same pleasure derived from scandal. In arguing for the success of his “*News-Letter of Whispers*,” Mr. Spectator’s correspondent insists: “every one of my Customers will be very pleased with me, when he considers that every Piece of News I send him is a Word in his Ear, and lets him into a Secret” (S457, 4:113). Similar to the Upholsterer’s conversations and whispered inquiries, contemporary news—against which Addison so strenuously positions his paper—elicits and devolves into gossip.<sup>222</sup> Newsmongers capitalize on this appetite for scandal, but the public’s desire for seemingly illicit knowledge drives the discourse.

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<sup>222</sup> Although Addison insists the *Spectator* steers clear of party politics, Bond’s notes to this issue show how the suggested paper enters into and mocks an ongoing partisan tussle between the Whigs and Tory government; see Bond, ed., S457: 4.112, note 1. Cf. my reading to Bullard, who examines this issue in relation to secret histories; see *Politics of Disclosure*, 114.

In issue nos. 567-568, Addison similarly satirizes the state of discourse in the print marketplace and mocks the current popular taste for scandalous news. In issue no. 567, Mr. Spectator reflects upon advice he was given “to season [his paper] with Scandal” in order to “give [it] . . . a general Run” (4:536). He first surveys the techniques of popular papers, which traffic in scandal, and he then provides a sample of such writing to prove that he could follow this popular style if he were to choose. According to Addison’s depiction in *Spectator* no. 567, the rhetorical practices and marketing techniques associated with scandal consciously attempt to excite readers’ passions to increase sales. Accordingly, we find that, like news, scandal is not limited to specific content, such as secrets about prominent personalities. Rather, according to Addison’s depiction, scandal is denoted by certain stylistic markings and key terms used to attract attention and sell papers. Scandal is created when events are reported through asterisks, dashes, and innuendo: authors employ such devices in order to present their narrative as a secret and thereby seduce the public. Mr. Spectator condemns the stylistic marketing tools, particularly the dashes and italicized terms, used to draw in the reader. He explains, the papers that sell are “filled with great Names and illustrious Titles,” and readers look for texts with “Letters separated from one another by a Dash” (dashes and asterisks being common techniques authors used to obscure a subject’s identity and thereby avoid libel suits) (S567, 4:536). As examples, Mr. Spectator references “Monsiuer Z---n” and “Lady Q--p--t--s” (S567, 4:537-8).<sup>223</sup> Moreover, even while writing with deference, “Party-writers” are adept

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<sup>223</sup> On the use of such methods to obscure a subject’s name to avoid charges of libel, see Gallagher, *Nobody’s Story*, esp. 97-101. As discussed above, however, the *Spectator* also suggests that such satire should not be directed against an actual “somebody” to begin with.

at using this technique, which Mr. Spectator refers to as “the secret Vertue of an Innuendo,” to drive up sales (S567, 4:537).

According to Mr. Spectator, authors also use evocative polemical language to increase sales; they link politicized terms with innuendo to excite the reading public’s interest. Mr. Spectator’s critique links current impassioned debate to the dangerous factional debate of the civil war and thereby provides a pressing rationale for why scandalous discourse must be excised from the public sphere. He insists that the public is drawn to a few key words in particular: “A sprinkling of the Words *Faction*, *Frenchman*, *Papist*, *Plunderer*, and the like significant Terms, in an Italick Character, have . . . a very good Effect upon the Eye of the Purchaser” (S567, 4:537).

Accusations that someone is French or papist can fly unchecked, and such writings create a charged and electric air as generalized political enemies are made individual and identifiable, their secrets exposed. These key terms, however, are not inherently scandalous. Instead, they are associated with contentious debate, both party politics of the early 1700s and the factional struggles of the seventeenth century. They recall the constitutional-religious debates of the mid seventeenth century in particular. As discussed in Chapter One, scurrilously identifying someone as a papist was a common rhetorical strategy throughout the seventeenth century, and polemicists invoked the specter of popery to rationalize and position calamities, such as the great fire of London in 1666, as Catholic plots against the state.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Mark Knights examines “[r]eligious labels as party tools” in *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 288-291. On the use of anti-popery and the civil war, see Peter Lake, “Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice” in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Longman Group, 1989), esp. 81, 83, 92-95; on the use of anti-popery and the fire, see Martin

This seventeenth-century context is what makes the factional passions in eighteenth-century public debate threatening. Throughout both the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, Addison and Steele's various allusions to the dangers of factions conflate the civil war of the mid seventeenth century with eighteenth-century party politics in order to rebuke partisan conflict.<sup>225</sup> Addison's critique of scandalous papers in *Spectator* no. 567 needs to be understood in context of this ongoing commentary that ominously situates party politics against the backdrop of civil war. Despite these associations throughout the papers, critics narrowly interpret Addison and Steele's political positions in relation to the Whig-Tory divide of the early eighteenth century. In particular they focus on Addison and Steele's efforts to create a unified community, a community that subtly fulfils a Whig ideology.<sup>226</sup> For instance, Lawrence Klein argues that Addison and Steele's position of moderation and polite sociability are themselves Whiggish political stances.<sup>227</sup> Similarly, Donald Bond argues that Steele's involvement in partisan politics throughout the *Tatler* was "relatively minor" despite a "brief strong deviation into flush partisanship" around 1710 as the Tories ascended into power. Overall, he describes Steele as occasionally endorsing Whig positions "without provoking dark suspicions of deep factional

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Dzelzainis, ed., *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, by Andrew Marvell, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Annabel Patterson, Dzelzainis, N. H. Keeble, and Nicholas von Maltzahn, Vol. 1 of 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 127n470.

<sup>225</sup> This is not to say that the *Spectator* never references contemporaneous party politics in and of itself. *Spectator* no. 451 explicitly refers to party politics, but the dangers are couched in terms of morality and crime—not as threats to church and state (S451, 4:87-89).

<sup>226</sup> See Cowan, "Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse"; Bond, Richmond P., ed. "Introduction," *Studies in the Early English Periodical* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 19; Eagleton, *Function of Criticism*, 17, 25, 35-36; Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions*, 10-11, 42, 49, 61; and Maurer, *Proposing Men*, 124.

<sup>227</sup> See Lawrence E. Klein, "Joseph Addison's Whiggism," *Cultures of Whiggism: New Essays on English Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. David Womersley et. al. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); and Klein, "Sociability, Solitude, and Enthusiasm."

purpose.”<sup>228</sup> Following Bond’s lead, most critics connect Addison and Steele’s anxieties to early eighteenth-century party politics, such as the Tory rise to power in 1710, and only provide an (often vague) allusion to the turmoil of the 1640s.<sup>229</sup> Neither Addison nor Steele, however, had yet forgotten the dangers of the preceding century. This seventeenth-century context shows why current partisan practices to illicit passions were dangerous and, alternatively, why practices to distract factions with rumors could be safe and appealing.

In September 1709, Steele, writing as Bickerstaff in the *Tatler*, denounces a fellow countryman for speaking ill about England’s recent military success at the battle of Malplaquet. The “Battle-Critick” questions the government’s claims about the battle: he wonders why, if England has attained “so great and compleat a victory,” the public has not yet received “an exact Relation” of the action or notice of the identity of prisoners captured or soldiers lost (T65, 1:448). Bond suggests that this skepticism reflects contemporaneous Tory complaints.<sup>230</sup> But Mr. Bickerstaff’s associates specifically condemn the critic, with his public dialogue on the government’s motives, as an “enemy” to England (T65, 1:4450)—a rather sharp condemnation given Steele’s critique of *passive* obedience just a few months earlier.<sup>231</sup> Anxieties about party politics are couched in terms of Englishmen as enemies to the state, an image which evokes the civil-war struggles of the mid 1600s.

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<sup>228</sup> Bond, *The Making of a Literary Journal*, 68 and 61, also see 59-68.

<sup>229</sup> See, for example, Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions*, 7, 10-11, 49, 63-65, 71, esp. 51; and Osell, “Tatling Women,” 287. Cowan provides the most substantial connection back to the seventeenth century, see “Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse,” 348, 350, 357. Cf. Klein, “Sociability, Solitude, and Enthusiasm.”

<sup>230</sup> Bond, ed., *Tatler*, 1: 448 note 3.

<sup>231</sup> On Steele’s earlier satire in defense of Whig principles of resistance, see Bond, *The Making of a Literary Journal*, 62, and *Tatler* nos. 44, 45, 50, 51.

Questioning both the accuracy of the information provided to the public and the government's policies threatens the state itself—a representation of the limits of public debate that is hardly reconcilable with the public's function to monitor civil society and the state.<sup>232</sup>

More pointedly, the *Spectator* remembers the destruction caused by factional passions. In the first month of its publication, Addison as Mr. Spectator admits:

my Paper would lose its whole Effect, should it run into the Outrages of a Party . . . [Therefore] If I can any way asswage private Inflammations, or ally publick Ferments, I shall apply my self to it with my utmost Endeavours; but will never let my Heart reproach me with having done any thing towards encreasing those Feuds and Animosities that extinguish Religion, deface Government, and make a Nation miserable. (S16, 1:73)

While the ascent of the Tory majority in 1710 may have troubled Whigs like Addison, his diction, with its severe, precise images—nations made miserable, religion extinguished, and government defaced—describes a country torn apart from incontrollable public passions. Addison associates the current party crisis with the civil war as a warning against factions. Nine months later, in *Spectator* no. 262, when Addison insists his paper contains no news, he also proclaims that his paper beneficially distracts men from fierce sectarian passions explicitly connected to the civil war: “it draws Mens Minds off from the Bitterness of Party, and furnishes them Subjects of Discourse that may be treated without Warmth or Passion.” Tellingly, he

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<sup>232</sup> On the role of private individuals to monitor the state, see Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 51-52, also see chaps 7 and 8.

praises the Royal Society (incorporated in 1662) and its encouragement of scientific experimentation for similarly distracting men “who, if they had engaged in Politicks with the same Parts and Application, might have set their Country in a Flame” (S262, 2:519). Thus, in issue no. 567, in Mr. Spectator’s initial condemnation of the popular use of asterisks and sensational labels, scandal appears to provoke passionate fixations without providing “innocent Amusements” as the Royal Society did (S262, 2:519).

Yet paradoxically, as the rest of issue no. 567 implicitly illustrates, the technique of exciting factional passions to sell periodicals also has the potential to undermine the authority and weight of political terms and debates. Thereby it has the potential to provide its own “innocent Amusements” by promoting trivial and impotent debates. According to Mr. Spectator, rather than flagging serious news, terms, such as “faction” and “papist,” are reduced to a “sprinkling” (S567, 4:537)—a calculated addition overlaid on top of the news to market it. Authors choose their language to fuel debate and ruffle their readers’ feathers. But since the scandalous accusations themselves come to dominate the readers’ attention, they actually obfuscate and thereby neutralize potentially dangerous political concerns. Despite the outward appearance of charged political controversy, these rhetorical sprinklings and other scandalous revelations only produce impotent public debate.

In fact, according to *Spectator* no. 567, the public buys such publications because of the *pleasure* they receive from reading the scandalous stories. The reader, looking for the names obscured by dashes, “buys it up and peruses it with great Satisfaction” (S567, 4:536). The secrets are tied to status: the subjects’ names and

titles make them worthy of public attention. The “great Names and illustrious Titles” (S567, 4:536) ensure that the subjects’ identity, background, and rank in society can be understood by all readers. Addison’s analysis suggests that scandal, signposted by dashes, asterisks, and italicized words, promises to make the secrets of the rich and powerful accessible to the reader; and it is the reader’s active role in uncovering these secrets that entices him/her. Addison explains, “It gives a secret Satisfaction to a Peruser of these mysterious Works, that he is able to decipher them without help, and, by the Strength of his own natural Parts, to fill up a Blank-Space, or make out a Word that has only the first or last Letter to it” (S567, 4:537). The reader becomes a participant in the news-making process, and the process suggests the allure of a private club accessible only to those clever enough to solve the riddle. Although Addison does not investigate the nature of the reader’s satisfaction, the pleasure he describes is ultimately an illusion: the success of these stylistic elements is that they are accessible to the many. They are coded signposts for the general reading public; to work—for the reader to realize the pleasure and for the author to communicate successfully his position or news—the codes must be decipherable.

*Spectator* no. 567 also includes an embedded “Libel” that mimics the scandalous papers and proves that Mr. Spectator could write in this popular style if he desired. As Addison’s discussion of asterisks and dashes points to the both the dangers and trivial pleasures of scandalous political discourse, this mock libel similarly emphasizes how rhetorical flourishes render public debate empty of serious content and implicitly points to disconcerting possibility of real unrest behind the scandalous innuendos. Most overtly, Addison’s imitation illustrates how national



political concerns are conflated with and thereby obscured by scandal. Addison's libel warns that there are "*four* Persons in the Nation who endeavour to bring all things into Confusion and ruin their native Country." Although their names are completely blocked out by asterisks, the libel continues, "if a *certain Prince* should concur with a *certain Prelate*, (and we have Monsiuer Z---n's word for it) our Posterity would be in a sweet P--ckle. Must the *British* Nation suffer forsooth, because my Lady Q--p--t--s has been disoblged?" (S567, 4:537-8). The monarchy and church are both implicated in the scandalous ruin of the country, and Lady Q's personal injury determines national policy. The popularity of such "political Treatise[s]" (S567, 4:538) rests on the allure of scandal and the stylistic elements that promise such scandal, but no new details or concrete information is provided. The piece is comprised of innuendo that plays on gossip with which the reader is already familiar. As Addison notes, "if he [a Reader] be acquainted with the present Posture of Affairs, [he] will easily discover the Meaning of it" (S567, 4:537).

Yet danger lurks behind these surface concerns. The opening lines warn every Englishman to be "upon his Guard" because of the threat of fellow Englishmen who seek to bring the country to "ruin." Moreover, religious allegiances motivate the conflict. The potential traitors "cry Ch--rch, Ch—rch," just as the Prince's relationship with the Prelate threatens England's posterity (S567, 4:538). Granted, the piece ridicules the libelous style of such popular pamphlets, and accordingly, the potential ruin of the country is specifically attributed to "*four* Persons." But the imagined threat is from within and is associated with political and religious powers, all of which recall the political-religious debates of the mid 1600s. Echoing the

pamphleteers of the civil war, Mr. Spectator ironically declares that it is his right to freedom of speech and freedom of conscience that fuels this printed attack against such “ill M[e]n.” He insists, “I love to speak out and declare my Mind clearly, when I am talking for the good of my Country” (S567, 4:538). The public’s taste for scandal trivializes these potentially serious concerns. Instead of discussing or resolving such debates in a decorous manner, the readers and the authors who placate them obscure the magnitude of the situation by focusing on individuals and titillating personal grievances. Throughout this issue in its entirety, Addison reveals the paradox surrounding scandal. He starts with partisan writers who use stylistic markings to impassion their readers and thereby excite potentially dangerous sentiments, but his analysis of these tactics ultimately illustrate how such marketing techniques render potentially dangerous conflict into petty concerns.

If Addison’s satire in issue no. 567 illustrates that politics is now routinely discussed by and through scandal, issue no. 568 provides some guidance on how to react to such popular papers. In this issue, dated two days after the mock libel, Mr. Spectator enters into conversation with three men in a coffeehouse. Mr. Spectator, hardly content to be a neutral observer in this instance, inserts himself into the men’s conversation by lighting his pipe and bringing their conversation around to the *Spectator* no. 567. The men, not knowing Mr. Spectator’s identity, discuss the merit of the issue. One participant, described as “an angry Politician,” attacks the issue, insisting both that Mr. Spectator “*can’t for his Life keep out of Politicks*” and that he “*abuses four great Men.*” The Politician’s “Wrath” is contrasted to Mr. Spectator’s “*sedate[ness]*” and another Whig’s “*mild Disposition,*” and the foil serves to

undermine the Politician's credibility (S 568, 4:539). Two of the men in the conversation are identified with politics. But one is an even-tempered Whig, Addison's own party affiliation,<sup>233</sup> and the other an angry, irrational politician, who defends the four men allegedly trying to ruin the country and who represents the dangers of political passion.

In form, the conversation that ensues resembles the rational-critical debate that theoretically characterizes the public sphere, but the exchange highlights the intellectual dangers of public debate. Scandalous secrets and accusations obscure the significant issues of the day. In the mock piece, Mr. Spectator declares he "will not make [his] Court to an ill Man, tho' he were a B--y or a T--t" (S567, 4:538), and the angry Politician decries the "*scurrilous*" treatment of the "*great Officers of State, the B--y's and T--T's*" (S568, 4:540). But no one addresses the behavior of the officers in question. The titillation of sensational communication, as promised by the dashes, substitutes for an explanation of the officers' "ill" behavior in placating Lady Q; and the retort only attacks the author's supposedly indecorous treatment of the men without addressing the specifics of their behavior.

Furthermore, both the moderate-tempered Whig and the zealous Politician are guilty of indulging in such superficial debate. The Politician attacks Mr. Spectator's use of stars/asterisk and the joining of "*Ch-rch and P-dd-ng in the same Sentence!*"; and he views the "[p]arenthesis . . . to be the most dangerous Part." The Whig, however, defends Mr. Spectator of being "*very cautious of giving Offence, and has therefore put two Dashes into his Pudding*" (S568, 4:539). At first glance, the ireful

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<sup>233</sup> On Addison's political views and activities, see Klein, "Joseph Addison's Whiggism," esp. 111.

Politician seems to represent an example of incorrect reading: one who reads the mock libel too seriously and thereby suggests he reads the papers in the same manner. But the mild Whig offers the same type of reading. He mocks the Politician, but he also engages the debate on how the author presents the scandalous material. He claims the author was cautious in using dashes to hide words, even as he goes on to fill in the blanks and name the word (pudding) that was supposed to be obscured. Later Mr. Spectator interjects that the paper “had gone too far in writing so many Letters of my Lady *Q- - p- - t- -s*’s Name”—an ironic satirical complaint for she is never identified. The Politician even challenges the Whig to identify her if he can (S568, 4:540). Since the meaning of the libel appears to be clear to the gentlemen, the exchange illustrates the weakness of the asterisk and dashes to actually obscure obscene or libelous sections. Yet, simultaneously, the inability to fill in Lady Q’s name shows how meaningless and suspect the information is. Like the Upholsterer, the public at large engages in politics through the personal, scurrilous, and sensational.

On the surface, the *Spectator* seems to be illustrating common debate in the coffeehouses and cultivating it—Mr. Spectator after all initiates the review of the paper—but in the end, *The Spectator* repudiates this public debate. Mr. Spectator closes the issue ruminating upon the “gross Tribe of Fools . . . the *Over-wise*, and upon the Difficulty of writing any thing in this censorious Age, which a weak Head may not construe into private Satyr and personal Reflection” (S568, 4:540). His denunciation suggests the blanks and asterisks of the satirical libel did not corresponded to any specifics at all, that they were “the most innocent Words that can

be put together” to prove the critique (S568, 4:541). The lesson, however, also reveals Mr. Spectator’s exasperation with the reading public. They are “Fools” with “weak Heads.” They make the practice of writing impossible for those authors who wish to rise above the public’s desire for scandal. Instead of finding treason in acts against the state, these readers find treason in scurrilous attacks, and since these attacks are grounded in innuendo, readers can uncover scandalous implications in any publication. Moreover, these issues of the *Spectator* do not articulate a more appropriate form for political news or current affairs.<sup>234</sup> In fact, these issues imply that Addison does not trust the public with such topics.

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For Addison and Steele the scandalous state of public discourse was too dangerously fixated to be left unregulated and simultaneously too trivial to sustain serious political dialogue. Their remedies focused on censoring and curbing the public’s involvement in such debate—they authorized only a few approved voices to speak. Public debate, especially political debate, had to be limited as individual citizens were swept up in their desire to know intimate, personal details about their neighbors and public figures. Rather than consistently offering a corrective model based on informed, rational public exchange regarding national concerns, the *Tatler* and *Spectator* gave up such exchange, the foundation to political public opinion, in favor of intensive expositions on the merit of a current play or the aesthetic pleasures of a literary text, such as *Paradise Lost*. Ironically, debate on political, religious, and national concerns in the Habermasian public sphere remained too dangerously

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<sup>234</sup> Cf. to Pollock, who suggests they provide an alternative, “spectatorial” mode of affective response; see *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere*, esp. 10-11.

sectarian to be broached by individuals ruled by their passions and titillations, who understood public events through innuendo and private secrets. Whereas Addison and Steele distrusted and therefore focused on curbing this taste for scandal, as we will see in the next chapter, authors such as Alexander Pope exploited and thereby legitimized this public appetite.

