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Prophecy, Dreams, and Fantasy: Writing Englishwomen's Practical Knowledge, 1640-1680

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

PROPHECY, DREAMS, AND FANTASY:
WRITING ENGLISHWOMEN'S PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE, 1640-1680

By Rebecca C.W. Hu

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the faculty of the
University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida
May 2017

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Prophecy, Dreams, and Fantasy
Writing Englishwomen's Practical Knowledge,
1640-1680

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This project sheds light on how presumably irrational, intuitive, and affective modes of knowing evident in seventeenth-century Englishwomen's writings are, in their own ways, practical, rational, and consequential. Thanks to important scholarship such as Linda Woodbridge's *The Scythe of Saturn: Shakespeare and Magical Thinking* and Diane Purkiss's *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations*, the concept of intuitive and affective knowledge as practical has received increasing academic attention. At least some seventeenth-century women wrote to legitimize the usefulness of what they knew. My project examines Anna Trapnel's ecstatic prophecies, Katherine Austen's numerology of dreams, and Margaret Cavendish's imaginative philosophies in search of instances where definitions of knowledge are contested to return intellectual agency to the thinking-feeling woman. It thus analyzes how such women who know through unorthodox, irrational, associative, or intuitive means speak out against rationalist forms of knowledge, and as a consequence, contribute significantly to a more organic and inclusive system of knowing.

Chapter One explores Trapnel's juxtaposition of rational knowledge -- what she calls "Head-piece languages" or the "Arts and Sciences" --against what she names the "Heart-piece sense." Trapnel urges her audience to question the

value of knowledge when it is a product of rational learning and formal institutional education. She presents true knowledge as the result of one's spiritual attunement to God. By evoking images of drunkenness, Trapnel associates the effects of knowing with the effects of inebriation. In teaching her mesmerized audiences to consume divine knowledge through digestion and emotion, Trapnel's sentimental education adds her poetic voice to the tumultuous debates that occurred during England's Interregnum.

Chapter Two examines Austen's curious method of husbandry that involves counting, calculating, and interpreting numerical images that appear in her dreams. Rather than succumbing to raptures as Trapnel had done, Austen feverishly hits the accounting books after inspiration strikes; in lieu of delivering her ideas through fluid transitions between genres which occasionally become unintelligible to her audience, Austen organizes them in a measured manner through poetic meters and arithmetic in her book, which was probably shared with a coterie of family and friends. Her model is unique in that it combines two artful, spiritual practices -- dream divination and number mysticism--to guide her as she undergoes a series of rather material challenges in securing financial entitlements. The conclusions of *Book M* suggest that this model succeeded not only in securing tangible assets for Austen's children as her legacy, but also in giving the independent Austen increasing skill and confidence as a thinker and poet.

Chapter Three argues that Cavendish imagines herself a melancholic figure in order to produce a growing emotional self-knowledge that enables her to adapt to life in exile from England and to add her voice to the fashionable academic

conversations of her day. In her own analysis of what melancholia means, Cavendish materializes melancholic thoughts -- indeed, depicts emotions as physical objects that act -- to study their relationships with the brain. Cavendish contends that the writing out of her fancies gives delight and relieves her from melancholic oppression. Her philosophical writings thus highlight how her feelings (in particular, her negative emotions) are sites for intellectual activity instrumental to producing the kind of knowledge that heals.

For Professor Ronald Levao

Under the Ashes, the Red Coal Glows.