## Chapter 4: Alexander Pope's Scandalous Exchanges: Sexual Calumny in Augustan Wit

The *Tatler* and *Spectator* condemn what had become mainstream fascination with scandal in public discourse, but Alexander Pope's literary appropriation of scandal legitimizes and sanctions it as an effective and acceptable satiric tool. Although Pope might be best known to scholars and students alike for his tightly formed witty couplets, his moral essays, and his attacks on Grub Street hacks, he was also famous for his public acrimonies with numerous contemporaries, especially his quarrels with the prolific bookseller Edmund Curll, the aristocrat Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, her intimate friend Lord John Hervey, and the actor-laureate Colley Cibber.<sup>235</sup> These quarrels in particular are notable for the titillating, scurrilous allegations that the parties leveled at each other in printed tracts sold in the commercial marketplace. In his fight with Curll over the bookseller's publication of illicitly obtained verses, Pope secretly administered Curll an emetic and then anonymously published a series of tracts that claim to document Curll's violent illness. A subsequent tract imagines Curll's conversion to Judaism and concludes with the bookseller castrated, his foreskin on public display. As the height of hostilities with Curll began to fade, Pope's acrimony with his former friends Montagu and Hervey heated up. A variety of Pope's poems exposes and ridicules the private

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<sup>235</sup> Pope also quarreled with other notable contemporaries, such as Joseph Addison, but these quarrels are less famous, less intimate, and less salacious. For overviews of Pope's relationships, see Norman Ault, *New Light on Pope, with some additions to his poetry hitherto unknown*, 1949 (N.p.: Archon Books, 1967). Pope's disputes with Montagu and Cibber receive the most critical attention as the most piercing and successful attacks. Cf. J. V. Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks on Alexander Pope, 1711-1744: A Descriptive Bibliography* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), xxvi-xxxvii.

affairs of Montagu and the effeminacy/androgyny of Hervey. They in turn responded with a stinging attack on Pope's physical deformity. And the pattern repeated itself with Cibber. After twenty-five years of literary denunciations and sexual railing from Pope, Cibber struck back with a damning exposé of Pope's night at a bawdy house. Cibber's account questions Pope's sexual virility, taunts him over his physical smallness, and links Pope's literary and sexual abilities. Many of these tracts, especially Cibber's, provoked a series of third-party responses that took sides and used similar means of attack. Such revelations purport to offer intimate glimpses into the private lives of public figures. Because they circulated publicly and widely in commercial tracts, the accusations, whether true or not, were threatening enough to warrant rebuttals.

If we read each episode in isolation at the site of attack, we see separate conflicts primarily driven by personal disagreements and individual personalities: Curll and Pope's battle for authority in the commercial press; Pope's soured personal relationship with Montagu; and the sensational, ongoing personal and literary animosities between Pope and Cibber.<sup>236</sup> In contrast, examining these exchanges in relation to each other and in context of Pope's whole career reveals that these ongoing adversarial relationships—each of which spans much of Pope's career—reflects a *modus operandi* for the Augustan poet and his contemporaries. The use of sexually scandalous revelations in the exchanges adds up to a larger pattern or literary strategy

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<sup>236</sup> For representative studies, see Valerie Rumbold, *Women's Place in Pope's World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), esp. xv, 131-132, 155-156, 159; Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. xviii; Claudia N. Thomas, *Alexander Pope and His Eighteenth-Century Women Readers* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), esp. 120-130; Paul Baines and Pat Rogers, *Edmund Curll, Bookseller* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), esp. 1, 109, 317; and Ault, *New Light*.



of attack, one that Pope honed and cultivated throughout his career. This rhetorical strategy uses the titillating allure of scandal to entice the public and damage an opponent's cultural reputation and capital. The strategy becomes a powerful and commercially successful weapon to deflate an opponent in the court of public opinion. Yet these manifestly social and cultural barbs ultimately veil deeply rooted religious and political disagreements, now obscured beneath sensational charges.

The strategic use of scandal is one more literary tool we should recognize as part of Pope's legacy. Several critics who consider the Pope-Cibber exchange already implicitly acknowledge the rhetorical use of the scandalous attacks. Kristina Straub and Laura Rosenthal each demonstrate the various ways in which Pope's and Cibber's sexual barbs participated in the construction of both a dominant normative masculinity and their own literary authority; and Eric Chandler examines how each author used sexualized images to represent the other's participation in the commercialized print marketplace.<sup>237</sup> Such arguments suggest that these sexualized attacks were not just about individual personality, but rather constituted a literary strategy in Pope and Cibber's quarrel. Pope's recourse to such tactics was widespread throughout his career. He customized sexualized attacks to capitalize on his various opponents' individual sexual vulnerabilities. He mastered this tool and incorporated it into a wide range of texts, from moral essay to mock-epic. Such lines of attack are even embedded in some of his most admired and studied works, including *An Epistle*

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<sup>237</sup> Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Laura Rosenthal, "'Trials of Manhood': Cibber, *The Dunciad*, and the Masculine Self," in *"More Solid Learning": New Perspectives on Alexander Pope's Dunciad*, ed. Catherine Ingrassia and Claudia N. Thomas (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2000), pp. 81-105; and Eric Chandler, "Pope's 'Girl of the Game': The Prostitution of the Author and the Business of Culture," in Ingrassia and Thomas's *"More Solid Learning,"* 106-128.

to *Dr. Arbuthnot* and *The Dunciad*, although they are certainly clustered around and most prominent in more ephemeral pieces that focus on the ongoing quarrels with Curll, Montagu/Hervey, and Cibber. While Pope's former friendship with Montagu and Hervey might have naturally led him to use personal attacks against them, he also readily adopted this line of attack as the animus of his satire against less intimately known targets as well, such as with his business rival Curll. Only by considering these various quarrels together can we see that these tactics are not unique to Pope's relationship to any one person, but rather constitute a general rhetorical strategy. Moreover, in comparing Pope's early prose attacks against Curll to his later couplets such as those aimed at Hervey, we can see that Pope's weapon became increasingly sophisticated over the course of his career. He refined the technique from crude and obviously fictionalized calumnies about Curll's castration to subtle, witty, and therefore more damning exposés on Hervey's effeminacy.

These manifestly social and cultural attacks, however, ultimately masked deeply rooted religious and political disagreements—factional disagreements from the seventeenth century that remained alive and threatening into the eighteenth century. Despite the projected stability of the Restoration in 1660, in the eighteenth-century print marketplace “literature often had an inescapable political force,” and literary antagonisms were common.<sup>238</sup> This was particularly true for Pope. Fear of unrest, especially fear of Jacobite rebellion, lingered throughout the early eighteenth century; and Pope's relation to the Jacobite cause was not necessarily clear given his Catholicism and his Tory friends, some of whom were known or suspected supporters

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<sup>238</sup> Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 19.

of the Pretender.<sup>239</sup> Several contemporary texts, such as *The Catholick Poet* (1716), *A Popp Upon Pope* (1728), and *An Epistle to Alexander Pope, Esq. Occasion'd by some of his Late Writings* (1735), explicitly emphasize Pope's Catholicism, and the *Epistle to Pope* even works to portray Pope as a Jacobite.<sup>240</sup> But less explicitly political texts, such as Cibber's *A Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope* (1742), mask such complaints behind salacious details. The titillating details of scandal focus public attention on the personal, physical, and ephemeral issues while avoiding the more troubling political-religious disagreements that also fueled the initial hostilities.

Whereas in Chapter One we saw Andrew Marvell and Samuel Parker use scandal to undermine each other's political-religious polemics, here we see Pope and his opponents use it to undermine each other's cultural standing. Pope's various confrontations have a manifestly different flavor to them than the Marvell-Parker ones. Pope's and his contemporaries' attacks became more intimate and personal and perhaps even more mean-spirited as they sought to undermine their opponents' cultural authority and reputations. Whereas the Marvell-Parker tracts kept political-religious difference at the forefront, seventy years later Cibber's alleged exposé of Pope's night at a bawdy house launched a series of comical engravings which focused

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<sup>239</sup> Both Maynard Mack and Pat Rogers suggest real fears over Jacobitism were not put to rest until the mid 1740s with the last failed rebellion. See Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope, A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with W. W. Norton & Company, 1985), 258-259, 393, 403-404 (hereafter cited in text); and Pat Rogers, *Hacks and Dunces: Pope, Swift and Grub Street* (London: Methuen, 1980), 99. Also see Chapter Two, notes 128-130 above. On Pope's relationship to Jacobitism, see, for example: Mack, *A Life*, 389, 392; Donna Landry, "Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and the literature of social comment," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 312; and Pat Rogers, *A Political Biography of Alexander Pope* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010), esp. p. 2 (although Rogers also warns of giving Pope's political friends too much "attention" [4-5]).

<sup>240</sup> On the *Epistle*, see Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 350-51.

more on the pleasure of ridiculing the poet as a person rather than on any substantive dispute. Pope and his peers adopted this strategy of attack to expose (purported) personal failings. They exposed alleged private secrets to undermine their opponent's standing in the public consciousness and sway over public political and aesthetic judgments. As we will see, Pope's opponents were generally his cultural adversaries: Curll and Cibber were highly visible and influential literary and business rivals of Pope, who were concerned with their public reputations and successes in the literary marketplace; Montagu even had her own public following due to her powerful political connections and public advocacy work.<sup>241</sup> The scandalous attacks construct a portrait of these public figures' private flaws in order to sully their reputations and thereby weaken their influence in the marketplace and over public opinion.

Such changes in the use of scandalous attacks were made possible because of changes in the political climate. As David Brewer and Steven Zwicker emphasize, although divisions persisted, after the Hanoverian succession and the peaceful succession of George II, there emerged the possibility of "imaginatively suspend[ing]" the specter of the 1640s and "envision[ing] aesthetics and politics as potentially separable entities."<sup>242</sup> To illustrate this transition, Brewer explains the changing attitudes to the *roman à clef* in the 1720s: "the impact of learning about the secret affairs or backstairs influence peddling of ministers seemed less of a life-and-death affair and more a game than it had . . . in the Exclusion Crisis."<sup>243</sup> With this

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<sup>241</sup> Grundy even notes that "the media treated [Montagu] not as an aristocrat but as a celebrity" (*Lady Mary*, xix).

<sup>242</sup> David Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1726-1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 25; also see Steven Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649-1689* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 202.

<sup>243</sup> Brewer, *Afterlife of Character*, 22.

new imaginative possibility, the polemical use of scandal also changed. Whereas Manley used scandal as a discursive strategy to occlude and temper factional political disputes, as seen in Chapter Two, thereafter its use was increasingly severed from explicitly partisan disputes. Scandal became increasingly available for attacks on individuals outside politics yet in the public eye. This “low” mode of combative, polemical exchange was sanctioned by the great Augustan wit himself in both his “low” Grub-Street-like productions and his heroic couplets.

Since the strategy rests on painting a picture of an opponent’s gendered transgressions to weaken his cultural status, Pope also made a particularly easy target for his opponents due to his Catholicism and his physical deformity from an illness. As Straub explains, these two conditions ensured that Pope was “culturally positioned as at least somewhat sexually ambiguous.”<sup>244</sup> His own famous characterization of himself in a letter to his friend John Caryll as “that little Alexander the women laugh at” admits as much.<sup>245</sup> Pope’s stunted growth was exacerbated by a “progressive curvature of the spine” due to Pott’s disease or spinal tuberculosis.<sup>246</sup> Montagu and Hervey take aim at this condition, and Cibber mocks Pope’s small stature and then questions the poet’s virility as he paints a picture of saving Pope’s “little-tiny manhood” from a whore described as the “Mount of Love.”<sup>247</sup> Straub and Rosenthal

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<sup>244</sup> Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 78. On Catholicism’s links to homoeroticism and subjected men, see Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 76-77. Also see my Chapter One above.

<sup>245</sup> *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956) I: 114 (25 January 170/11).

<sup>246</sup> Paul Baines, *The Complete Critical Guide to Alexander Pope* (London: Routledge—Taylor & Francis Group, 2000), 8. On Pope’s disease and the power Pope also constructs from this physical deformity, see Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>247</sup> Colley Cibber, *A Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope*, 1742, Augustan Reprint Society no. 158 (Los Angeles: University of California, 1973), 48; hereafter cited in text.

show that, in the *Dunciad*, Pope attacks Cibber's suspect masculinity as he works to encode his own ambiguous masculinity within the mainstream and thereby secure his literary authority.<sup>248</sup> Because of this ambiguity, throughout his career Pope uses circumcision and impotence to, in effect, neuter his masculine competition. Yet he turns his female nemesis, Montagu, into a fierce (that is, masculinized) opponent; he attempts to de-sexualize their enmity while also identifying her as a potentially dangerous sexualized woman.

Neither Pope, the authors who adopted the tactic against him, nor the reading public were particularly concerned with the truth of the salacious revelations. The most successful and sensational attacks mixed true details with salacious or fabricated innuendo. J. V. Guerinot, using "libel" as shorthand to categorize the various attacks on Pope, defines them as both "detraction – an attempt to destroy the good fame of another – and calumny – the circulation of scandal which is untrue," and following Norman Ault, critics concur that Cibber's description of Pope's visit to a whorehouse is primarily fabricated.<sup>249</sup> Guerinot, noting the popularity and profitability of scandal-mongering texts, suggests pamphlet attacks turned their focus to "public figures," such as Pope, instead of the "peerage" to avoid punishment.<sup>250</sup> Yet Pope himself seems to have relished in directly attacking powerful targets—the successful businessman Curll, Walpole's aristocratic friends Montagu and Hervey, and poet-laureate Cibber—with intimate accusations, accusations that cannot so easily be dismissed as calumny. While Pope's tracts claiming to document Curll's illness from the emetic are fiction, they stem from what is believed to be a true incident. Pope's

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<sup>248</sup> Straub, *Sexual Suspects*; and Rosenthal, "Trials of Manhood."

<sup>249</sup> Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, xxvii; Ault, *New Light on Pope*, 304-307.

<sup>250</sup> Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, xli, also see xxxix-xl.

written attacks on Cibber are primarily composed of vicious literary reviews embedded with personal insults, and Pope's scandalous accusations against Montagu exploit true details from Montagu's personal life—details he knew from their former intimacies—making his attacks even more damaging.<sup>251</sup> For instance, he slyly combined commonly known facts, such as Montagu's advocacy of inoculation against smallpox, with hints of sexualized indiscretions in stinging couplets.

The use of sexualized attacks by Pope and his adversaries both depended on and further cultivated the emergent celebrity culture of the early eighteenth century. The success of these attacks depends on the public's interest in the lives of private individuals, and the cultural acceptance and currency of scandal in the eighteenth century helps illuminate the origins of today's celebrity culture.<sup>252</sup> Our tabloid obsession with the scandals of contemporary actors and socialites, even those famous simply for being famous, may seem to be a natural cultural appetite. But such appetites have been cultivated by commercial literary practices that emerged at this juncture when the public, enabled by print technology that facilitated the widespread circulation of scandal, were given access to the secrets of private individuals in the public spotlight. Pope's use of scandal demonstrates his attention to the power of public opinion, and it helps us understand the roots of our contemporary fascination with and access to the intimate details of celebrities' private lives.<sup>253</sup>

Innovations in marketing and publicity made sexualized attacks against authors and cultural figures commercially viable and popular in the growing print

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<sup>251</sup> See note 289 below.

<sup>252</sup> The edition of *PMLA* on "Celebrity, Fame, Notoriety" also points to the importance of the eighteenth century in the development of "'modern celebrity'" [Joseph A. Boone and Nancy J. Vickers, "Introduction—Celebrity Rites," *PMLA* 126.4 (October 2011): 906].

<sup>253</sup> For more on this contemporary fascination and access, see the Epilogue below.

marketplace. Straub and Joseph Roach argue that celebrity culture first emerged around Restoration theater actors and actresses. Straub emphasizes the public's "fascination" with the actor's "sex life" in particular, and she points to biographies and other texts that provided such details and served as "soft-core pornography for a considerable audience."<sup>254</sup> Paul Baines and Pat Rogers illustrate how Curll's "innovations" in "publicity" helped develop a mode of celebrity around the author as well.<sup>255</sup> For instance, his salacious and notorious publications, his publication of illicitly obtained texts, his teasing advertisements for memoirs and private letters, and his public debates in defense of his questionable publications all brought members of the book trade into public view:

By planting stories in the press, he was able to reach an audience who might previously have taken no notice of the latest publications. . . . His activity made authorship into news, and literature a locus of scandal, a temple of infamy, a whispering gallery of rumor. Where modern gossip magazines . . . creat[e] people famous for being famous, Curll's practice turned writers into people who were written about.<sup>256</sup>

Curll's unsanctioned publication of Pope's personal correspondence and the public dispute over those letters in printed advertisements are prime examples of his methods. As literary figures began to emerge as popular public figures, they too had to manage the demands of "public intimacy," to borrow Roach's phrase. This is not to

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<sup>254</sup> Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 13, also see 24-25, 31. On the importance of Restoration theater to celebrity, also see Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

<sup>255</sup> Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 318-319.

<sup>256</sup> Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 86.



claim that Pope had the “It” factor that propels an actress’s celebrity—his physical appearance necessarily sets him outside of Roach’s paradigm—but rather, to illustrate that those private individuals who became public figures had to manage the demands of a public who subsisted on titillating stories about those accruing cultural status.<sup>257</sup> This appetite fostered an environment in which private, intimate, and sexual details became fodder in public discourse—an environment which encouraged public figures to turn to scandal to undermine the cultural standing of their opponents, regardless of the true source of disagreement.

My revised picture of Pope’s rhetorical strategies and his cultivation of scandal complicates our understanding of Pope’s literary legacy. Critics now generally recognize that Pope constructed a reputation for himself as an arbiter of high culture and that satirists are implicated in their own satire.<sup>258</sup> Related inquires, however, primarily emphasize that Pope was deeply implicated in the very Grub Street press that he, often savagely, critiqued. Baines and Rogers, for example, have astutely shown how Pope used Curll’s habits of illicit publication and “tools of publicity” in order to “avail himself of the mechanism of Grub Street to undermine

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<sup>257</sup> Roach, *It*, 3.

<sup>258</sup> For representative discussions of Pope’s construction of this self-image, see for example, Pat Rogers, “Nameless Names: Pope, Curll, and the Uses of Anonymity,” *New Literary History* 33.2 (Spring 2002): 233-245; Deutsch, *Resemblance and Disgrace*, 3; Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, xlii, xlviii-xlix; and Dustin H. Griffin, *Alexander Pope: The Poet in the Poems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). This view is implicit (and explicit) in many of the essays in Ingrassia and Thomas’s “*More Solid Learning*.” On the satirist’s relationship to his target, see Fredric V. Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading From Jonson to Byron* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); and Bradford K. Mudge, *The Whore’s Story: Women, Pornography, and the British Novel, 1684-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. 160, 163.

rival authors.”<sup>259</sup> But to understand Pope’s full legacy, we must also recognize the “low” or “less respectable” side of Pope’s arsenal of *literary tools* and how he integrated these strategies into “high” works of art, such as his moral essay to Dr. Arbuthnot. My analysis of Pope’s use of scandal thus shows the extent to which “high” and “low” cultural productions intermix and depend on each other, not just in terms of publication or business practices, but within the art itself. Pope asserts and insists upon the refined status of his own productions, but his imagination and literary arsenal are shaped by the popular culture and appetites that they grow out of and react against. Pope’s contemporaries even recognized scandal as part of his literary *modus operandi*. Before I turn to a detailed analysis of Pope’s most famous quarrels, a brief analysis of a contemporary pamphlet, *The Neuter*, published during the height of the Pope-Montagu quarrel, demonstrates that Pope’s contemporaries recognized sexual scandal as a Popeian weapon of attack. They recognized both his public status as an arbiter of wit and high culture *and* his use of scandal.

In 1733, the anonymous author of *The Neuter* comments on Pope’s mistake in the *Dunciad* in attacking his Grub Street adversaries using their very techniques. In particular, this author, similar to other contemporaries that we will see below, critiques Pope’s use of his opponents’ private, licentious secrets. In the dedicatory epistle to Montagu, the author, who is only identified as a “Lady,” laments that Pope

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<sup>259</sup> Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 317 and 109. Cf. to Eric V. Chandler who considers how Pope’s scatological imagery implicates him in the Grub Street milieu; see Chandler, “Pope’s Emetic: Bodies, Books, and Filth,” *Genre* 27 (Winter 1994): 351-76, esp. 372-373. Also see Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chap 2. In one notable exception to this focus on the marketplace, Deutsch considers Pope’s use of his physical deformity in *Resemblance and Disgrace*. Cf. to the earlier focus on Pope’s difference from his objects of attack: Mack, *A Life*; Rogers, *Hacks and Dunces*, 15; and Guerinet, *Pamphlet Attacks*, xxvi, xxvii, xlii.

made his “. . . Enemies more significant than they cou’d possibly make themselves; and since he was so much above the reach of their *Malice*, [she] heartily wish[es] he had been above committing their *Crime!*” The tract itself insists that “. . . *Pope* with Scandal, has defil’d his Lays.”<sup>260</sup> Broadly, Pope’s “scandal” and “crimes” seem to be his appropriation of Grub Street’s style of overly abusive satire.<sup>261</sup> Yet the text creates a strong association between Pope’s “scandals” and the sexual scandals of Delarivier Manley’s and Eliza Haywood’s amatory fiction, and this connection necessarily colors our understanding of Pope’s “scandals.” After lamenting Pope’s “Crime” in stooping to the dunces’ level, the dedication unexpectedly turns to Haywood’s scandalous amatory fiction. The author explains:

I am apprehensive that Mrs. *Haywood* may think me guilty of an Error which I wou’d willingly explode; I own that any Misfortune occasion’d by bad Circumstances, is a very shameful Theam for Satire: But I am of opinion, that her uncleanness is not so much occasion’d by her Poverty, as her dirty Work; for I have, long since, made the Observation, *That great Dealers in Scandal, are great Strangers to clean Linnen.* In her [u]topia, and things of that Nature, she has endeavour’d to copy Mrs. *Manley*’s Vice, without her Merit: I am perswaded that a Person of your *Ladyships* [Montagu’s] Disposition must detect such inhumane Undertakings, where instead of drawing a kind of Veil over the private misfortunes of worthy Families

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<sup>260</sup>*The NEUTER: or, a MODEST SATIRE on the POETS of the AGE.* (London, [1733]), dedication, p. 6; hereafter cited in text.

<sup>261</sup> Guerinot’s comments on the tract reflect such a reading; see Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 235-236.

(admitting their Accounts to be true) they not only cruelly aggravate,  
but officiously transmit 'em to Posterity. [author's emphasis]

This sudden turn to Haywood's amatory fiction, without warning, catches the reader by surprise, and it alludes to an ongoing quarrel with Haywood over the salaciousness of her tracts. Moreover, the digression immediately links scandal to sexual scandal in particular as it explicitly insists that "great Dealers in Scandal, are great Strangers to clean Linnen." By swiftly turning from the *Dunciad* to Haywood's "dirty works" that mimic Manley's vices (presumably through explicit descriptions of sexual activity and female desire), the author associates Pope's scandals and crimes, which "defil'd his Lays," with Haywood's amorous tales. The tract itself even begins by reasserting this connection between Pope, the Grub Street hacks he imitates, and Haywood. It laments "this rude Age" in which "babbling Scandal quits the Female Cause: / Where Wit, licentious, can unblushing" inflict damage. Pope and the dunces are the inheritors of Haywood's decidedly female scandals, and they ruthlessly, un-self-consciously ("unblushingly") wield their sexualized wit—all of which raises the question, is it still true wit?

The author's critique of such scandalous wit centers on the public display of private indiscretions, not on the sexual transgressions themselves. Here, "private Misfortunes" among public figures—"worthy Families"—are imagined as a *purely* private matter. Such affairs no longer straddle the public/private divide as they did in the Restoration when King Charles and his courtiers' libertine reputations had broader political implications, as discussed in Chapters One and Two. The satirists'

job, according to this author, is to help “Veil” such affairs and not permanently publicize them to “Posterity” by committing them to print.

Yet, despite the critique of Pope’s tactics, the piece also hints at the ineffectiveness of such scandalous attacks. The title, *The Neuter: Or, A Modest Satire on the Poets of the Age*, works in two opposing manners. The short title, *The Neuter*, reinforces the sexualized nature of the abuse while suggesting the impotence of such verbal lashings. But the full title serves as a rebuke to this debased mode of attack. It claims the title of neuter for itself and positions itself above the (gendered) fray. As a “*Modest Satire*,” it is true satire that “in vain displays her noble Rage!” against the taste of the age in which satire devolves into railing ([5]). Although the title uses “neuter” as a noun—*The Neuter*—it also evokes the power of castration, as if it were neutering the debate, as if it hopes to serve as the final word on the matter.

*The Neuter* not only defines Pope’s scandalous methods as sexual scandal, it also offers a stinging critique of Montagu’s own similarly scandalous works. We cannot conclusively establish that the author of *The Neuter* knew of *Verses Address’d to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace* (1733), Montagu and Hervey’s stinging reply to Pope’s sexual jabs at them, yet the internal content of the satire indicates an awareness of *Verses* which turns the dedicatory epistle into a bristling, ironic condemnation of Montagu. The dedication opens by complementing Montagu on her wit and “[concern] for the visible decay of a noble *Art*,” and in the passage quoted above, the epistle invokes Montagu as a sympathetic ear in the war against smut. But this stance is undercut by the tract as a whole. *Verses* was published in March 1733; *The Neuter* is dated May 27, 1733 in the dedication, and the pamphlet

was published in the midst of a flurry of texts commenting on the Pope-Montagu exchange. The author explicitly identifies the piece as a “Satire,” instructing us how to approach the verse, and the title page insists it was penned “By a *Lady*,” the very same attribution given to Montagu’s *Verses*. In this light, the author’s critique of satire that targets “Misfortune occasion’d by bad Circumstances” and satire that “cruelly aggravate[s],” rather than “Veil[s],” serves as a reprimand to Montagu for her savage treatment of Pope’s physical deformity in *Verses*. In fact, the entire tract reads as a scolding to both Pope and Montagu, with its opening complaint: “Where Wit, licentious, can unblushing, send / The cruel Jest, to stab the falling Friend” (5). Claudia Thomas suggests that the opaque treatment of Montagu might have political implications: that the dedication to Montagu, a prominent Whig supporter, would help balance the body of the poem which includes a critique of the “Whig party writers who attacked Pope for including them in the *Dunciad*.”<sup>262</sup> But the political aims of the satire are initially obscured by the explicit and extended opening frame which sets the discussion of Pope’s works within the context of scandalous amatory fiction and licentious private secrets. More so than current Pope scholars, the author of the *Neuter*, like other contemporaries discussed at the end of this chapter, notes scandalous attacks as a hallmark of Pope’s satiric strategy. Only by recognizing Pope’s mastery and incorporation of this strategy within his *oeuvre* can we begin to see the true complexity and range of his talents.

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<sup>262</sup> Thomas, *Pope and His Eighteenth-Century Women Readers*, 129.

## The Pope-Curll Quarrel

In a perplexing and uncharacteristic action, in 1716 Pope poisoned the successful, if notorious, bookseller Edmund Curll with an emetic and anonymously published a fictive account of Curll's ensuing illness in *A Full and True Account of A Horrid and Barbarous Revenge by Poison, On the Body of Mr. Edmund Curll, Bookseller*. Pope expanded on this tract with two anonymous pamphlets that further expose and revel in Curll's ill, debased, and ultimately severely disfigured body. In the subsequent tracts, *A Further Account of the most Deplorable Condition of Mr. Edmund Curll* (1716) and *A Strange but True Relation of How Edmund Curll . . . was converted from the Christian Religion by certain Eminent Jews* (1720),<sup>263</sup> Pope specifically imagines and asks the reader to envision Curll's increasingly mutilated phallus. Disfigurement turns into castration, and Curll's severed phallus is placed on public display in coffeehouses. Pope's descriptions of Curll's sexual inadequacies are clearly fictional, but they are framed as public revelations of private misfortunes.

Pope's attacks on Curll are reminiscent of the Marvell-Parker charges of impotence, but the stakes and terms of the polemical contest had changed. The specter of political unrest still haunted and even helped motivate Pope's attacks, but

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<sup>263</sup> Commonly attributed to Pope, *A Strange but True Relation* is usually dated to 1720 although the surviving publication appears in the Pope-Swift *Miscellanies* of 1732. See Norman Ault, ed., *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope: Vol. I. The Earlier Works, 1711-1720* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968, second impression), I: cvii. Also see Eric Van Deventer Chandler (1998), "The publishing imagination: The cultural warfare of Alexander Pope and Edmund Curll," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, United States – California, retrieved June 22, 2011, from Dissertations & Theses: Full Text (Publication No. AAT 9922768), 210; and Shaun Regan, "'Pranks, Unfit for Naming': Pope, Curll, and the 'Satirical Grotesque,'" *The Eighteenth Century Theory and Interpretation* 46.1 (Spring 2005): 55n2. While not a direct continuation of the *Accounts*, in the *Miscellanies*, *A Strange but True Relation* is grouped with and included after them, and it participates in the same general mood and critiques.

Pope's animus focused on weakening Curll's cultural standing, particularly his influence over public opinion and literary productions in the print marketplace. Although critics have traditionally paid scant attention to Pope's *Accounts* and the related pamphlet on Curll's conversion to Judaism, Shaun Regan and Eric Chandler successfully demonstrate how these tracts expose Pope's relationship to the commercialized print marketplace, and they emphasize how Pope uses Curll's deformed body to mark Curll's textual productions as illegitimate.<sup>264</sup> As Regan summarizes, Pope's tracts not only represent "his encounter with Curll, but more outrageously . . . embed Curll's exposed and unrestrained body—Pope's fiction of purely *imagined* sufferings—within a contemporary context of real texts, writers, booksellers, spaces, and institutions."<sup>265</sup> While scatological imagery is prominent in these texts, as Regan and Chandler emphasize, Pope's specific allegations of emasculation and castration are central to his portrait and critique of Curll. Administering the emetic itself might have given Pope the pleasure of revenge, yet in increasingly envisioning the embodiment of Curll's emasculation throughout the tracts, Pope insists upon and revels in Curll's public humiliation—an exposure and violation made possible through widespread circulation in print.

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<sup>264</sup> Regan, "'Pranks, Unfit for Naming'"; Chandler, "Pope's Emetic," and his "The publishing imagination," chap 1. Cf. to the more traditional and cursory analysis in Mack, *A Life*, 296; Mudge, *The Whore's Story*, 159-163; also see Baines and Roger, *Edmund Curll*, 82-85, and their "Pope's First Horatian Imitation? Ben Jonson's Crispinus and the Poisoning of Edmund Curll," *The Review of English Studies* New Series 60.243 (March 2009): esp. 81-83, 89. Straub, most famously, notes the link between sexual and literary authority in the Pope-Cibber dispute; see Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, chap 4, esp. p. 78.

<sup>265</sup> Regan, "'Pranks, Unfit for Naming,'" 38. Regan contends that Pope aimed to undermine Curll's "*cultural*" standing and authority ("'Pranks, Unfit for Naming,'" 45), but his analysis is primarily centered on Pope's concern with the output from the Grub Street press.



Curll's public humiliation is punishment not only for the purloined texts he published, but also for the subtle political attack against Pope that was embedded in his illicit publication *Court Poems*, which had been published two days before Pope administered the emetic. Critics have overlooked the direct implications of the *Court Poems* for Pope,<sup>266</sup> but Pope's immediate and extreme response suggests a deep, personal wound, and the specific complaints embedded within *A Further Account* repeatedly point to political differences between the two men. The skirmish between Pope and Curll started innocuously enough in 1707 as a series of literary disputes over Curll's publication of texts under Pope and his friends' names. As Baines and Rogers document, Curll first produced illicit publications of or against Pope's friends, Matthew Prior, Jonathan Swift, and Nicholas Rowe. But he shifted his target to Pope more directly in 1714 with the publication of Charles Gildon's play the *New Rehearsal: or Bays the Younger and Poems and Translations, by Several Hands*. Gildon's play mocked Pope's verse, particularly the *Rape of the Lock*, and Colley Cibber's role in that play helped fuel Pope's animosity towards Cibber, as we will see below. In *Poems and Translations*, also 1714, Curll republished and publicly identified a bawdy verse "An Epigram upon Two or Three" (renamed in the collection as "A Receipt to make a Cuckold") as Pope's—a move which prompted Pope to explain to his friend Caryll that the epigram had been purloined. This moment was the beginning of Pope's ongoing attempts to respond to and discredit Curll's publications.<sup>267</sup> In 1716 Curll published *Court Poems*, which included the

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<sup>266</sup> In one exception Mudge cursorily notes that Pope poisoned Curll out of concern that "a damaged reputation could jeopardize sales" (*The Whore's Story*, 163).

<sup>267</sup> Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 63-64, 67-69, and on Gildon's *New Rehearsal* as a "Curllian production," see 68 and 84.

anonymous “The Basset-Table,” “The Drawing-Room,” and “The Toilet,” and the opening “Advertisement” attributes these poems either to “a Lady of Quality,” John Gay, or “the Judicious Translator of Homer,” that is, Pope.<sup>268</sup> In response to this illicit publication with its damaging attribution, Pope slipped an emetic into Curll’s drink, and then anonymously published an account of the revenge. Curll’s *Court Poems* came out on March 26, 1716; on March 28<sup>th</sup> Pope administered the emetic, and by April 3<sup>rd</sup> Pope’s *A Full and True Account* was published.<sup>269</sup>

All the surviving evidence suggests the poisoning actually occurred. Based on Pope’s account in these texts and his personal letters, and based on Curll’s own similar account in *The Curliad* (1729), we can reasonably believe that Pope called on Curll and his own publisher, Bernard Lintot, at Swan Tavern and slipped Curll an emetic in revenge for the *Court Poems*.<sup>270</sup> The motives behind Pope’s seemingly extreme and unprecedented behavior, however, continue to perplex critics. As commonly noted, even as Pope maintained the façade that *A True Account* was published by “a late Grub-street author,” he tried to justify the emetic to Caryll. He refers to the incident as “a most ridiculous quarrel with a bookseller, occasioned by [the bookseller] having printed some satirical pieces on the Court under [his, Pope’s,] name.” Pope ultimately insists he “contrived to save a fellow a beating by giving him a vomit.”<sup>271</sup> While George Sherburn and Ault argue that Pope acted to protect Montagu, Robert Halsband contends that to contemporaries the reference to a “Lady

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<sup>268</sup> *Court POEMS* (London: 1716), A2-[v]A2.

<sup>269</sup> Mack, *A Life*, 296; Reginald Berry, *A Pope Chronology* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1988), 29; Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 85.

<sup>270</sup> For a clear and concise history of this incident, see Baines and Rogers, “Pope’s First Horatian Imitation?,” 78-80.

<sup>271</sup> *Correspondence*, I: 339 (20 April [1716]).

of Quality” did not necessarily or obviously refer to Montagu and that Pope actually acted to protect John Gay—his close friend who was trying to secure a position in Princess Caroline’s court and whose standing would be seriously compromised by being linked to “The Drawing-Room,” an eclogue that critiques the Princess’s management of her court.<sup>272</sup>

Yet Pope’s motives may not have been so personally disinterested. Curll’s presentation of the eclogues attempts to align the three authors (Pope, Montagu, and Gay) with radical political sympathies. Pope’s emetic and his corresponding printed attacks against Curll are thus responses to Curll’s literary *and* political antagonisms. Curll’s title page asserts that the eclogues are being “[p]ublish’d faithfully, as they were found in a Pocket-Book taken up in *Westminster-Hall*, the Last Day of the Lord *Winton*’s Tryal.” Halsband dismisses this claim as a “trick to profit by the notoriety of the Jacobite rebel whose trial was being fully reported by the newspapers.”<sup>273</sup> In 1716, however, the specter of Winton’s trial would have stoked political divisions. It would not have served as innocuous publicity. George Seton, the fifth earl of Winton, was on trial for treason for his role in actively raising troops and fighting in support of the Pretender in the Jacobite rising of 1715.<sup>274</sup> The “Advertisement” affixed between

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<sup>272</sup> George Sherburn, *The Early Career of Alexander Pope*, 1934 (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1963), 168-169; Ault, *Prose Works*, I: xcvi; and Robert Halsband, “Pope, Lady Mary, and *The Court Poems* (1716),” *PMLA* 68.1 (March 1953): 243, 245-249. Cf. Mack, *A Life*, 295-296. Halsband warns against attributing one of the three poems to each of Montagu, Gay, and Pope, and instead concludes that Gay was the author of “The Toilet” while Montagu was responsible for the other two eclogues; see Halsband, “Pope, Lady Mary,” 242-243. Also see Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 104; Cf. Thomas James Wise, *A Pope Library: A Catalogue of Plays, Poems, and Prose Writings by Alexander Pope* (Folkestone, Kent: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1973), 22.

<sup>273</sup> Halsband, “Pope, Lady Mary,” 238.

<sup>274</sup> Roger Turner, “Seton, George, fifth earl of Winton (*b.* before 1679, *d.* 1749),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford

the title-page and body of the text then calls attention to the Winton trial again: the publisher reminds the reader that since he or she is already “acquainted from the *Title-Page*, how I came possess’d of the following *Poems*. All that I have to add, is, only a word or two concerning their *Author*.” While the association with the Winton trial does not explicitly accuse the authors of Jacobite sympathies, it purposefully recalls the specter of active rebellion against the Hanoverian crown, an opening mood that resonates with one of the eclogue’s critiques against Princess Caroline.

Such political associations would have created hurdles and humiliations for Pope, Gay, and Montagu. At first glance, the loose association with Jacobitism might appear to be a particularly odd charge against the Whig-supporter Montagu, but Montagu’s sister had married the Scottish Earl of Mar, John Erskine. Despite his pledge of allegiance to King George I in 1714, Mar led Scottish military forces in the Jacobite rebellion of 1715 and proclaimed the Pretender as the rightful king. While Montagu was not implicated in his treason, her sister suffered publicly: during the rebellion Mar abandoned his wife in London, leaving her destitute; and Montagu’s “close friend,” Sir Richard Steele, “public[ly] condemn[ed]” Mar’s treason in print.<sup>275</sup> Curll’s title-page seems designed to play on these public embarrassments. Similarly, such Jacobite associations might pose particular problems for Gay as he was trying to secure a position at Caroline’s court, and they would have been troublesome for Pope’s own literary career as well. Pope’s relation to the rising of 1715 already proved problematic to some contemporaries given his Catholicism and his social ties to Jacobite rebels. For instance, Pope’s preface to the *Iliad* (1715) praised

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University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2006. 16 June 2011  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25123>>.

<sup>275</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 96, also see 95-98.

Bolingbroke, who was then in service to the Pretender in France. In light of the political-religious tensions lasting into early 1716, the specter of Jacobitism in the opening frame of the *Court Poems* posed an ominous threat to Pope.<sup>276</sup>

Pope's responses make use of especially sensational tactics to exact revenge. The dispute over Curll's *Court Poems* only takes up about a paragraph in Pope's first pamphlet, *A True Account*. The rest of the tract details the bookseller's bodily responses to the emetic, and this emphasis on his body helps set the stage for Pope's strategy of attack in later tracts. In *A True Account*, Pope "reprimanded Mr. Curll for wrongfully ascribing to him the aforesaid Poems," and Curll subsequently lays the blame on one of his authors, John Oldmixon. Pope, who is described as "seeming Coolness" and being by "all appearance reconcil'd," then toasts Curll with the poisoned cup of "Sack."<sup>277</sup> The rest of the tract documents Curll's reputed illness in explicit detail. Curll, upon returning home, "fell a vomiting and straining in an uncommon and unnatural Manner, the Contents of his vomiting being as Green as Grass." In increasing pain and fearing that death approaches, Curll drafts a "verbal Will" which acknowledges his unscrupulous publishing methods (3). Asking for forgiveness, he admits to "inventing new Titles to old Books, [and] putting Authors Names to Things they never saw," and he also acknowledges trafficking in scandal: "publishing private Quarrels for publick Entertainment," contributing to "Abuse"

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<sup>276</sup> On Pope's social connections to Jacobites, see Rogers, *Political Biography*, 2-3; on his preface to Bolingbroke, see Mack, *A Life*, 392. On Pope's *Iliad* and anti-Catholic sentiment in 1715 and 1716, see Baines and Rogers, "Pope's First Horatian Imitation?", 87. None of these scholars, however, consider the political implications of the title-page and advertisement of the *Court Poems*.

<sup>277</sup> [Alexander Pope,] *A FULL and TRUE ACCOUNT of a Horrid and Barbarous REVENGE by POISON, On the Body of Mr. EDMUND CURLL, Bookseller; With a faithful Copy of his Last WILL and TESTAMENT* ([1716]), 3; hereafter cited in text.

against others, and pushing one author to put forward “Stories of the Town” as “Facts” (4). Pope specifically imagines Curll exposing his own business as private scandal and false imprints. Curll then retreats to his “Close-stole” (5). The tract closes as Curll is “surprisingly relieved by a plentiful foetid Stool” which forces his audience to clear the room; it warns that the poison will continue to work on Curll’s body and that he will die within a month (6). Pope’s *True Account* relies on scatological imagery to critique and condemn Curll’s texts: Curll and his productions are as vulgar and putrid as his vomit and stools; and his response to the emetic illustrates “his lack of masculine fortitude.”<sup>278</sup>

Building upon this emphasis on Curll’s body, in *A Further Account* Pope creates an explicit link between sexual and literary authority/debasement—a connection he would return to throughout his career. This account continues to expose Curll’s unscrupulous business practices, recounts Curll’s “*Madness*” as a result of the earlier poisoning, and features private admissions by his wife which pair Curll’s sexual failings with his business failings.<sup>279</sup> Curll’s first symptoms of madness are deviations from his normal impolite behavior: civility to his customers and saying his prayers. But the symptoms quickly deteriorate into sexualized perversions. Curll purportedly “void[ed] his Excrements in his Bed, read Rochester’s *bawdy Poems to his Wife*, gave *Oldmixon a slap* on the *Chops*, and wou’d have kiss’d Mr. *Pemberton’s A----- by Violence*” (7). Curll’s lewdness, which includes homo- and

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<sup>278</sup> Regan, “Pranks Unfit for Naming,” 37. For a discussion of how the “metaphor . . . of vacuous literary production as a kind of bodily evacuation” operates in Pope’s *Accounts*, see Chandler, “Pope’s Emetic,” 354-365.

<sup>279</sup> [Alexander Pope,] *A FURTHER ACCOUNT Of the most Deplorable Condition of Mr. EDMUND CURLL, BOOKSELLER. Since his being POISON'D on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March* (London: 1716), 6; hereafter cited in text.

hetero-erotic indecencies, is further explained by his own wife, who only appears incidentally in *A True Account*. Pope's *Further Account* claims to reprint a letter that Mrs. Curll purportedly wrote to Lintot appealing for help after she realized that her husband's "Misfortune was publick to all the World" (8). In her letter she explains that signs of Curll's madness first appeared after his poisoning and that "this is the greatest Adversity that ever befell [her] poor Man since he lost *one Testicle* at School by the bite of a black Boar" (8; Pope's emphasis). Curll's current debasement, which is a direct result of his illicit business practices, is equaled only by his sexual disfigurement as a boy. While the incident—the idea of a boy losing *one* testicle to a bear's bite—is not believable, the tract poses as if it offers the true exposure of a private sexual secret, a moment of sexual loss. The narrator claims to reprint an original, private letter from Mrs. Curll to Lintot, a form designed to invoke the trope of authenticity. According to the text, she confides in Lintot since the public already knows about the illness, but her story about the bear adds a new, intimate revelation. This boyhood loss necessarily cripples Curll's manhood which prefigures and preconditions his current status (in Pope's eyes at least) as a professional hack who steals others' works rather than legitimately producing his own reputable texts. Mrs. Curll's letter, accordingly, goes on to expose their poor finances as a result of Curll's professional shortcomings.

Despite this explicit focus on Curll's sexual and literary debasement, Pope subtly alludes to the political-religious differences that fuel their hostilities, and he insists that Curll perverts his Catholicism in order to defame him. The pamphlet turns to Curll, who has assembled his authors together to determine a course of revenge for

Pope's emetic. Cataloguing all the sacrifices he has made for his authors, Curll insists that he has been punished for his efforts to ensure that their works have been published for all to read. Curll's group resolves upon revenge by defamation, which is to be achieved primarily by attacks on Pope's translation of Homer. Pope's satiric portrait thus attempts to refute criticism of his translation of Homer by showing it to be biased attacks rooted in personal animosity, and while constructing this defense of his Homer, Pope continues his attempt to undermine Curll's authority in the print marketplace. But these literary disputes are intertwined with religious ones. Upon gathering in Curll's dining room, the authors are suspicious of each other—some have "an Air of Contempt," others an air of "Fear and Indignation"—all are compared to hungry scavengers eyeing their next meal (13). Curll presides over this "council of war" from his "Close-stool,"<sup>280</sup> and corralling his minions, he begins by paying them, acknowledging that "*Whores and Authors* must be paid beforehand to put them in good Humour" (14). Pope never lets us forget the debased nature of Curll's empire. "After several Debates" (15), they resolve on defamation focused on Pope's business practices, his Homer, and his Catholicism. They even decide to tie Pope's literary output to religious sedition at home—not unlike Curll's actual *Court Poems*. They resolve to assert "That the Printing of *Homer's* Battles at this Juncture, has been the Occasion of all the Disturbances of this Kingdom" (16). In fact, the texts Curll did issue in revenge for the emetic emphasize Pope's Catholicism. Most notably, *The Catholick Poet* (1716) explicitly accuses Pope of Jacobitism and asserts that political-

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<sup>280</sup> Baines and Rogers rightly label it a "council of war" (*Edmund Curll*, 98), but they do not address its possible allusion to Milton's *Paradise Lost* as I do below. Given the tract's similarities to the *Dunciad* and the implications of comparing Curll to Satan, the implicit allusion to *Paradise Lost* deserves mention.



religious differences explain, in part, why Pope's subscribers abandoned his Homer.<sup>281</sup>

Similar to Curll's will in *A True Account*, the council's resolutions are designed to reveal their disreputable literary methods, yet the entire incident implicitly evokes that other famous council of war—Satan's council in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Curll, reigning from his chamber pot as he and his debased minions debate the mode of attack on their adversary, mockingly recalls Satan reigning over the council of fallen angels in Hell as they debate how to avenge themselves against God. The litany of sacrifices Curll has endured—"What have I not done, what have I not suffer'd, rather than the World should be depriv'd of your Lucubrations?" (14)—even subtly mirrors the "hazard[s]" Satan must face to be worthy of his reign: "But I should ill become this Throne . . . / . . . / . . . if aught propos'd / And judg'd of public moment, in the shape / Of difficulty or danger could deter / Mee from attempting [the journey to Earth to revenge their fall]." <sup>282</sup> Pope's allusion to *Paradise Lost* in his scatological council of war prefigures his use of Milton's unholy trinity, ruled by Dulness in Pope's version, in *The Dunciad*.

But Pope's critique of Curll's religious attacks and his own attempt to associate Curll with the most famous traitor of all, Satan, give way to a picture of Curll's exposed body that distracts the reader from the implications of Pope's grievances. The council quickly dissolves into a gross comedy of filth and waste as

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<sup>281</sup> [John Oldmixon,] *The Catholick Poet; or, Protestant BARNABY Sorrowful Lamentation: An Excellent NEW BALLAD* (1716), 5. On Curll's response to Pope, see Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 38-40, and Baines, *Critical Guide to Pope*, 20.

<sup>282</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes, 1957 (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), Book II, line 452 and II.445-50.

Curll, with his un-wiped and bared ass, rises from his close-stool to fight the books that he suddenly imagines to be attacking him. In this delirium, Curll denounces his own books by wiping his own bared ass with them (22). As with his will in *A True Account*, Curll's delirium exposes the truth of his debased business, but Pope's scatological portrait also asks the reader to envision Curll's (supposedly) debased body. This incident furnishes the literary lesson of Pope's satire, namely that Curll's tracts are fit only to shit on, yet Pope's emphasis on Curll's naked lower body does not let us forget the missing testicle on the front side of that body, a deformity presumably on display throughout Curll's rant against the books.

Finally, Pope's last piece in his trifecta against Curll describes Curll's literal unmanning from a botched circumcision during Curll's conversion to Judaism. In *A Strange but True Relation*, Curll is aligned with Judaism through greed. The opening passage laments that young men of the age now lust after money, not women—an unmanly perversion in and of itself. According to the tract, Curll's deep investment in stocks has prompted his irreligious authors to point him to Judaism and the “immense Sums the *Jews* had got by *Bubbles*,” and Curll takes it upon himself to forsake bookselling for stock-jobbing, a slap at Curll's business methods which focus on profit-making.<sup>283</sup> Taking a cue from Curll's own statements, the Jews seduce Curll by promising riches upon conversion, and throughout the process Curll ends up selling his Christian articles of faith. All that is left to the conversion is circumcision. Pope

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<sup>283</sup> [Alexander Pope,] *A Strange but True RELATION HOW EDMUND CURLL, of FleetStreet, Stationer, . . . went into Change-Alley, and was converted from the Christian Religion by certain Eminent Jews . . .* In *MISCELLANIES in Verse and Prose. By Alexander Pope, Esq; and Dean Swift. In One Volume* (London: 1744), 42; hereafter cited in text. On Curll's interest in profit and innovative techniques to sell his books, see Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*.

recounts the circumcision ceremony in great detail. Upon entering the tavern, Curll attempts to leave at the sight of the “large Pair of Sheers, and . . . red hot Searing-Iron,” but the Jews grab him, unbutton his pants, and lay him bare on a table (44). Curll then voluntarily submits to this “*unmanly Ceremonial*” when told he must be circumcised or lose all his money (45; Pope’s emphasis). As with *A Further Account*, his debased financial gains are linked to, in this case dependent upon, his sexual and physical unmanning.

For a second time, Pope asks his readers to imagine Curll’s castrated genitals as an object of display. Curll’s circumcision is particularly damaging. It goes horribly wrong, and he loses “five times as much [of his foreskin] as ever Jew did before.” Curll’s own impatience causes the error, and the results are so grotesque that the Jews refuse to accept him as one of their own (45). The Jews keep his foreskin, however, and put it on display. In case there are any lingering questions to the extent of Curll’s loss and the effects on his virility, Pope brings in Curll’s wife, once again, to testify to the extent of her husband’s castration: “he now remains a most piteous, woful and miserable Sight at the Sign of the *Old Testament* and *Dial* in *Fleet-street*, his Wife, (poor Woman) is at this Hour lamenting over him, wringing her hands and tearing her Hair; for the barbarous Jews still keep, and expose at *Jonathan’s* and *Garrawy’s*, the Memorial of her Loss, and her Husband’s Indignity” (45-46). The foreskin, according to the logic of the tract, makes a man a man. Curll’s gross greed has led him to sacrifice his manhood for money, and his unmanliness is so deformed that even the Jews, already unmanly themselves, reject his deformity. His foreskin becomes a relic for the curious, an object of morbid titillation and warning.

While the tract's opening and closing moralizing laments avarice and the cruelty of the Jews, Curll is the target of Pope's disgust. Pope never explicitly mentions Curll's book trade, yet the emphasis on Curll's profit-driven tactics recalls his infamous business. This derisive display of Curll's lost manhood suggests how Pope views and wants his readers to view Curll's literary authority: as an impotent relic. The success of Curll's business and his provocations with Pope, however, reveal that his business and literary authority were anything but impotent. Moreover, the indignity of Curll's imagined loss is not just the physical loss itself but the extreme cruelty of the public display—a critique that seems particularly apt given Curll's eventual appropriation of Pope's portrait as his shop sign and imprint.<sup>284</sup> Mirroring Pope's technique in *A Further Account*, the scandalous details of the circumcision purportedly revealed in the tract hold no real claim of truth in and of themselves, but the alleged episode works to reveal a truth, from Pope's perspective, about Curll's unscrupulous character and business practices. These crude, obviously fictional disclosures are early experiments with the devastating weapon of attack that Pope will hone over the course of his career—a literary tool of attack not confined to Grub Street, but later aimed at Pope's social peers and betters. Looking across Pope's career, we will see a recurring pose of exposing intimate sexual secrets for public consumption although the pose and accompany revelations become more sophisticated, subtle, and therefore damaging in his later work.

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<sup>284</sup> For more on Pope's literary play between shop signs and Curll's phallus, see Chandler, "The Publishing Imagination," 208.

### The Pope-Montagu/Hervey Quarrel

Recognizing Pope's rhetorical use of scandal puts his conflict with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in new light and challenges common critical assumptions that his treatment of her is primarily misogynistic. Examining Pope's attacks on Montagu in the context of his entire career reveals that he consistently used sexual vulnerabilities as a weapon against his opponents, including men such as Curll, Hervey, and Cibber. His scandalous jabs at Montagu's promiscuity are not misogynist satire aimed at her in particular because she is a woman and a powerful, threatening one at that. Feminist critics have illustrated how Pope's satire is shaped by emergent gender norms,<sup>285</sup> and critics traditionally concur that he is particularly hostile to Montagu. Valerie Rumbold argues that Pope combined personal details from her life with misogynist myths and images of transgressive women, such as "filth, meanness and lewdness," to produce a rhetorical (rather than historical or factual) construction of Montagu as "the one who came to represent all that disgusted him in the sex."<sup>286</sup> Acknowledging Montagu's own "rage" against Pope, Isobel Grundy insists, "once roused, his negative feelings about her went immeasurably beyond his other enmities, apparently into real, almost obsessive hatred in the guise of judicial condemnation."<sup>287</sup> Focused narrowly on Pope's *First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* (1733), Mack, Rogers, and

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<sup>285</sup> For example, see Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660-1750* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984); Ellen Pollak, *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Christa Knellwolf, *A Contradiction Still: Representations of Women in the Poetry of Alexander Pope* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

<sup>286</sup> Rumbold, *Women's Place*, 159, 155. Also see Gundy, *Lady Mary*, 329; and Thomas, *Pope and His Eighteenth-Century Woman Readers*, 124-126.

<sup>287</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 273.

Thomas contend or suggest that Montagu received worse treatment from Pope's pen than did her close friend and literary accomplice Lord John Hervey.<sup>288</sup> But in fact, Pope's satire against Montagu is intimately paired with vicious attacks against Hervey, and throughout Pope's career, Hervey emerges as an equal (if not primary) opponent—both in terms of Pope's scandalous attacks and Hervey's responses.

Pope's perception of Montagu's gender transgressions might fuel the precise particulars of his attacks on her; but the frequently paired and sometimes even more vicious attacks on Hervey's gender transgressions and sexual ambiguities point to the problem of viewing Pope's treatment of Montagu in isolation. The critical distortion stems from both the sophistication of Pope's attacks on Montagu and the fact that Montagu's surviving reputation is greater than that of Hervey or even Curll, thanks in large part to feminist recovery projects such as Rumbold's. In contrast to Pope's fantastical and calumnious treatment of Curll, many of the charges leveled at Montagu combine intimate details drawn from their former friendship with "otherwise hoarily generic charges."<sup>289</sup> This hint of truth makes the sensational charges more damaging and difficult to dismiss.<sup>290</sup> But Pope similarly levels well

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<sup>288</sup> See Mack, *A Life*, 558; Rogers, *A Political Biography*, 191; and Thomas, *Pope and His Eighteenth-Century Woman Readers*, 125.

<sup>289</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 268, also see 333-334. Mack also notes that Pope's later attacks on Montagu focus "on her slatternliness and her own and her husband's tightfistedness, two points where there is much evidence he was on solid ground, but also and repeatedly, on her sexual promiscuity, about which, not surprisingly, despite her unsavory reputation in some quarters in her own time, it is impossible to be positive" (*A Life*, 560).

<sup>290</sup> For instance, fear that Pope's claims in the *First Satire* had the appearance of truth may have provoked Montagu into responding. Montagu's appeals to acquaintances to intervene with Pope on her behalf and her direct response all testify to the weight of Pope's attacks. See Mack, *A Life*, 558-559.

known charges of androgyny or effeminacy that seem stepped in some basis of truth against Hervey as well.<sup>291</sup>

Pope's jabs at Montagu and Hervey are closely paired in his verse because his conflicts with the two were intimately connected. Political as well as sexual tensions appear to undergird Pope's animosities toward them. The sexual component of Pope's stinging satire may be overt and titillating, but many of Pope's critiques are embedded in what are now recognized as political satires, such as his *Epistle to Bathurst*, which critiques the Walpole administration. Pope's friendship with Montagu started around 1715 but had soured by the time he penned "The Capon's Tale," circa 1726/1727.<sup>292</sup> Despite Montagu's literary interests, it was an unlikely friendship from the beginning: a stooped, Tory, Catholic poet and a beautiful, Whig courtier. We have no surviving definitive record from Pope or Montagu on the split. Reasons given by contemporaries vary from Montagu rejecting and laughing at Pope's romantic advancements to Montagu returning dirty linens to him. Surviving correspondence suggests a growing separation by 1722. In the early 1720s Pope alluded to libels against him that he traced back to Montagu, and he began to complain that she was circulating her works under his name—a complaint that

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<sup>291</sup>See Camille A. Paglia, "Lord Hervey and Pope" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 6.3 (Spring 1973): 348-371; and Reed Browning, "Hervey, John, second Baron Hervey of Ickworth (1696-1743)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2008. 7 April 2011 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13166>>.

<sup>292</sup>The squib was first published in the Pope-Swift *Miscellanies* of 1728 and is thought to be penned shortly prior to that; Cf. Ault, *New Light*, 245 to John Butt, ed., *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A Reduced Version of the Twickenham Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 477. Scholars commonly attribute the squib to Pope; see Ault, *New Light*, 243-245; Cf. Robert W. Rogers, *The Major Satires of Alexander Pope* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), 127n3. On Montagu's early relationship with Pope, see Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 92-93.

receives full voice in the “Capon’s Tale.” Comments reportedly by the two also suggest that their (probably political) satiric targets began to diverge,<sup>293</sup> and Grundy provides a compelling history of the growing political and corresponding social rift that seems to have ultimately separated them throughout the 1720s.<sup>294</sup> During their friendship Montagu brought Pope and Hervey together, and Hervey, a Whig courtier, seems to have been solidly allied with Montagu throughout the hostilities. Hervey’s acrimony with Pope, while political, might also have been fueled by romantic competition first over Mary Lepell, who married Hervey in 1720, and then over Montagu.<sup>295</sup>

Unlike his pamphlets about Curll, which were largely clustered together over a few years, Pope’s attacks against Montagu and Hervey were more sustained and developed over several decades. The open rift is most commonly traced to Pope’s scandalous references to Montagu and Hervey in his *First Satire*, their response in *Verses Address’d to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace* (1733),<sup>296</sup> Hervey’s *An Epistle from a Nobleman to a Dr. of Divinity* (1733), and Pope’s stinging attacks, particularly in his portrait of Hervey, in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735). While these barbs commonly receive the most mention, Pope’s unflattering allusions to Montagu’s and Hervey’s private sexual lives are spread

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<sup>293</sup> For representative discussions on the split, see Mack, *A Life*, 553-562; Rogers, *Major Satires*, 127-133; Ault, *A New Light*, 246-247; Rumbold, *Women’s Place*, 142-145.

<sup>294</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 274, see 271-274.

<sup>295</sup> Browning, “Hervey, John,” *ODNB*.

<sup>296</sup> *Verses* is attributed to Montagu, Hervey, and, increasingly, William Wyndham as well. For representative discussions on authorship of *Verses*, see James McLaverty, “‘Of Which Being Publick the Publick Judge’: Pope and the Publication of *Verses Address’d to the Imitator of Horace*,” *Studies in Bibliography* 51 (1998): 184-185; and Isobel Grundy, “*Verses Address’d to the Imitator of Horace*: A Skirmish between Pope and Some Persons of Rank and Fortune,” *Studies in Bibliography* 30 (1977): 96-108.



throughout numerous works from the late '20s and early '30s.<sup>297</sup> Hervey and Montagu's responses to Pope's jabs are also more prevalent than commonly recognized. They include Montagu's manuscript responses to Pope's *Dunciad* (1729), her manuscript epistle "P[ope] to Lord Bolingbroke" (1734-1735), and Hervey's contributions to the Pope-Cibber hostilities of 1742. The Pope-Montagu/Hervey exchange, particularly the publication of Montagu and Hervey's *Verses*, also prompted third-party contributions, such as *The Neuter* discussed in the opening section of this chapter.

Pope's various attacks against Montagu and Hervey are not explicitly framed as the revelation of a secret per se, as they were against Curll in *A Further Account*, yet the witty barbs operate as the revelation of a secret since they expose private intimacies. Granted, the occasional remark may slide into the most basic exposure of name-calling, and the "Capon's Tale" works differently since the entire poem is an exposé of Montagu's nefarious dealings. But generally, Pope's damning couplets and portraits are simply embedded in his moral epistles or classical imitations. This change in the presentation of the scandalous material is largely dependent on Pope's particular verse form. Unlike Behn's and Manley's novel-esque narratives, and unlike Mrs. Curll's presence in Pope's earlier prose pamphlets, no character or dialogue alerts us to the fact that a secret is being shared. Pope's verse form, however, does not readily accommodate such conventions. Instead, the speaker—often aligned with Pope's authorial image of himself—slips in some titillating intimacy packaged in a devastating couplet. The speaker is, in effect, the secret-sharer; rather than alerting

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<sup>297</sup> For a complete list, see Mack, *A Life*, 556-557, 560. All include some form of sexual attack.

the reader to the revelation by setting up an elaborate frame of secret sharing, he casually, but precisely, exposes his opponent's scandalous affairs as part of his characterization of them. In this vein, Pope repeatedly highlights and thereby exposes Montagu's purported promiscuity and Hervey's effeminacy and impotence—an odd charge against a man with eight children.

In 1728, with the publication of the Pope-Swift *Miscellanies*, Pope's first complaint against Montagu was committed to print with the publication of "The Capon's Tale: To A Lady Who Father'd Her Lampons Upon Her Acquaintance." The verse lampoon, probably written about a year earlier, focuses on a literary dispute: using the common trope of texts as progeny, Pope assails Montagu for publishing her own pieces under his and possibly Swift's names. Pope's manuscript copy is even more precise; the piece is entitled "The Capon's Tale: To Lady *Mary Wortley*."<sup>298</sup> In the lampoon, Montagu appears as both a yeoman's wife who oversees her hens' mating and one particularly fertile, daresay even promiscuous, hen. This precise identification of Montagu as the object of attack brings a particularly personal tone to the piece, but Pope's tactic is not particular to her. A decade earlier he had explicitly identified Curll as his object of attack as well. The descriptions of both the hen's amatory ruses and the yeoman's wife's exploitation of the capon, a castrated cock, reveal Montagu's various manipulative deceptions, both romantic and literary. The hen is solely described by her sexual behavior. Her "tuneful Clocks / Dr[aws] after her a Train of Cocks," yet her flirtations border on artifice. Her "Eyes [are] so piercing, yet so pleasant, / You would have sworn this Hen a Pheasant," and mirroring the amatory rituals of Pope's peers, "All the plum'd Beau-monde round her

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<sup>298</sup> Ault, *New Light*, 244.

gathers.”<sup>299</sup> The mating habits of the hen resemble the fashionable world of coquettes and beaux: “Morning from Noon” the cocks strut around “Flutt’ring, Chuckling, Crowing” as they compete for attention (ln. 11-12). Grundy similarly concludes “Lady Mary is a society coquette.”<sup>300</sup> Yet this hen is no chaste coquette, for she “hatch’d more Chicks than she could rear” (ln 16). With these nods towards contemporary social habit, Pope explicitly emphasizes Montagu’s deceitful sexuality and promiscuity. The hen’s uncontrollable procreation prompts the yeoman’s wife to take action. Realizing the hen is overrun with offspring, she decides to bring in “some Dry-Nurse to save her Hen” and then turns to the castrated Capon. After getting him drunk, she “claps the Brood beneath his Wings” (ln. 18-19, 22).

Ironically, in the satiric critique of Montagu, Pope positions himself as the castrated cock. While this identification is dampened by alterations made to the published verse, it is quite sharp in the surviving manuscript edition. The entire complaint is Pope’s tale of Montagu’s manipulations of his literary reputation. For the critique to function, Pope must claim the place of the capon, the position of the castrated cock/author who is made responsible for progeny/texts that are not his own. Thus, Pope must assert his own emasculation. The capon is so effeminate that he is made to function in the most overtly feminine and female role of a woman’s life, that of mother. Even more problematic for Pope, the yeoman’s wife may take advantage of this impotent male, but according to the verse, she does not castrate him. He already exists as a capon, and he is too foolish to realize the wrong: “The feather’d

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<sup>299</sup> Alexander Pope, “The Capon’s Tale,” in *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A Reduced Version of the Twickenham Text*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), line 5-9; hereafter, all quotations from Pope’s poems will be from this edition and will be cited by line number in text, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>300</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 274.

Dupe awakes content,/ O'erjoy'd to see what God had sent. / Thinks he's the Hen, clocks, keeps a Pother, / A foolish Foster-Father-Mother" (ln. 23-26). He enjoys his maternal role. In contrast, Montagu becomes a "Lady" who fathers lampoons, as indicated in the published subtitle. She attempts to attribute her texts to male authors thereby giving them fathers, and the poem suggests that her manipulations are an aggressive, unnatural act.

Pope tangles with this problematic metaphor of castration throughout the piece. Pope's very complaint suggests his literary authority is anything but impotent. By positioning her own progeny/texts as his, Montagu usurps his literary prowess, and her act of appropriating his name acknowledges the strength of his public reputation. Yet the metaphor of the capon implies that this loss of control and manipulation at the hands of the woman feels castrating. The sexualized nature of Pope's metaphors, while damning for Montagu, threatens to suggest too much about Pope himself as well. In the conclusion of the poem, Pope attempts to temper such implications about his own virility. In his autograph manuscript copy, which alleges that Montagu appropriated the names of both Pope and an acquaintance, the verse concludes:

Such, Lady Mary, are your Tricks,  
 To make us Capons own your Chicks.  
 Hatch on, fair Lady! Make dispatch,  
 Our Tails may smart for what you hatch.  
 The Simile yet one thing shocks,

We are not two Capons but two Cocks.<sup>301</sup>

Here Pope attempts to make Montagu responsible for their castration. She can make them impotent capons/authors but only by revealing her own authorship of the libels. But this logic is not enough to protect the author's literary and sexual authority. The final couplet explicitly registers the problem of the metaphor and overtly insists on their literary and sexual virility, despite Montagu's appropriation of their names. In the published edition, this tension is edited out of the concluding lines. The published satire ends by instructing Montagu, "since [she] hatch[es], pray own [her] Chicks" and suggesting that she should "be better skill'd in Nocks, / Nor like [her] Capons, serve [her] Cocks" (ln. 28, 30). In this published edition, the connection between the speaker/Pope and Montagu's crime is muted—the speaker makes no explicit claim that he is Montagu's capon—and Grundy suggests this final swipe at Montagu's capons functions as a possible jab at Montagu's relationship with Hervey.<sup>302</sup>

Whatever the precise target, the final turn of phrase, instructing Montagu to "serve [her] Cocks" differently than her mistreatment of her capons, lets the capon's own effeminacy stand and refocuses the ending critique on Montagu's exposed sexual promiscuity.

Pope's exposé of Montagu continues in the *Dunciad* (1728) where his innuendos about her promiscuity comprise part of his satiric attack on Grub Street, and notably, these barbs complement and match his treatment of others—both women and men. During the dunces' games celebrating the crowning of Dulness's new king, Pope satirizes Curll's habit of appropriating one author's work under another's name

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<sup>301</sup> In Ault, *New Light*, 244. On Jonathan Swift as the other wronged author, see Ault, *New Light*, 245.

<sup>302</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 274.

and compares this practice with those of prostitutes who work under other's names: "Whence hapless Monsieur much complains at Paris / Of wrongs from Duchesses and Lady Mary's" (II.127-128). The reference to Paris, however, particularizes the scandal. In the early 1720s, prior to the South Sea Bubble, Montagu helped Nicolas-François Rémond, a Frenchman who courted her, invest in South Sea Stock, a pastime Montagu seemed to have enjoyed with Pope and even at his urging.<sup>303</sup> In the *Dunciad*, Pope turns this financial scandal into an underhanded exposé of Montagu's purported sexual promiscuity. "Logically, the *Dunciad* presents the complaints as misdirected," Grundy explains, "but it jarringly recalls that they were made, and that they linked her name with those of 'battr'd jades'." As Grundy's analysis indicates, the very threat of being made the gossip of town, as Montagu's sister had been, is the real danger.<sup>304</sup> But, again, this strategy of attack is not unique to Pope's relationship to Montagu. Within this very barb Curll is also maligned; his business practices compared to those of a whore. Moreover this strategy, although part of Pope's own repertoire, is also part-in-parcel with the Grub Street antics that he satirizes throughout Book II of the *Dunciad*. Accordingly, the allusions to Montagu are on par with his other sexualized portraits in Book II: Eliza Haywood with her "Two babes of love close clinging to her waste" (II.150) and Curll with his burning urine, symptoms of a sexually transmitted disease, in the dunces' pissing contest (II.176).<sup>305</sup> In 1742,

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<sup>303</sup> For Montagu's relationship with Rémond, see Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 203-209, and Rumbold, *Women's Place*, 142.

<sup>304</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 277-278; also see Thomas, *Pope and his Eighteenth-Century Women Readers*, 5.

<sup>305</sup> Complementing my reading, Kathryn R. King argues that twentieth-century critics incorrectly accepted Pope's attack against Haywood at face value and that this misreading produced a distorted view of Haywood's career and reputation. See King, "Eliza Haywood, Savage Love, and Biographical Uncertainty," *The Review of English Studies* New Series

Pope even adds the suggestive scene in Book IV in which Colley Cibber, having ascended to his throne as the king dunce, sleeps on Dulness's lap: "[s]oft on her lap her Laureat son reclines" (IV.20). While the specifics of Pope's jabs at Montagu might be rooted in Pope's detailed knowledge of her actual history, this type of revelation was becoming a general method to discredit the cultural standing of his literary and cultural adversaries.

The political differences between Pope and Montagu/Hervey that probably grew throughout the 1720s are an important backdrop for their escalating antagonisms. Montagu's manuscript responses to the *Dunciad*, "Her Palace placed beneath a muddy road" and "Now with fresh vigour Morn her light displays," and her manuscript epistle "P[ope] to Lord Bolingbroke" include political critiques aimed at Pope's Catholicism, Bolingbroke's Jacobitism, and Pope's continued friendship with him. Considering the epistle, Thomas notes that Montagu "emasculates both Pope and his patron," and she theorizes that Montagu's image of Pope kissing his elderly nurse is retaliation for the way in which "he had abused [Montagu's] confidence to slander her (in the instance of Rémond, for example)."<sup>306</sup> Similarly, Pope's *Epistle to Burlington* (1731), *Epistle to Bathurst* (1733), and even the *First Satire* (1733) contain both embedded political critiques of the Walpole administration (of which Montagu and Hervey were fierce allies) and sexual jabs at Pope's former friends. In the *Epistle to Bathurst*, Hervey's androgyny is maligned as "soft Adonis, so perfum'd

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59.242 (2008): esp. 722, 725. Similar to Grundy's analysis of the jab at Montagu, Rogers and Baines note that Pope's footnote which disavows the gossip on Curll's venereal disease actually "lodges the implication all the more securely in a reader's mind" (*Edmund Curll*, 194-95). For more on Curll and the *Dunciad*, see their chap 10.

<sup>306</sup> Thomas, *Pope and His Eighteenth-Century Women Readers*, 127, 128. On Montagu's responses to Pope's *Dunciad*, see Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 331, and Thomas, *Pope and His Eighteenth-Century Women Readers*, 124-125.

and fine” (ln. 61), and Montagu is once again linked to prostitution and promiscuity: “Phyrne forsees a general Excise. / Why she and Sappho raise that monstrous sum? / Alas! they fear a man will cost a plum [£100,000]” (ln.122-124). The sexual dig is coupled with a political one. Phyrne, Maria Skerret, who was Walpole’s mistress, and Sappho horde money to procure sexual favor from men in the face of inflation—all a critique of Walpole’s proposed Excise Bill in 1733.<sup>307</sup>

In Pope’s *First Satire* the devastating attacks become more complex even as they are compressed into witty puns and couplets. The poem serves as a defense of Pope’s satiric verse, and within the first ten lines of the poem, Pope attacks Hervey. Pope notes that some critics complain Pope’s satire is “too rough” and others that it is too weak, so weak in fact that “Lord *Fanny* spins a thousand such a Day” (ln. 4, 6). This literary dig at Hervey’s verse also encapsulates and reflects Hervey’s person: a gendered character defined by impotence. Hervey is prolific, but his output is weak and ineffective. He can “spin”—a word that both recalls the female work of sewing and suggests the unproductiveness of his act—so many verses each day because they are toothless nothings. The “Lord” is further unmanned by the sobriquet “Fanny,” which is diminutive and feminine. The name also illuminates the futility of his works. It alludes to poetaster Fannius, an opponent of Horace and, in Ben Jonson’s play the *Poetaster*, a hack found guilty of calumny against Horace.<sup>308</sup> Pope’s portrait thus depicts Hervey as powerless and effeminate. While no sexual secrets are revealed or

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<sup>307</sup> For political readings of Pope’s verses, see Mack, *A Life*, 562-579, and Rogers, *A Political Biography*, 3, 188-190. Also see Vincent Carretta, *The Snarling Muse: Verbal and Visual Political Satire from Pope to Churchill* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), esp. 61, 66-69, 93, 105, and 109.

<sup>308</sup> See Baines and Rogers, “Pope’s First Horatian Imitation,” 83, 87.



explicitly invoked, nonetheless, all of Hervey's sexual potency, or lack of thereof, is exposed.

Pope's satire, however, inverts Hervey's real life sexual and political potency. As previously mentioned, Hervey's effeminacy or androgyny was well known. Contemporary satires routinely noted his delicate features, and he seems to have had a homosexual affair with Stephen Fox. But he was also the father of eight children, an intimate confidant to both Montagu and Queen Caroline, and romantically involved with Anne Vane, who later became Prince Frederick's mistress.<sup>309</sup> Pope thus emphasizes the impotence and femininity of this father of eight in order to undercut rhetorically the very real sexual success that Hervey achieved and Pope did not. In fact, Hervey's ability to negotiate both his transgressive ambiguity and heterosexual virility simultaneously may have made him even more threatening for Pope. Straub, in her analysis of Pope's treatment of Cibber in the *Dunciad*, astutely contends that Pope struggles to define his own cultural authority against male figures that "perpetuat[e] uncertainties about the dominant versions of sexual identity and literary authority that are emergent in the eighteenth century. . . . Confronted with his own problems of sexual ambiguity and literary authority, Pope associates deviation from verbal mastery with sexual deviation, and firmly positions both outside newly dominant definitions of masculinity and literary authority."<sup>310</sup> A similar dynamic is in play here with Pope's emphasis on Hervey's effeminacy and weak verse. Yet once again, Pope runs the risk of implicating himself as impotent as well, for he admits his

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<sup>309</sup> See Paglia, "Lord Hervey and Pope," esp. 351, 353-356; and Browning, "Hervey, John," *ODNB*.

<sup>310</sup> Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 78.

verses are considered similarly weak and ineffective by others, even as his entire piece works overall to counter such complaints.

If Pope's verse is as weak as Hervey's, it is also as stinging as Montagu's revenge on others; and while Pope portrays Hervey as effeminate and powerless, he depicts Montagu as fierce and potent.<sup>311</sup> Arguing for his right to defend himself through satire, Pope compares his satire to others' various forms of retribution:

Slander or Poyson, dread from *Delia's* Rage,  
 Hard Words or Hanging, if your Judge by *Page*.  
 From furious *Sappho* scarce a milder Fate,  
 P—x'd by her Love, or libell'd by her Hate (ln. 81-84).

The accusation that Montagu libels her enemies connects back to Pope's earlier complaints that she libeled him and published libels under his name; and as frequently noted, the allegation that she poxes those she loves works on three levels: as a reference to the sexually transmitted disease syphilis, to the scars on her face from smallpox, and to her own campaign for inoculation against smallpox in England. Considering these three allusions are all neatly captured in this one verb, Mack explains the phrase also almost works as a "compliment" of Montagu's activism (*A Life*, 559). Her campaign for inoculation is an act of compassion. Yet even that compliment is two-sided. The poked mark is "scarce a milder fate" than hanging. As Grundy notes, the suggestion lingers that the vaccine may have been deadly.<sup>312</sup> Mack rightly questions why Montagu finally responded to this attack when she had let the

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<sup>311</sup> On Pope's changing characterization of Montagu from womanly and soft to monstrous and aggressive, see Rumbold, *Women's Place*, 145-150. Also see Gundy, *Lady Mary*, 270-271.

<sup>312</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 354-355, and on Montagu's role in the debate over inoculation, see xix and 209-222.

earlier ones linking her with prostitution slide. He hypothesizes that Hervey may have “spurred” her on and/or that Montagu might have been outraged “at the insulting allegation dropped in so casually among other allegations believed by many to be truths. Page, for example, *was* in fact something of a judicial sadist, and there had been a scandal, carefully hushed up, involving a supposed attempt by ‘Delia’ (Lady Mary Deloraine, governess to the younger princesses and soon to be their father’s whore) to poison a rival.” The list of scandals also works as a political critique since all three were Walpole’s allies (*A Life*, 559, also see 566). But the sexual reverberation of the line is hard to escape, especially considering Pope uses a similar critique in the *Epistle to Bathurst* published just few months earlier. There, in his satiric portrait of Balaam, possibly corresponding to Thomas Pitt (1653-1726),<sup>313</sup> Pope quickly condemns Balaam’s whoring son and his daughter who “flaunts a Viscount’s tawdry wife; / She bears a Coronet and P-x for life” (ln 390-392). This generalized portrait reveals patterns of common sexual corruption: the known mistress who is publicly and visibly marked by both her social standing and her sexual affairs and disease. Thus, Montagu, although masculinized by her fierceness, is a diseased woman who continues to infect her lovers. Whether by venereal disease or inoculation, her favor is potent and leaves a lasting mark.

Montagu and Hervey blasted back in their collaborative *Verses Address’d to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace*, and a series of third-party pamphlets then joined in the fray. The exact conditions surrounding the publication of *Verses* may never be known. *Verses* is attributed to “a Lady” on its title page, which seems to identify Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as the author.

<sup>313</sup> See Butt’s note to line 342 in the *Reduced Twickenham*.

Advertisements for *Verses* appeared on the same day as did advertisements for *To the Imitator of the Satire of the Second Book of Horace* (1733), a tract of almost identical content but which is not attributed to a Lady. *Verses* is commonly assumed to be Montagu and Hervey's manuscript retort which was put into print, either unauthorized by Montagu or through Hervey as a shield, since as an aristocratic woman she could not be identified as the author of such a commercial tract.<sup>314</sup> Mack has dubbed this response, "the fiercest verbal thrashing of [Pope's] life" (*A Life*, 559), and *Verses* was commercially successful, selling well and going through several editions.<sup>315</sup>

*Verses* is overtly comprised of vicious attacks on Pope's physical deformities, but the overall picture of Pope's deformity and by close association his literary inadequacies are accompanied by glancing blows against his sexual abilities that partake in the trend of using sexualized ammunition in the war against one's cultural rivals.<sup>316</sup> The most lasting imprint of the tract is the conclusion: "And with the Emblem of thy crooked Mind, / Marked on thy Back, like *Cain*, by God's own Hand. / Wander like, accursed through the Land."<sup>317</sup> In one of the more literary analyses of

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<sup>314</sup> McLaverty presents a compelling argument that Pope illicitly published the *Verses* through Anne Dodd, while Hervey was in the midst of publishing *To the Imitator* with James Roberts, in order to justify his attacks against the pair and to allow him to publish further attacks in his *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*; see McLaverty, "Pope and the Publication of *Verses*," 183-204.

<sup>315</sup> On the commercial success of *Verses*, see Rogers, *Major Satires*, 132, and Grundy, "A Skirmish," 101.

<sup>316</sup> In contrast, Mack contends that Pope's opponents do not charge him with impotence in their attacks. Acknowledging only a few "cursory allusions" to allegations of impotence, Mack insists that most texts emphasize Pope's virility (*A Life*, 871). While the evidence he references supports his conclusion, he does not appear to consider the implicit charges of impotence in some of the most famous attacks on Pope, notably Montagu and Hervey's *Verses* and Cibber's *A Letter*, as discussed below.

<sup>317</sup> *VERSES Address 'd to the IMITATOR of the FIRST SATIRE of the Second Book of HORACE* (London: Printed for A. Dodd, 1733), 8; hereafter cited in text.

this tract, Thomas concludes that Montagu and Hervey, in an attempt to “identify Pope with the embodiment of evil” but unwilling to give him the power of Satan, associate him with the “Genesis myth” more broadly.<sup>318</sup> As the simile to Cain reflects, *Verses* works by constructing an inherent relationship between Pope’s physical deformity, his soul, and his writings. His body serves as public warning of his misanthropic soul, which is evidenced in his railing satire. The poem asserts this connection between Pope’s body, soul, and texts from the beginning: Pope’s imitation of Horace is “just such an Image of *his* [Horace’s] Pen, / As [Pope’s] . . . self art of the Sons of Men”—that is, debased (3). “It was the Equity of righteous Heav’n, / That such a Soul to such a Form was giv’n” (4).

This relationship between Pope’s physical body and literary ability begins to slide, in places, into the connection between sexual and literary authority that we have seen in the Pope-Curll quarrel and which we will see in the Pope-Cibber conflict. The verse vacillates between ascribing Pope’s satire and hence the poet himself with immense wounding power and rendering him ineffective, even impotent. Pope’s piercing satire, in addition to murdering its fellow man (8), is an “Oyster-Knife, that hacks and hews[,]” (4) and a wasp that “stings and dies” (7). Yet, like “fretful *Porcupines*” that “shoot forth a harmless Quill” while smiling, Pope “whilst impotently safe, / . . . strike[s] unwounding” leaving “unhurt” targets to “laugh” (7). Pope even becomes “*A little Insect shiv’ring at the Breeze*” (7). *Verses* thus attacks Pope’s literary authority and virility, insisting his verses are both too scathing to be true satire and too ridiculous to be effective. Yet the physical implications to Pope’s impotency are not far off, for the logic of the entire poem rests on linking Pope’s

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<sup>318</sup> Thomas, *Pope and His Eighteenth-Century Women Readers*, 125.

deformed body to his satire. In addition to being imagined as a *little* insect shivering in the breeze or as a smiling porcupine launching a harmless quill/phallus, the hunch-backed Pope with his “wretched little Carcass” (6) is “No more for loving made, than to be lov’d” (5). While ostensibly a commentary on his debased soul and writings, the verse evokes questions about Pope’s capabilities as a lover given his deformity. One third-party response, *A Proper Reply to a Lady, Occasioned by her Verses . . .* (1733), takes this theme of impotence and turns it back against Montagu’s very literary endeavors, which it declares to be decidedly unwomanly.

Critical attention may focus on Montagu’s treatment by and exchanges with Pope, but Hervey had the longer running series of exchanges with him, and Pope’s attacks on Hervey’s effeminacy grew even more severe as the flurry continued. In addition to *Verses*, Hervey also responded separately to Pope in *An Epistle from a Nobleman to a Doctor of Divinity. In Answer to a Latin Letter in Verse* (1733). This piece stands apart from *Verses* as Hervey adopts the tone of a differential statesman writing to a family friend. Hervey uses irony, sarcasm, and mocking self-deprecation to expose Pope’s own hypocrisies and flaws; and the attack stays focused on Pope’s literary shortcomings. Hervey’s overtly decorous form of response seems to be his attempt to squash Pope’s earlier characterization of him spinning puny satires. Nonetheless, two years later Pope further highlights Hervey’s sterility by casting him as Sporus, Nero’s castrated and effeminate servant/wife, in a searing vignette in *An Epistle from Mr. Pope, to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735). By this time, Hervey had become an active supporter of Walpole in Parliament and a member of the king’s Privy Council as vice-chamberlain, a position which created an intimate friendship with Queen

Caroline.<sup>319</sup> Pope's salacious condemnation of Hervey's androgynous behavior may grab the reader's attention; however, Pope's portrait includes a more substantive political critique on the nature of political power, and in these details, the possibility of Hervey's threatening potency remains.

Much of the Sporus portrait explicitly focuses on Sporus or Hervey's transgressive sexuality. At the opening of the vignette, Pope inserts a note insisting that the name "was originally *Paris*, but that Name having been, as we conceive, the only reason that so contemptible a Character could be applied to a Noble and Beautiful Person, the Author changed it to this of *Sporus*, a Name which has never yet been so mis-applied" (ln. 305). In typical Pope fashion, the note reinforces the embedded critique even as it pretends to deny the slight. It suggests that Pope changed the name to Sporus so that the satiric portrait could not be misapplied to a particular noble person, but in calling attention to the nobleman's beauty, Pope succeeds in further linking the critique to Hervey in particular. Summarizing the critique of Hervey/Sporus, Pope proclaims that he is an "Amphibious Thing!" (ln. 326). Pope's charge captures both Hervey's vacillating wit, which "see-saw[s] between *that* and *this*, / Now high, now low" (ln. 323), and his androgynous (bi)sexuality. He is the "Amphibious Thing! that act[s] either Part, . . . Fop at the Toilet, Flatt'rer at the Board, / Now *trips* a Lady, and now *struts* a Lord" (lns. 326-329; emphasis added). The overt meaning is that Hervey/Sporus plays both parts, male and female. But Pope's precise wording subtly plays on Hervey's sexual potency too. The verbs refer to the way Hervey plays both sexes—the movements he performs to act each part respectively—yet each verb also hints at Hervey's sexual

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<sup>319</sup> Browning, "Hervey, John," *ODNB*.

conquests. For “strut” also meant “[t]o protrude stiffly from a surface or body.”<sup>320</sup> In the context of Hervey/Sporus’s sexuality the line evokes the image of one stiffly protruding male organ in particular. While “trips” is less sexual, there is the double *entendre* that Hervey trips or purposefully makes a Lady, perhaps a Lady Mary in particular, stumble in order to catch or overwhelm her. This behavior towards women might be deceptive, yet it is in line with Hervey/Sporus’s overall being: “A Cherub’s face, a Reptile all the rest; / Beauty that shocks you, Parts that none will trust, / Wit that can creep, and Pride that licks the dust” (lms. 331-333). Embedding this personal critique within the satiric portrait of Sporus stands in stark contrast to Pope’s retelling of Curll’s mangled circumcision. In the attack on Curll, Pope names names and directly conjures the image of Curll’s foreskin on display, but here the attack is more suggestive and sophisticated. Pope theoretically offers the portrait of Sporus as a generalized satiric type—the reader must, in the end, match the portrait to Hervey—and while the portrait of Sporus/Hervey’s amphibious nature is designed to shock and calculated to ensure disgust, the precise condition of his sexual organs and capabilities are left to the reader’s imagination.

Pope, however, cannot seem to decide whether Hervey’s transgressions are threatening and harmful or weak and ineffective. The castrated Sporus should not have access to a hetero-normative masculine authority, but one cannot escape the hint of Hervey’s potency. The lines above suggest that, once revealed, Hervey’s disturbing sexuality should dissuade others from any intimacy; yet his grotesque body and

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<sup>320</sup> And until the late seventeenth century, “strut” particularly referred to a protruding “organ, part, [or] growth.” “strut, v.4a &b,” OED Online, June 2011, Oxford University Press, accessed 14 July 2011  
 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/191974?rskey=JMF1GI&result=6&isAdvanced=false>>.



shocking secrets threaten to intrude and discompose others. His sexuality is not passive. Despite this force, elsewhere in the passage, accounts of Hervey/Sporus's androgyny and effeminacy bleed into implications of his literary, sexual, and political impotence. After describing Hervey/Sporus as a bug that teases both "the Witty and the Fair" (ln. 311), Pope comments on Hervey's political, literary, and cultural influence:

Whether in florid Impotence he speaks,  
 And, as the Prompter breathes, the Puppet squeaks;  
 Or at the Ear of *Eve*, familiar Toad,  
 Half Froth, half Venom, spits himself abroad  
 In Puns, or Politicks, or Tales, or Lyes,  
 Or Spite, or Smut, or Rymes, or Blasphemies. (lns. 316-320)

"[P]olitics and scandal mongering have merged," according to Rogers. Walpole is the puppet master guiding Hervey's speech; Eve is Queen Caroline. Thus, "there is little difference between Hervey's backstairs activity as a courtier and his malicious gossip in poetry and pamphlets."<sup>321</sup> Coming to a similar conclusion, Rosemary Cowler suggests that "Hervey, the man, is generalized into a type of perverse-pernicious courtier localized in the historical model of Sporus, Nero's male wife."<sup>322</sup> While the broad sketch and political critique may serve as a satiric type, the inconsistencies in the portrait also point to Pope's ongoing acrimony with Hervey and Montagu in particular. His image of Hervey as Satan makes the impotence claim more perplexing as it belies the accusation that Hervey is politically ineffective. As Walpole's puppet

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<sup>321</sup> Rogers, *A Political Biography*, 205

<sup>322</sup> Rosemary Cowler, ed. *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope. Vol II: The Major Works, 1725-1744* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1986), II: 434. Cf. Carretta, *Snarling Muse*, 116.

he may squeak and speak in “florid Impotence,” but as a toad at Eve’s ear, he threatens to manipulate the queen just as Satan successfully tempted Eve. His dishonest, vengeful libels—“Half Froth, half Venom”—may successfully affect court politics and policies.

Critics remind us that Pope drew several of his images, including this allusion to Satan and Eve, from Hervey and Montagu’s *Verses*,<sup>323</sup> but Pope first used the image of Satan at Eve’s ear in a youthful letter to his friend Henry Cromwell in order to showcase his own sexual prowess. This letter, dated July 11, 1709, was published illicitly in Curll’s *Miscellanea* (1726), in *The Female Dunciad* (1728), and by Pope in the octavo version of his letters (1737).<sup>324</sup> In the letter Pope describes a flirtatious encounter in a coach with a beautiful, ill young woman. After offering her some fruit to remedy her illness, he conjures the image of Satan tempting Eve, and he describes his flirtations through that Biblical (and Miltonian) story. Pope, according to his retelling in the letter, uses the “good Success” of Satan as a model as he charms the young woman with “Gayety” despite his “evil Form.” Pope recounts his success: “so that now, as once of yore, by means of the forbidden Fruit, the Devil got into Paradise.”<sup>325</sup> He ends the paragraph claiming they maintained their modesty, but he purposefully sexualizes the iconic scene of temptation. *The Female Dunciad* even structurally aligns Pope’s letter with Haywood’s amatory tales: the letter is grouped

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<sup>323</sup> Deutsch, *Remembrance and Disgrace*, 208; and Grundy, “A Skirmish between,” 117-118.

<sup>324</sup> Although Curll’s publication lists the date as July 17<sup>th</sup>, Sherburn has determined it must actually be July 11<sup>th</sup>. For the dating and publishing history of this letter in Pope’s octavos, see Sherburn, ed., *Correspondence*, I: 66 and xiv-xv.

<sup>325</sup> Quotations from the letter as included in *MISCELLANEA. IN TWO VOLUMES. Never before Published*. Vol. 1 (London, 1727[6]), 14.

with bawdy and amatory pieces, including one of Haywood's novels. Satan's skillful use of language to tempt, or seduce Eve, becomes amatory seduction.

Pope's supposed gayety in the coach varies dramatically from Hervey/Sporus's spewing frothy venom. Yet the sense remains that Sporus threatens to seduce his Eve. Explaining that "Hervey's bisexuality . . . goaded Pope beyond endurance," Grundy notes that the reference to Eve also recalls Montagu and one of her nicknames and thereby "alleges that Hervey has perverted Lady Mary."<sup>326</sup> In this context, the metaphor even further emphasizes Hervey's verbal potency and suggests the personal nature of the attack. If Hervey "perverted" Montagu away from Pope, it helps explain Pope's disgust at Hervey's bisexuality and androgyny in particular, over any homosexual transgressions. The loss of his intimacy with Montagu to the effeminate Hervey might have been most disturbing to Pope given his own fragile claims to a normative masculinity. Pope's repeated portrayals of the ineffective, impotent Hervey serve as retribution for Hervey's real life sexual, political, and cultural potency as seen in his eight children, his intimacies with Queen Caroline, and his close friendship (at the very least) with Montagu. Thus, the tensions embedded within the portrait both stem from and belie Pope's rhetorical struggle to contain and neuter Hervey's real-life accomplishments. In the portrait, Pope's overt focus on Sporus/Hervey's gendered transgressions helps obscure both these inconsistencies and the personal and political nature of Pope's conflicts with Hervey while still allowing Pope to condemn Hervey for those very same conflicts.

This masterfully wrought portrait certainly rivals Pope's most damning exposes of Montagu's supposed sexual transgressions, including his infamous quip

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<sup>326</sup> Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 349.

about being “p—x’d by her love,” causing us to modulate our understanding of his hostility to Montagu in particular. Examining the entire Pope-Montagu/Hervey quarrel in context helps us understand his attacks on Montagu, and it also illuminates the power of scandal to affect all three figures. Each of their responses attests to their fear that the scandalous characterizations could take root if circulated unchecked. While Pope’s surviving critical reputation may suggest that he was ultimately victorious, the need of each author to counter and respond to his or her opponent shows the power of this type of polemical strategy.

### **The Pope-Cibber Quarrel**

In addition to his vicious Sporus portrait, in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* Pope takes at least passing aim at most of his various critics and adversaries, including actor and poet laureate Colley Cibber. Defending his satire by showing the futility of his attacks, Pope asks, “Whom have I hurt? . . . has not *Colly* still his Lord, and Whore?” (94-96)—a two-sided compliment that points to Cibber’s continued commercial success (his ability to retain his patron and pay for his whore despite Pope’s critiques) while simultaneously slurring Cibber for his indebtedness to patrons and his sexual proclivities.<sup>327</sup> Seven years later in *A Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope* (1742), Cibber turns this line against Pope, citing it as the reason to recount an episode of Pope’s failed whoring in his famous rendering of Pope as a “*Tom Tit*, pertly perching upon the Mount of Love!” (48). There seems to be no truth to Cibber’s most salacious details, but the truth of the episode appears to have been irrelevant to the reading public. The reaction of the town was almost instantaneous:

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<sup>327</sup> For a similar reading, also see Chandler, “Pope’s ‘Girl of the Game,’” 114.

engravings and pamphlets capitalizing on the incident followed within days and weeks.<sup>328</sup>

Cibber's infamous Tom-Tit episode is the climax of a quarrel that spanned Pope's entire career. Recognizing the true extent of this quarrel highlights the consistent intertwining of political and scandalous attacks throughout their exchanges. Not only do the salacious accusations reflect and construct emergent gender norms as Straub's seminal study *Sexual Suspects* emphasizes, but these revelations are literary strategies designed to wound a cultural opponent by masking the true hostilities and appealing to reader's appetites, rather than alienating them with divisive disputes. Whereas Pope's quarrels with Curll, Montagu, and Hervey, which peaked earlier in his career, demonstrate Pope's increasingly masterful use of scandal, this quarrel is notable because at its height Cibber and other pamphleteers turned Pope's own literary methods against him. Their successes and failures bring Pope's own mastery into sharp relief; and the commercial success of Cibber's tactics, as demonstrated in the numerous third-party responses, shows scandal's strategic ability to transform real animosities into commercially safe, titillating, and appealing forms.

The sexualized quips that Pope and Cibber wield against each other are not *ad hominem* attacks or scandal simply for the sake of scandal, but rather these moments epitomize and demonstrate the other's moral and literary failings.<sup>329</sup> Straub and, after

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<sup>328</sup> On Cibber's probable fabrication of the Tom-Tit episode as told, see Ault, *New Light*, 304-307. On the immediate success of the Tom-Tit episode, see Ault, *New Light*, 302; Mack, *A Life*, 779; and James Sutherland, ed., Introduction, *Alexander Pope: The Dunciad*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963), xxxiii.

<sup>329</sup> Similarly, Chandler agrees that Tom-Tit episode is not merely about "titillating scandal," but he reads the figure of the whore as a satirical symbol "for commercially motivated cultural production" and Pope's inability to admit his own commercialization ("Pope's 'Girl of the Game,'" 112, also see 108).

her, Rosenthal read Cibber's *Letter* as a response to Pope's portrayals of him, especially as heir to Dulness's throne in the *Dunciad*. Reading these pieces in tandem, both critics productively illustrate the authors' competing constructions of masculinity, and they show how literary and masculine authorities are intertwined: an opponent's masculine inadequacy reflects and is indicative of his aesthetic failings as well. Their readings indicate that Pope's and Cibber's various constructions of masculinity are a means to shape "the emerging dominant order of bourgeois culture" and "an emergent set of [sexual] norms . . . [and their] deviation[s]." <sup>330</sup> While, as we will see below, Cibber's *Letter* ultimately responds to decades of injuries, not just to the *Dunciad*, these arguments suggest that the preoccupation with another's masculinity functions as a kind of polemical discourse. No longer the sexual politics that we saw in Chapters One and Two, sexual secrets become a popular means to discuss and evaluate cultural figures and norms; thereby, they become the basis for combative, often ideologically-driven debates between competing public figures. Hence, polemical strategies have changed from the overt political-religious and constitutional pamphlets of the seventeenth century. As in Pope's other disputes, the rhetorical strategy of using scandal to undermine an opponent becomes the polemics of choice in cultural warfare.

Pope's and Cibber's tracts reflect their concerns with their own respective cultural authority, an authority grounded in their claims to masculine power, their literary reputations, *and* their political influence. Their overt focus late in their careers on each other's sexual authority strategically obscures these entrenched political hostilities. While Straub acknowledges that Pope's Catholicism would have

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<sup>330</sup> Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 23; also see Rosenthal, "Trials of Manhood," esp. 89-91 and 103.

necessarily limited his involvement in public life, in her analysis of the quarrel, she primarily considers how contemporary representations of Catholicism that linked it to sodomy and other sexual transgressions diverged from hetero-normative constructions of manhood.<sup>331</sup> Pope and Cibber's conflict, however, started twenty-five years before Cibber's *Letter*, and their early hostilities over political and literary patronage deserve more attention than Straub's narrower considerations allow. Real contention existed over their literary achievements, particularly Cibber's professional successes, and their respective relations to the Hanoverian throne. Contemporary responses even point to the political-religious tensions of Pope and Cibber's confrontations as twenty-five years of acrimony came to a head and received their fullest airing in the sensational Tom-Tit episode.

Accordingly, the rest of this chapter surveys the entire Pope-Cibber quarrel, which stretched throughout Pope's career and culminated in Cibber's *Letter*, particularly in the Tom-Tit episode. I show that their early quarrels explicitly chronicle their different political allegiances, and that this context sets the stage for their animosity and later satiric quips. My extended analysis of Cibber's *Letter* and the flurry of responses it inspired (pamphlets and engravings) illustrates that contemporaries recognized the source of the hostilities and that some attempted to deploy and profit from scandalous attacks as well. But focusing on Pope's satiric exchanges in isolation obscures the fact that the height of Pope and Cibber's titillating exchanges, both Pope's revised *Dunciad* and Cibber's *Letter*, roughly coincided with Samuel Richardson's watershed polite, domestic novel *Pamela* (1740). Hence, before concluding, I briefly put the engravings of Cibber saving Pope from the monstrous

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<sup>331</sup> See Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 76-77.

prostitute into context with the nearly contemporaneous illustrations of scenes from *Pamela* in which Lord B attempts to ravish the eponymous heroine. Considering these two sets of engravings together helps clarify scandals' relationship to the emerging novel and reveals that, despite the critical eminence of the novel, both forms exploit the reader's desire for a glimpse into a private individual's intimate life.

Cibber's acrimony with Pope dates back to their earlier careers in the theater. Competition over their professional reputations quickly gave way to political attacks that highlighted their opposing stances and the political implications of their various literary allies and patrons. Gay, Arbuthnot, and Pope's farce *Three Hours After Marriage* (1717) included a satiric jab at Cibber—a jab Cibber was forced to deliver in his character's own lines. In retaliation, later that year, while starring in Charles Gildon's *A New Rehearsal*, Cibber added improvised lines mocking Pope's farce. According to Cibber's retelling in his *Letter*, his lines in the *Rehearsal* provoked Pope into a frenzy, and various contemporary reports indicate that Pope confronted Cibber after the show demanding that Cibber cease and threatening physical retaliation by Gay on his behalf.<sup>332</sup> Cibber then took aim at Pope in his play the *Non-Juror* (1717). The play condemns Jacobites, Jacobite sympathizers, and Catholics more generally; and it displays three of Pope's texts on stage. Ault proffers that the play features Pope's texts on stage to associate the poet with treasonous Jacobites: the texts on stage suggest "that Pope's works (and, therefore, the poet himself) would naturally be popular in houses where disaffection to the Hanoverian succession and the

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<sup>332</sup> See Cibber, *A Letter*, 18-19; Mack, *A Life*, 775; Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, xxxi; and Ault, *New Light*, 300.



Government was rife.”<sup>333</sup> Cibber thus uses Pope’s religion to implicate his political allegiances and thereby sully his literary reputation; and the exchange of literary, political, and ultimately sexual barbs continued throughout their careers. Pope responded with *A Clue to the Comedy of the Non-Juror* (1718), which turned Cibber’s anti-Jacobitism back upon the play by reading it as an elaborate Jacobite tract.<sup>334</sup> Even Pope’s decision to establish Cibber as Dulness’s heir in the revised *Dunciad* carries political implications. As Mack explains, it identifies “the true begetters of Dulness’s new empire: George II and his stage manager: Cibber-Walpole.”<sup>335</sup> The political implications of their various literary patrons inform the hostilities. Because of the public’s response to the salacious details, the sexual attack seems to take center stage and operate independently in Cibber’s *Letter*. But Cibber’s entire *Letter* grows out of and attempts to settle their early confrontations, and the titillating story is only one brief prong of attack.

Throughout the *Letter* Cibber catalogues all of Pope’s slights against him and attempts to refute them as unfounded. The Tom-Tit story, refuting Pope’s *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, offers by far the biggest punch, but before Cibber works his way to the infamous episode, he revisits their literary and political-religious quarrels. Cibber directs much of his energy to refuting Pope’s characterization of him in the *Dunciad*, but the tract is also sprinkled with ongoing references to Pope’s professional jealousy over Cibber’s success on the stage. Omitting the reference to himself in Pope’s *Three Hours After Marriage*, Cibber begins by admitting that he “publicly offended

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<sup>333</sup> Ault, *New Light*, 311.

<sup>334</sup> Ault, *New Light*, 311. Also see Cibber, *A Letter*, 26. For a list of their combative exchanges in print prior to 1742, see Ault, *New Light*, 300-324, and Mack, *A Life*, 777-778.

<sup>335</sup> Mack, *A Life*, 781. Also see Sutherland, Introduction to *Dunciad*, xxxvi, and Rogers, *A Political Biography*, 227-228.

[Pope], before a thousand Spectators” in his performance of the *Rehearsal*, but he insists the slight was not sufficient to warrant Pope’s reaction. He admits that he obliquely referenced Pope’s farce, which had recently “been acted without Success,” but he maintains it was only a “Jest” because the audience interpreted it as one (17). Not only does Cibber repeat the offending reference at some length, but he also exacerbates the original offense by describing Pope’s effeminate and extravagant reaction. Cibber recounts how Pope confronted Cibber after the play with “his Lips pale and his Voice trembling.” Pope’s “Passion” overwhelms Cibber but only in temporary “Amazement” (19). Cibber then turns to Pope’s *A Clue to the Comedy of the Non-Juror* which purported to reveal Cibber’s play as “a closely couched Jacobite Libel against the Government” (26) and which Cibber condemns for being impolite (21). Cibber suggests that professional jealousy spurred Pope’s analysis: “. . . *Drury-Lane* was not so favourable to him; for there alas! . . . he had so sore a Rap o’ the Fingers, that he never more took up his Pen for the Stage” (22).

Their professional jealousy, however, covers and is even fueled by political-religious conflict. Cibber slyly admits that he hesitated to reference Pope’s critique of the *Non-Juror* but that he ultimately included it because he decided it illustrates Pope’s “Sentiments” (22). Cibber then expounds on those sentiments. He explains that Pope “disguise[d] . . . [his] real dislike” of the play. Others attacked the play for “exposing” the treasonous Jesuit and “ridiculing the conscientious Cause of an honest deluded Jacobite Gentleman,” but he suspects that Pope hid such disgust. For “if the Play had not so impudently fallen upon the poor Enemies of the Government, Mr. *Pope*, possibly, might have been less an Enemy to the Play: But he has a charitable

Heart, and cannot bear to see his Friends derided in their Distress” (23). Cibber’s play, performed two years after the Jacobite rising of 1715, aimed to guide public anger against the Catholics.<sup>336</sup> Now, mocking Pope’s loyalty to Jacobites under the guise of “Religious Duty” (24), Cibber publicly and explicitly questions Pope’s loyalty to his monarch. Cibber uses Pope’s aesthetic judgments and personal intimacies to impute his political beliefs. In contrast, Cibber notes the king’s support and financial reward for the play (24) and thereby marks his own public success and politically-correct allegiances. Cibber returns to the insinuations about Pope’s political leanings at the end of his *Letter*. Countering Pope’s swipe in the *Dunciad* at the “Cibberian *Forehead*” or “Cibber’s Impudence,” Cibber insists that he still has the support of his superiors, and he counters, “rather the Papal, than the *Cibberian Forehead*, ought to be out of Countenance” (59, 61). Cibber’s remark ostensibly refers to Pope’s satire and questionable morals, but it also puns on Pope’s Catholic fealty. The contextual emphasis on one’s social standing and status among one’s superiors suggests that English society would do well to be wary of Pope’s allegiances.

Cibber’s strategy to attack Pope by embedding scandalous calumny within (what strives to be) a logical refutation elevates scandal to the same level of validity as his other lines of argument. He treats the Tom-Tit episode as just another refutation of Pope’s logical fallacies. In order to fully refute Pope’s half-truths, logic compels him forward: Pope’s generic charge in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, “‘has not Colley too his Lord, and Whore?’”, could apply to anyone, including Pope (*Letter* 44). Since Pope has leveled this “flattest Piece of Satyr” against him, Cibber asserts that he has

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<sup>336</sup> Rogers, *A Political Biography*, 228.

the right to “take the same Liberty” with Pope (46-47). Moreover, Cibber insists on the superior accuracy of his account, for he declares: “I must own, that I believe I know more of *your* whoring than you do of *mine*; because I don’t recollect that ever I made you the least Confidence of *my* Amours, though I have been very near an Eye-Witness of *Yours*” (46). He positions his reciprocal treatment of Pope as fair and reasonable. Not only does Pope’s generic charge compel it; truth, his “very near” empirical evidence, in contrast to Pope’s lack of specifics, validates it as well. Since the charge requires “some particular Circumstances to aggravate the Vice” and justify the satire, Cibber is “reduced to mak[ing] bold with a little private Conversation” (46, 47). Cibber thus recounts an incident, purportedly from Pope’s youth, in which Pope and Cibber accompany their Lordship to a brothel. The Lord, according to Cibber, decided that the evening’s entertainment would be to “see what sort of Figure a Man of [Pope’s] Size, Sobriety, and Vigour (in Verse) would make, when the frail Fit of Love had got into him.” Their waitress “tempt[ed] the little-tiny Manhood of Mr. Pope,” and he went off with her. But Cibber, suddenly fearing for Pope’s health, “threw open the Door upon him” and “found this little hasty Hero, like a terrible *TomTit*, pertly perching upon the Mount of Love!” Cibber then completed his rescue by grabbing Pope by the heel and dragging him away from “his Danger” (47-48).

The entire episode focuses on Pope’s lack of vigor, and his frailty stands in sharp contrast to Cibber’s resolute action. Although Cibber’s narrative contrives to depict Pope’s frailty, the entire *Letter* attests to his vigor. Cibber insists he intervened solely to protect Pope’s health. Fearing that Pope’s “thin Body” would contract and not be able to survive a venereal disease, he rushed to intervene (49). Although

Cibber ostensibly claims to be thinking of Pope's wellbeing, his opening salvo to Pope's diminutive size and his "Vigour (in Verse)" sets the stage for a comparison between Pope's poetic and sexual capabilities. Cibber explicitly emphasizes Pope's small stature six times within the short passage (48-49), and Chandler notes that a "tom-tit or titmouse" is a "tiny, delicate bird."<sup>337</sup> Pope's sickly body is no match for the "Mount of Love" that threatens to overwhelm him by physically engulfing him and infecting him with disease. But the implication is that Pope's "little-tiny Manhood" would not be able to handle her sexual prowess either. Cibber claims to cut the encounter short by interrupting Pope "pertly perching" over his whore, yet the entire piece works to suggest that Pope, in all his sickly smallness, would not be up to the task. As commonly noted, in many ways Cibber's story of saving Pope "pertly perching upon" the prostitute counters Pope's image of Cibber "[s]oft[ly] . . . reclin[ing]" on his mother's lap (*Dunciad* IV.20). Whereas Pope imagines Cibber either in a "post-coital swoon or his pre-coital struggle to achieve an erection," as Chandler explains, Cibber's "story both places the poet in the whore's lap and infantilizes him (he is childlike in his tininess and position)."<sup>338</sup> Similarly, Straub, in her analysis of Cibber's narrative, summarizes: "This is a passive-aggressive act of castration with a vengeance. If Pope has the phallus that his literary sharpness would seem to accord him, Cibber suggests that it is a pitiful little thing, not worth having."<sup>339</sup> Yet the entire *Letter* belies Cibber's literary castration of the Augustan wit. Pope had finally provoked Cibber into responding after years of slights, which suggests Pope's very potency. If his wit were as impotent as Cibber suggests, neither

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<sup>337</sup> Chandler, "Pope's 'Girl of the Game,'" 120.

<sup>338</sup> Chandler, "Pope's 'Girl of the Game,'" 115.

<sup>339</sup> Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 44, also see 74.

his slur in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* nor his newest installment of the *Dunciad* would have provoked a response.

The sheer number of continuations and appropriations of the Tom-Tit story point to the commercial success of Cibber's initial *Letter*. While many of these subsequent tracts attempt to build on Cibber's initial success and use scandalous calumny to undermine Pope's cultural capital, several of these attempts are anemic. The fact that some attacks fall flat points to the skill needed to wield scandal as a successful satiric weapon and highlights Pope's mastery of the technique. Even Cibber's use of scandal is inconsistent. Although he successfully harnessed it in his first *Letter*, his later letters fail to carry the same punch as the first. Cibber penned two more public "letters" to Pope. One followed in each of the following two years, and perhaps unsurprisingly, Cibber revisits the Tom-Tit episode in his third letter, *Another Occasional Letter From Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope* (1744). The premise of this third letter is that Pope's *Dunciad in Four Books* (1743) illustrates that Pope is Dulness's true heir, and Cibber uses the Tom-Tit episode to demonstrate that Pope is also "a *Dunce* in Love." This time Cibber reminds us of the "friendly Office he did thee [Pope], when in thy dangerous Deed of Darkness, crawling on the Bosom of thy dear Damsel, he gently with a Finger and a Thumb, pick'd off thy small round Body, by thy long Legs, like a Spider, making Love in a Cobweb." Cibber now concludes, however, that Pope was made a "Martyr" to "this *gentle Love*" and that he still suffers from a venereal disease. Cibber warns, "consider by thy being liable to have all these Truths of thee made publick, what possible Glory canst thou reap from this idle

Contest.”<sup>340</sup> Further infantilizing Pope and turning him into an insect, Cibber showcases his own power against Pope’s physical smallness and romantic inadequacies. Yet Cibber’s warning falls flat, for he has already made Pope’s supposed “Truths” public.

*Blast upon Blast*, a pamphlet that followed Cibber’s first letter in 1742, similarly offers new revelations into Pope’s private life and motivations, yet its portrait of Pope’s romance is more pathetic than it is titillating or even ridiculing. Once again, the hint of scandal fails to land a forceful blow against Pope. The tract is a parody of Genesis, and the resulting form and language mutes the scandal. The form and satiric aim are incompatible, and hence the tract serves as a foil to Pope’s skill at integrating scandal into a variety of forms. *Blast upon Blast* explains the Pope-Cibber quarrel in terms of professional jealousy. Pope is cast as Cain, and once outcast from society, Pope mates with his elderly nurse who bears a son. Despite the difference in age between the lovers, which the pamphlet emphasizes in its description of the nurse’s death, the narrative is remarkably un-salacious. The tract sides with Cibber in the dispute, and the subtitle announces it provide “a New Lesson for P—PE.” But the biblical style—“*P-pe* knew his Nurse, and she conceived and bare a Child, and called his Name *Crambo*”—forecloses any scandal.<sup>341</sup> Salacious detail is necessary for the lesson to sting, but the style precludes such details. Pope’s relationship with his nurse seems to hold the promise of scandal. Pope had close relationships with both his

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<sup>340</sup> Colley Cibber, *ANOTHER OCCASIONAL LETTER From Mr. CIBBER to Mr. POPE* (London, 1744), 52. Also see Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 316.

<sup>341</sup> H---S Vinegar [Edward Roome], *BLAST upon BLAST, and Lick for Lick; or a NEW LESSON for P—PE. A Parody of the Fourth CHAPTER of GENESIS* (London: 1742), 7.

mother and his nurse,<sup>342</sup> and the author plays on the question of impropriety with the nurse given the nurturing, almost incest-like, nature of the relationship and the age-discrepancy. But ultimately, in *Blast upon Blast*, the suggestion merely reflects Pope's pathetic circumstances, rather than providing titillating gossip. The tract even depicts an enduring bond between the two, as Pope spends his life with his nurse and appropriately mourns her death.

As demonstrated by the claims in the many tracts that capitalized on Cibber's Tom-Tit narrative, contemporaries recognized that Cibber's salacious story responded to and yet obscured more substantive disagreements. Reflecting the political and literary subtext of the quarrel, two additional publications, *Sawney and Colley* and *A Blast upon Bays*, provide fanciful new revelations about the authors' respective sexual proclivities. The anonymous pamphlet *Sawney and Colley* (1742) mocks both Pope and Cibber, but it also uses scandal to attack Pope as it claims to reveal the intimate secrets that motivate Pope's misogyny. The tract insists that the two authors engage in these titillating adversarial exchanges for financial gain, for as Colley acknowledges in the tract, "[t]he more [they] rail, the more bespatter, / 'Twill make [their] Pamphlets sell the better."<sup>343</sup> The pamphlet is structured as a dialogue between Sawney, a nickname for Alexander, and Colley, and the tract is full of purported revelations into Pope's sexual secrets and private sexualized motives. The

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<sup>342</sup> See, for example, Rumbold, *Women's Place*, 24-27, and Mack, *A Life*, 14-15, 25-26, 28, 406, 546. In a manuscript response to the *Dunciad*, Montagu asserts that Pope was reduced to "kiss[ing his] ancient Nurse"; Mary Wortley Montagu, "P[o]pe to Bolingbroke," in *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy*, ed. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), ln. 84.

<sup>343</sup> *Sawney and Colley (1742) and Other Pope Pamphlets*, ed. W. Powell Jones, Augustan Reprint Society no. 83 (Los Angeles: University of California, 1960), 5; hereafter cited in text.



pamphlet's Colley insists that Sawney/Pope could only be with a woman who was a prostitute, for only a prostitute, who sells "her *Titillation*, / For Bread, not carnal Recreation, / Would suffer Thee, *small* Friend, to come / Within ten Foot of her *Fore-bum*." Continuing, Colley ridicules Sawney/Pope's "*filial Piety* to his *Mamma*" as seen in his references to her in his letters, and Colley highlights Sawney/Pope's hypocrisy in his treatment of the "rest of her sex" in verse. The anonymous author even imagines a proper punishment for such hypocrisy: "he should have his *Bumkin* scourged to the Bone, by a Committee of M A T R O N S chosen for that Purpose" (11). Sawney's bared ass is exposed for punishment by a committee of respected women. The image is ostensibly asexual, yet the entire sadistic spectacle plays on the sexual ambiguity of a schoolboy's bared ass, a figured used in Cibber's *Apology* and Pope's *Dunciad*.<sup>344</sup> The pamphlet concludes, however, that Pope's harsh poetic treatment of the fair sex reflects his frustrated desires for them, not hatred (12).<sup>345</sup> It condemns Pope's hostilities towards women while exposing a series of private sentiments that supposedly explain his misogyny.

Although the pamphlet reproduces and mimics Pope and Cibber's sexual/literary quarrel, it shows that Colley's sexual barbs mask his true intent to expose Pope's Jacobite sympathies. Sawney warns Colley, "you'll see me draw my *Quill*," and Colley retorts, "Sir, I've seen your *Quill* before, / So did your *Lord*, and eke your *Whore*; / But 'twas so *very, very small*, / I trust, it holds but little *Gall*" (6).

Reasserting the link between the men's sexual and literary authority, the author

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<sup>344</sup> For detailed analysis of the sexual ambiguity of the schoolboy trope, see Straub, *Sexual Suspect*, 69-70. Whipping "reinforced discipline and hierarchy," but contemporaries also feared it might "give a pleasure to the beaten or the beater . . . that certainly has sexual overtones" (Straub, *Sexual Suspect*, 72).

<sup>345</sup> See Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 302.

makes each character's literary quill stand in for his phallus. With reference to the Tom-Tit episode, Colley maligns both Sawney/Pope's satire and his phallus as inadequate and ineffective. He insists that one "[w]ho slanders *all* Men, slanders *none*" and that Sawney is "[a]s impotent in *Spite as Love*" (7). He then immediately proclaims that Sawney/Pope lives "a *Traytor* in the land" (7). Sawney responds by smearing the actor/laureate's own literary achievements—Colley hides his own "*Impotence*" by taking credit for (or "*fath'ring*") others' works (8). The salacious and familiar charge of impotence distracts from the accompanying charge of treason, but the real impetus behind the sexual bravado is Colley's political accusation. The tract even explicitly returns to Pope's friendship with Bolingbroke before it concludes. The author insists on aligning Pope and Bolingbroke and then goes on to catalogue Bolingbroke's political back dealings and, ultimately, his betrayal of his king (15-16). If Pope's loyalty to his mother is hypocritical in light of his critiques on the female sex, his poetic claims to virtue are hypocritical in light of his political friendships and inferred alliances.

*Blast upon Bays; or A New Lick at the Laureat* (1742), the first direct response to Cibber's initial *Letter*, suggests that Cibber's bias against Pope's religion fuels his first letter. The anonymous pamphlet, now commonly attributed to Pope, is an animadversion to Cibber's first letter.<sup>346</sup> It refutes many of the slights Cibber attributed to Pope by demonstrating them to be products of Cibber's own imagination. Most notably, it rejects Cibber's interpretation of Pope's *A Clue to the*

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<sup>346</sup> For the attribution to Pope, see Wise, *A Pope Library*, 99; Berry, *A Pope Chronology*, 172; and the citations given in the *English Short Title Catalogue* and *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Accordingly, I accept Pope as the probable author of this pamphlet and will refer to him as such in this project.

*Comedy of the Non-Juror* by highlighting the biased logic of Cibber's argument. Around the same time as *A Clue*, Pope wrote a similar mock-exposé of his own *Rape of the Lock*. According to the tract, however, Cibber condemns the libel of the first exposé while dismissing the other as a harmless joke. Hence, Pope insists Cibber only reaches this fallacious conclusion because of his religious biases against Pope. Modeling and mocking Cibber's position, the tract concludes that, in the end, Cibber's criticism only demonstrates that "Mr. *Pope's* Papism and Jacobitism sticks in the Stomach of the loyal, protestant, sack-drinking *Colley*."<sup>347</sup> Pope then contrasts Cibber's divisive labels with excerpts from his own verse and letters that depict his political and religious moderation.

The animadversion continues by refuting the Tom-Tit episode. Pope notes the distinction between his line in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, "And has not Colley STILL *his Lord and Whore?* ", and Cibber's appropriation of that line, "And has not Colley too *his Lord and Whore?*" (20; Pope's emphasis). Cibber's inaccurate appropriation, "too," allows him to insist that Pope once had a whore as well and introduce the Tom-Tit story from Pope's youth. But Pope calls attention to the difference between either of them taking a whore thirty years earlier and Cibber "still . . . [having] his Whore at Seventy" (21). Pope thus tries to diminish the power of the Tom-Tit story on public opinion. To emphasize the "Force" of his original satire, Pope goes on to depict Cibber's amorous encounters at seventy. Pope recounts a recent episode when Cibber and a friend became enamored with "a fair smirking Damsel, . . . *Susannah-Maria*,\*\*\* who happen'd to have Charms sufficient to revive

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<sup>347</sup> [Alexander Pope,] *A Blast upon Bays; or, A New LICK at The LAUREAT* (London, 1742), 16; hereafter cited in text.

the decay'd Vigour of these two Friends. They equally pursued her, even to the *Hazard of their Health*, and were frequently seen dangling after her, with tottering Knees, at one and the same Time" (22). In Pope's exposé, Cibber's age functions as Pope's physical limitations do in the Tom-Tit episode. His age cripples him and makes him a pathetic, derisive figure. The friends' sexual pursuit endangers their health, and their "tottering Knees" and "dangling" pose answer Cibber's description of Pope's small body about to be overwhelmed by the mount of love. Cibber's sexual escapade is not interrupted; it never even begins. Moreover, Cibber is made more ridiculous by chasing Susannah-Maria alongside his friend in public view. According to the tract, Cibber and his friend's ridiculous behavior was so public that others would comment, "Lo! Yonder goes Susannah and the two Elders" (22). Although not revealing a closely held secret, Pope rehashes purported gossip; furthermore, he ridicules Cibber and then publishes that portrait further spreading it about town. Pope introduces the anecdote under the guise of truth—"you cannot but remember (for the Fact is recent, and if you forgot it, no body else will)"—yet Pope also admits that he is responding to Cibber's "Story" with one of his own (21-22). Pope praises Cibber's superior imagination in creating the titillating Tom-Tit episode, but Pope's praise damns Cibber's story (and his own) as fiction.

Finally, an issue of *The Universal Spectator, and Weekly Journal* from October of 1742 suggests the ongoing popularity of the Pope-Cibber quarrel in the marketplace and points to the deep political conflicts between the men. Although designating the material solely as "Humour," the issue opens claiming to reprint a letter purportedly written from Cibber's son to Pope. The letter, attributed to

“T—PH—S C—R” (Theophilus Cibber), recounts the well-known history of the Pope-Cibber acrimony, including their tensions in 1717, but the tract, which promises to continue in the next issue, ends by emphasizing the polemical subtext of the conflict. Theophilus considers why Pope has attacked him, not just his father. He surmises, “I could not, by defending Sir R—— W—— *totis Vivibus*, offend the little Bard; unless —he was an Enemy to the *Government*:—For according to mine and my Father’s Principles, to be against the *Minister*, is to be against the *K—g* and *Church*, and *Constitution*, and —— the Devil and all.”<sup>348</sup> He thus concludes that Pope’s “Enmity” to the Cibbers is due to their differences in “*Religion*.” The paper undoubtedly mocks Theophilus’ position that opposition to Walpole represents opposition to the monarch, Church, and constitution—a blurring that recalls the threat of civil war. Nevertheless, it explicitly highlights the dangerous political subtext that Cibber’s *Letter* attempts to gloss over and demonstrates that the animosity was more politically tinged than currently recognized. Even third-parties recognized the division and invoked it to score their own political points.

Despite the sensationalism and popularity of *Cibber’s* revelation in the Tom-Tit episode, Pope’s detractors characterized the public revelation of a friend’s private intimacies as an offensive *Popeian* hallmark. Picking up where Montagu and Hervey’s *Verses* left off, one tract, Thomas Carte’s *The Blatant-Beast* (1742), insists that Pope’s inner soul is embodied in his deformities. Under this premise, Pope becomes Shakespeare’s Caliban.<sup>349</sup> As is standard for these pieces, Carte attends to

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<sup>348</sup> *The UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR, and WEEKLY JOURNAL*, No. 732 (Saturday, 16 October 1742). For a reference to the paper’s discussion of an engraving from Cibber’s first letter, see Sutherland, Introduction to *Dunciad*, xxxiii n2.

<sup>349</sup> [Thomas Carte,] *The BLATANT-BEAST. A POEM* (London: 1742), 9; hereafter cited in

Pope's professional jealousy over Cibber's successful plays, and he contends that Pope viciously attacks even the most virtuous men out of personal jealousy stemming from his deformity. But he also specifically accuses Pope of disclosing others' private secrets to the press for personal gain: "Beware all ye, whom he as Friends carest, / How ye entrust your Secrets to his Breast. / . . . On Backs of Letters was his *Homer* wrote, / All your Affairs disclos'd too save a Groat" (6). Pope does not merely satirize public figures for the general good or even malign casual acquaintances for profit; he betrays his *friends'* intimacies. The lines specifically reference Pope's publication of his personal correspondence, but the attack is broader. He publishes his friend's secrets to further his own authorial standing and increase his own wealth. He will sacrifice those who should be most dear for his own purposes.

In his third and final letter, Cibber similarly insists that Pope delves into his opponents' private sins and publishes them to undermine their cultural standing and further his own. Cibber compares Pope to a highwayman: just as the robber takes one's money, Pope takes one's "more valuable good Name"—each to satisfy his own "equally craving Wants of Food, or of Fame" (19). Later in the tract Cibber attempts to refute the reasons that Pope lays out in the *Dunciad* of 1743 for labeling Cibber the king dunce. Responding to Pope's jab that Cibber "*has his Lady at fourscore* [eighty]," Cibber warns, "*Alexander*, this raking into a Man's private Sins, to prove him a Dunce is but much about the Sagacity of peeping into his Close-stool, to prove him a Glutton!" (50). Cibber intones that everyone has private sins and that those amorous affairs do not warrant Pope's charges. He uses this retort as an excuse to

revisit the Tom-Tit episode, but it also highlights Pope's habitual recourse to publishing private scandals.

In addition to these publications, engravers captured the alleged moment of Pope's humiliation. This graphic visualization of the Tom-Tit episode in four engravings emphasizes the voyeuristic pleasure of scandal—a voyeuristic interest in private intimacy that novel readers shared—and thereby helps clarify scandal's relationship to the emerging novel. Analysis of these engravings in relation to the Pope-Cibber pamphlets and then in comparison to the nearly contemporaneous engravings surrounding *Pamela* helps illustrate the widespread public interest in such transgressive revelations and how that public appetite was briefly contained by the domestic novel. While the pamphlets mimic and build on Cibber's calumnious allegations and the ongoing animosities more broadly, the engravings focus on the precise moment of Pope's sexual humiliation when Cibber pulls him off the prostitute. Rosenthal argues that Cibber's revenge is “in moving this body from the poet's (relatively) disembodied realm of print into the actor's embodied world of public exposure.” His violation is in “exposing and imagining [Pope's] sexuality as *public*.”<sup>350</sup> The entire strategy of attacking an opponent by revealing sexually scandalous secrets gains its power through that very violation, but, as Rosenthal references, this public exposure is literalized in this handful of engravings. In contrast, Pope had famously attempted to control the public's view of his body. “[T]he market for Pope's poetry was inseparable from a thriving market for images of the poet,” but attempting to retain control over his image, Pope never authorized a

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<sup>350</sup> Rosenthal, “Trials of Manhood,” 103, 99.

full-length picture of himself.<sup>351</sup> This compulsion to hide his stooped body from public consumption would have made the Tom-Tit engravings particularly devastating to his crafted public image.

All the engravings are variations on the same moment in time: the moment when Cibber pulls Pope by the heel off the monstrously large prostitute. One engraving features Cibber pulling a very petite, hunched-back Pope from in between the clothed but open legs of a demonstrably larger woman. Cibber's *Non-Juror* and Pope's wig are on the ground; the Lord stands at the door accusing Cibber of ruining his "sport"; and Cibber proclaims that he has "sav'd Homer." On the wall are three paintings that comment on the Pope-Cibber quarrel: a small officer drawing a sword on a larger officer; an iconic scene from Pope's *Three Hours After Marriage*; and a small bird, presumably a tom-tit, pecking a larger bird.<sup>352</sup> A second engraving is inscribed: "And has not Sawney too his Lord and Whore?". It features a hunched-back Pope reclining on and grasping onto a demonstrably larger woman as Cibber pulls him by his heel and two men look on through a partially open door. A third engraving, which is found as a frontispiece to subsequent editions of Cibber's *Letter*, reproduces the second engraving in reverse and in miniature. A fourth engraving pictures a similar scene inscribed with the lines in which Cibber claims responsibility for Pope's translation of Homer by having saved his life.<sup>353</sup> Notably these engravings all seize on the moment in which Pope's private sexual activity is interrupted. But while the visual discrepancy between the petite, deformed Pope and the larger woman

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<sup>351</sup> Deutsch, *Resemblance and Disgrace*, 19, also see 35.

<sup>352</sup> Mack, *A Life*, 780; and Ault, *New Light*, 303.

<sup>353</sup> On these three engravings, see Ault, *New Light*, 302-30, and Chandler, "Pope's 'Girl of the Game,'" 110-111.



ridicules Pope's body, these renderings do not capture Pope's implied sexual inadequacies as well as Cibber's narrative. The jab is at Pope's expense, but it focuses on revealing and reveling in his misshapen form and his disrupted encounter. This physical, comedic ridicule obscures Pope's mortal danger and minimizes the suggestion of his impotence.

These satiric, scandalous engravings partake in the larger "spectacular culture" of the times—a culture more traditionally associated with the emerging novel form.<sup>354</sup> The images convey the sense that we are peeping in on this intimate scene. Although we view the scene as if we were in the room with an unobstructed view, the door is ajar and other men peer in from the threshold or background. This series of engravings thus capitalizes on the same market appetites that fueled the *Pamela* controversy. Richardson's novel ignited a controversy between the Pamelaists, who believed in the eponymous heroine's sincerity and ultimately in her marriage, and the AntiPamelaists, who believed she prostituted herself in exchange for a lucrative marriage. As James Grantham Turner explains, the public, a "spectacle-crazed society," conceptualized and debated Pamela's motives by envisioning some of the most amorous and scandalous scenes of the novel, thereby embodying Pamela. Richardson insisted his novel overturned popular amatory fiction, but Turner demonstrates how Richardson used the very conventions of this "spectacular culture": "most significant moments [in the novel] can be identified as *scenes*; and that

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<sup>354</sup> I borrow this term from James Grantham Turner, "Novel Panic: Picture and Performance in the Reception of Richardson's *Pamela*," *Representations* 48 (Autumn 1994): 77. Cf. to David A. Brewer's theory of "visualization" (*The Afterlife of Character*, 53). Cf. Brewer's and Turner's focus on the embodiment encouraged by the novel to Straub's focus on the gaze in the theater; see Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 13.

dramatic immediacy operates directly to arouse the spectator, male or female.”<sup>355</sup>

Capitalizing on this construction, Joseph Highmore painted a series of bedroom scenes from the novel (dated 1743-1744), risqué amatory scenes in which Pamela, in various states of undress, is in danger of being ravished by Mr. B. Although different in tone and quality from the contemporaneous Tom-Tit engravings, the two sets of illustrations share a voyeuristic interest in capturing and visualizing a moment of private (transgressive) intimacy. Yet the pleasure of the Pope engravings is not the same erotic pleasure as glimpsing Pamela’s exposed chest or imagining Mr. B ravishing her. Rather, the emphasis on Pope’s misshapen body juxtaposed against the imposing prostitute—who shows surprisingly little skin—conveys its mocking derision. The pleasure is that of *schadenfreude* at public insult and cruelty.

At this pinnacle moment in the rise of the polite domestic novel, the public’s appetite for salacious secrets was ubiquitous. Even a reading audience interested in forms fundamentally different from the novel—Augustan satire and Popeiana—relished in the delights of visualizing the intimacies of a private individual. The act of exposing another’s scandalous behavior in print participated in and grew out of this spectacular culture; the act of revealing the purported secret called (and still calls) for the reader to visualize the erotic scene. While the polite domestic novel attempted to refine this amatory impulse, the novel at its very core also participated in this process of making the private life public. It capitalized on, as it attempted to reform, the same impulse that Cibber, Pope, and others used to level some of their most crushing satiric critiques. The appetites of this spectacular culture fueled the efficacy and commercial

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<sup>355</sup> Turner, “Novel Panic,” 76, 77, 78, also see 77-80. Cf. Brewer, *Afterlife of Character*, 121-140.

popularity of sexual scandal as a polemical tool of combat—an efficacy that remains today. Despite this shared appetite, over time the polite domestic novel was elevated to high art by literary critics and Pope's form of satire disappeared. Scandal, however, outlasts both genres.

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In the culmination of their combative exchanges, in the last years of Pope's life, Cibber, more so than Pope, wielded scandal as a weapon in the public battle over their respective literary and therefore cultural achievements and reputations. Yet Pope had thrown early jabs at Cibber, as the actor/laureate is quick to remind us, and it is important to remember that such hostilities ran throughout Pope's entire career. Pope's engagement with Cibber began in 1717, a year after his most pointed exchanges with Curll. Once we recognize these hostile exchanges with Curll, Montagu, Hervey, and Cibber as ongoing (sometimes concurrent) confrontations, we see how Pope made frequent use of salacious revelation or calumny as a strategic method of attack in an attempt to undermine his opponents' public reputations. The fact that several of his adversaries, who were prominent and successful public figures, returned such attacks against Pope suggests the public currency and acceptance of such scandalous polemical strategies. While it is not clear that anyone's contemporary public standing (including Pope's) was measurably undermined by such attacks, the proliferation of these texts and their offspring suggest the commercial success of sexually scandalous attacks among a reading public now eager for and even expecting such titillating gossip—a popular taste and commercial method that Addison and Steele clearly condemn, as seen in Chapter Three. Pope and Curll's disputes about the

sanctity of an author's authorization and control over his texts turn into an extended look at Curll's debased body and castration. Pope's failed friendship and political-religious differences with the staunch Whigs Montagu and Hervey are famously reduced to images of Pope's deformed body (sexual deformities and inadequacies included), Montagu's fierce sexuality, and Hervey's effeminacy and bisexuality. Pope and Cibber's political-religious differences and Pope's fierce condemnation of Cibber's literary achievements are forever engraved as Pope's anger over coitus interrupted. None of these scandalous revelations (or calumnies) can entirely escape the political, religious, and literary disputes that fuel the initial hostilities. At some point the texts circle back and reveal such underlying conflicts, yet those substantive disagreements are displaced and overrun when the authors embrace scandal as their rhetorical strategy of attack. The third-party commentaries that these exchanges encouraged suggest that these means were a relatively safe, popular, and profitable way to attack an opponent's cultural standing. The popularity of this strategy of attack helped mold the market for the twenty-first-century celebrity and scandal industries that continue to expose the private lives of public figures, even if these enterprises now operate primarily for profit separate and apart from other motives.

## Epilogue

Writings by Andrew Marvell, Delarivier Manley, and Alexander Pope helped legitimize scandal as part of the mainstream press and acceptable public discourse. These authors used scurrilous (and often calumnious) revelations in their commercial tracts to attack political and cultural opponents, and they thereby authorized the investigation into private secrets as an appropriate form of public discourse. When noticed, their scandalous barbs and exposés have traditionally been explained as mere raillery or personal proclivity, salacious amatory intrigue, or misogynistic satire, respectively. But the scandalous accusations serve particular rhetorical functions in the texts and need to be recognized as strategic rhetorical decisions. By examining these titillating moments on their own terms and taking them seriously as part of the authors' literary strategies, we see how Marvell, Manley, Pope, and their peers wielded scandal as a weapon of attack for polemical ends. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele aimed to reform and curb the public taste for scandal through their periodicals the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, but paradoxically even they encouraged the habit as the papers' structuring frames of observation ultimately teased readers with the whiff of sensational revelation. Furthermore, the successful sales of the texts that used scandal and the flurry of published responses surrounding them reflect the emergent cultural currency and popularity of scandal in the early eighteenth century. Third parties capitalized on the disputes for polemical advantage and profit. Works by these authors and the responses they generated show that scandalous discourse was more widespread and prominent in the early eighteenth-century public sphere and

marketplace than traditionally recognized.

At its root, this discourse of scandal emerged in response to both the pamphlet wars that accompanied the civil war of the mid 1600s and the unresolved political conflicts that lingered well past the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Whereas seventeenth-century precedent showed the dangers of hostile polemical contest—showed how divisive constitutional-religious debate led to revolution and bloodshed—throughout the long eighteenth century, authors embraced scandal as a polemical strategy that allowed them to obscure and thereby soften potentially dangerous conflict. As an alternative to the discourse of politeness, which also grew as an antidote to civil war, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries authors adopted scandal as one means to make political debate safer. They incorporated scandal into their adversarial tracts to turn attention away from divisive political questions and redirect public inquiry towards an opponent's personal life and private secrets. They thus provided the public with a new means of conceptualizing political dispute. They encouraged and authorized the sexualization and personalization of political discourse. While Marvell's prose satire *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* helped initiate this turn to personal scandal by redirecting early modern precedents towards new ends, Manley perfected and legitimized this use of scandal in public discourse throughout *The New Atalantis*. In recounting England's recent political history, she turned to scandalous exposés instead of narrating moments of key political crises. Scandal thus allowed her to temper political debate while still airing veiled grievances against political opponents.

Later authors such as Pope levied this method of attack against private individuals in the public eye. Pope incorporated virulent barbs against his peers and business rivals in a variety of his works. Over the course of his career, he refined this means of assault into a devastating satiric tool. His exposés continued to veil partisan animosities buried far below the surface, but as these adversarial exchanges came to appear more and more removed from political debate, they further sanctioned public inquiry into the private lives of private individuals and helped cement the foundation of our twenty-first-century celebrity culture.

Recovering the prominence and strategic function of this discourse of scandal necessarily alters our understanding of the dominance of politeness throughout the early eighteenth century. Thus, the discourse of politeness not only worked to reform the vitriol of the civil war, but also to reform the public taste for scandal. Addison and Steele's attempt to instill a culture of decorous manners actually reveals the entrenched and widespread public appetite for scandal. Rather than encouraging rational public debate, their anxieties over the public's taste for scandal reflect their deep-seated suspicions of the public's ability to engage in critical debate in the first place. In response to these fears, they offered a system of proscriptions that only sanctioned a select few for public dialogue.

Thirty years after Addison and Steele's periodicals, the polite domestic novel similarly rebuked this discourse of scandal. Although the domestic novel won critical dominance, the widespread appetite for scandal shows that the ascendancy of the domestic novel was not uncontested, and as explained in Chapter Four, the novel with its detailed look into an individual character's private life offered the same

voyeuristic thrill that scandal did with its titillating insights into others' private secrets. William Warner famously concludes that the fallout of the controversy surrounding Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela* ensured that future scenes of seduction were either rewritten into pornography or reformed into the "elevated novel,"<sup>356</sup> but sexual scandal occupied a middle ground, one that survived such reforms. While Richardson's novels attempt to contain the discourse of scandal and amatory intrigue, novels such as Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* revel in innuendo, revelation, and titillating affairs, showing that the voyeuristic impulse of scandal continued and was even incorporated into the novel.<sup>357</sup>

Interest in sexual scandal, even scandal increasingly removed from polemical attack, remained strong throughout the late eighteenth century, and a media industry continued to grow around these appetites. Matthew Kinservik, Anna Clark, and Vincent Carretta call necessary attention to the re-emergence of high-profile political scandals in second half of the century; and Kinservik, in particular, emphasizes the media industry that covered aristocratic scandals.<sup>358</sup> But personal scandal continued to flourish in the marketplace as well. As Katherine Temple documents in her work on literary piracy, in 1779 Catharine Macaulay's literary career was "effectively

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<sup>356</sup> William B. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 219. Also see Bradford K. Mudge, *The Whore's Story: Women, Pornography, and the British Novel, 1684-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>357</sup> Sean Latham points to enduring power of this impulse as he highlights the resurgence of secret history in the modern novel; see *The Art of Scandal: Modernism, Libel Law, and the Roman à Clef* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>358</sup> Matthew J. Kinservik, *Sex, Scandal, and Celebrity in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2007); esp. p. 10. Anna Clark, *The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); and Vincent Carretta, *George III and the Satirists from Hogarth to Byron* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990). Also see Nicholas Rogers, "Pigott's Private Eye: Radicalism and Sexual Scandal in Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 4 (1993): 247-263.



ended” after a letter documenting her scandalous marriage to a Scottish man half her age was circulated, advertised salaciously, and (at the very least) published in partial form by being embedded in other tracts. Temple concludes that “the trouncing [Macaulay] took in the English popular press” destroyed her career.<sup>359</sup> Instead of using scandal to attack others, several women even published their own sexual secrets in an attempt to revive their reputations. In the mid 1700s Teresia Constantia Phillips, Laetitia Pilkington, and Frances Anne, Viscount Vane (linked as a lover to both Lord Hervey and Prince Frederick) each published what are now commonly referred to as “scandalous memoirs,” “vindicatory texts” designed to “rehabilitat[e]” their public reputations.<sup>360</sup> These memoirs and others like them traditionally publicize the authors’ sexual transgressions in order to apologize and seek forgiveness. Vane’s memoirs, however, refuse to apologize for or cover the details of her affairs.<sup>361</sup> Similarly, at the end of the century, William Goodwin published memoirs of his late wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, that “approving[ly]” recount her affairs and other sexual transgressions.<sup>362</sup>

The eighteenth-century economy of scandal exposes the roots of the twenty-

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<sup>359</sup> Kathryn Temple, *Scandal Nation: Law and Authorship in Britain, 1750-1832* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 122-123.

<sup>360</sup> Clare Brant, “Speaking of Women: Scandal and the Law in the Mid-Eighteenth Century,” in *Women, Texts and Histories, 1575-1760*, ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992), 242, 243.

<sup>361</sup> See Emma Plaskitt, “Vane, Frances Anne, Viscountess Vane (*bap.* 1715, *d.* 1788),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman. 10 March 2012 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28084>>. Further highlighting the similar impulse behind the public’s appetite for scandal and the novel, Vane’s memoirs first appeared in Tobias Smollett’s novel *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickel* (1751). Evidence suggests it was in fact written by Viscountess Vane; see Plaskitt, *ODNB*.

<sup>362</sup> Gail Bederman, “Sex, Scandal, Satire, and Population in 1798: Revisiting Malthus’s First Essay,” *Journal of British Studies* 47.4 (October 2008): 769. While Goodwin’s memoirs were in defense of Wollstonecraft, Bederman reveals how the scandalous tract motivated polemical and satiric responses against the couple.

first-century celebrity culture and scandal industry. Critics who see similar connections between the periods traditionally trace “modern celebrity” back to eighteenth-century or Restoration theater.<sup>363</sup> Kristina Straub and Stuart Sherman even suggest how print culture and theater intersected to produce celebrity actors. As they show, when printed tracts ranging from biographies to the daily news took up influential actors as their subjects, these tracts both capitalized on and further constructed the actors’ celebrity.<sup>364</sup> In tracing the popularity of scandal and how scandal increasingly focused on private individuals outside of any direct political setting, however, I show an alternative origin to modern celebrity culture and how scandal is central to that culture. But whereas Pope attacked cultural competitors, such as Edmund Curll, and social betters, such as aristocratic Whig advocate Mary Wortley Montagu, already public figures in their own right, today’s industry of reality television elevates private individuals to public visibility and then relishes in their salacious missteps. As Ben Brantley describes, this contemporary taste is a fascination with “Personality” and “gossip writ large” which “has surprisingly little to do with the accomplishments of those gossiped about.”<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Term from Joseph A. Boone and Nancy J. Vickers, “Introduction—Celebrity Rites,” *PMLA* 126.4 (October 2011): 906. They too note the importance of the eighteenth century. For critics who point to the importance of eighteenth-century theater see, for example, Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), and Julia H. Fawcett, “The Overexpressive Celebrity and the Deformed King: Recasting the Spectacle as Subject in Colley Cibber’s *Richard III*,” *PMLA* 126.4 (October 2011): 950-965.

<sup>364</sup> Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 13, 24-25, 31; and Stuart Sherman, “Garrick among Media: The ‘Now Performer’ Navigates the News,” *PMLA* 126.4 (October 2011): 966-982.

<sup>365</sup> Ben Brantley, “Theater Talkback: Who Wrote Shakespeare? Who Cares?” *New York Times*, *New York Times*, 27 Oct. 2011, Web., accessed 31 Oct. 2011. Today’s celebrity culture still also revolves around already prominent public figures, such as actors and sports champions, but the recent rise of reality television operates in a different manner.

Scandal remains popular with the public, in part, because it serves as an easy diversion from the problems of the world. While political scandals are still rampant and the exposure of a political opponent may be politically advantageous, the public's contemporary embrace of scandal must be more broadly understood. Profit motives dictate media coverage, and scandal has transcended its adversarial origins. In tracking the every movement of rich socialites and actors, scandal tempts us by offering us a glimpse into an exotic alternate lifestyle and the schadenfreude of public humiliation. Reality television even creates artificial environments designed to provoke scandalous incidents, and coverage of such foibles provides the audience with an easy alternative to real news. Spreading beyond "mere" tabloid culture, scandal now pervades the twenty-four-hour news cycle. In 2007 the Associated Press, recognizing the extent to which these celebrity scandals had become part of contemporary news coverage, even experimented with banning coverage on socialite Paris Hilton. Their self-imposed "blackout" lasted a week.<sup>366</sup>

More research on the contemporary function and uses of scandal is necessary to understand the exact relationship between the eighteenth-century and twenty-first-century celebrity cultures and scandal industries; but the contemporary fixation on scandal appears to offer the public an easy distraction or alternative from intractable social, political, and economic ills. In explaining the Associated Press's decision to ban news coverage of Paris Hilton, Jocelyn Noveck insists that the experiment "wasn't based on a view of what the public should be focusing on [instead]—the war

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<sup>366</sup> Jocelyn Noveck, "Even ignoring Paris Hilton makes news," the Associated Press in *USAToday*, USATODAY.com, 1 March 3007, Web, accessed 28 Oct. 2011.

in Iraq, for example, or the upcoming election of the next leader of the free world.”<sup>367</sup> But her very disclaimer suggests that, in fact, the public *is* focusing on such scandalous celebrities as a titillating alternative to more substantial matters. Similarly, in 2011, the opening of the Country Music Association Awards poked fun at society’s obsession with the private lives of the rich and famous, yet the joke suggests how the public’s enthusiasm for scandal displaces serious national concerns. Participants offered a song about what was “weighing on everyone’s mind.” Was it “[o]ur global economy?” “A nuclear Iran?” No, it was the dissolution of socialite Kim Kardashian’s 72-day marriage. As one participant deadpanned: “You’re right that pretty much impacts everyone.”<sup>368</sup> While the song mocked the marriage itself, the skit also implicitly critiqued the public appetite that supports celebrity culture and its dependence on scandal—an appetite and scandal industry that first became mainstream and was initially legitimized in the print marketplace of the first half of the long eighteenth century.

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<sup>367</sup> Noveck, “Evening ignoring Paris Hilton makes news.”

<sup>368</sup> 2011 CMA Awards, ABC, aired 9 November 2011, *YouTube*, Web, accessed 9 March 2012.

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