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While writing this acknowledgement, I realized that above the technical skills of academic research and writing, what really helped bring my dissertation to life were the loving energies vested by the positive people around me. Professor Ronald Levao, to whom this dissertation is dedicated, sparked my passion for early modern literature with his fascinating lectures when I was just an undergraduate student at Rutgers University. Memories of him speaking to a sea of captivated students in Scott Hall about Viola and Edgar and Lady Macbeth linger at the back of my mind through episodes of triumph and despair as I continued on my path as an aspiring thinker, scholar, and educator. During a time when I was disheartened about my role in the academia, at a bustling Starbucks on Princeton's Nassau Street, Dr. Levao told me (someone who cannot cook anything to save my career) that in order to make good barbeque, one must grill atop hot coal covered in ashes. Although it looks dusty and gray on the outside, that glowing red will always remain underneath. The glow, for Dr. Levao, represented the eternal flame of passion buried deep within the heart of even the most cynical academic. It was a simple analogy, meant to remind me to hold on to happier memories in order to weather bad days, and that glowing red heat has been warming my heart and motivating my work ever since. I am sincerely grateful to my ever-patient director, Dr. Pamela Hammons, for telling me without hesitation, "You are going to get your doctorate, and it's going to be here." The power of her words, her example, and most of all her confidence in me have sustained my faith in myself. To Dr. Kathryn Freeman, for her meticulous feedback and endearing smiles; for being my role model in gracefulness, for saying she'd be happy to work *for* me in this project, a remark that astounded and humbled me. To Dr. Ranen Omer-Sherman, for his

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Preface

Prophecy, Dreams, and Fantasy evolved through several transformations, each a very distinct project of its own. I was initially interested in representations of the occult and metaphysics in literature and film. This curiosity led me to produce several relevant seminar papers during coursework: one in which I explored Vladimir Nabokov's demonology of Lilith in his novel, *Lolita* (1955); another, in which a comparison of John Bale's *King Johan* (approx. 1550) and Shakespeare's *King John* (1623) sought to highlight the capture of Satan as means of negotiating nationalism in early modern England; still another, in which Vodoun and the practice of zombification during the presidency of François Duvalier's Haitian regime are underscored as thematic in selected works of Caribbean literature. As an aspiring scholar specializing in early modern British literature, these previous essays helped me envision a dissertation that tackled how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English drama figured witches and demons on the stage. What did it mean, I inquired, for Shakespeare to present the Weird Sisters chanting and cursing in the theatre, while outside the theatre women young and old were burned at the stake for accusations of witchcraft? What did it mean for Christopher Marlowe to show Dr. Faustus being dragged away by demons at the end of his *Tragicall History* (1592), at a time when occult studies such as alchemy, astrology, and scrying were very much a part of clerical, aristocratic, and humanist learning?¹ What does it say about the readers and audiences of twenty-first century America, I finally wanted to ask, when King James I's earnest fears of psychic attacks

¹ On Milton's understanding of metaphysics, for example, see Bailey, 1964; on Queen Elizabeth's regular consultations with the sycr John Dee, see Sofer, 2009; on the relationship between poetry and conjuring as practical knowledge, see Knopp, 2004.

and demons are explicated in academia not through historical and spiritual contexts but through scientific and psychological interpretive frameworks offered by Freud and Jung, yet at the same time primary debates for candidates running for the 2016 presidency are still invoking Christianity and the name of the Lord as defenses for their arguments about issues such as immigration, abortion, and gun control?

In preparing for my initial project, I came across ideological conflicts that opened my eyes to what it actually means to ask these questions within the institutional framework of twenty-first century American academia, to be a scholar and what our obligations are, how different kinds of academic endeavors are considered “scholarship,” and the varying degrees of regard we hold towards different forms of publications. Some of these debates have been processed through my own internal monologues; some are theorized in the abstractions of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Emmanuel Levinas and Bruno Latour -- thinkers most influential to my intellectual development. And then there are some debates that are very much alive and teeming with a sense of urgency, circulating daily in the blogosphere on the current state of education, in venues such as the *Huffington Post*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Conditionally Accepted*. These debates sparked an unexpected thirst in my soul. I began to realize that what I was pursuing was neither an answer to how Elizabeth Sawyer really died in *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621),² nor whether it was important to prove that the many rituals depicted in Jonson’s *Masque of Queenes* (1609) were in fact contemporary reflections of actual pagan practices. What these individual moments culminate to ask--indeed, what they collectively flag as problematic--is how power struggles among social classes, among

² On the debate between Rowley’s play as reflection of panic over the dangers of dark magic or as critique of domestic violence, compare, for example, Nicol 2004 and Garrett 2007.

religio-political loyalties, between genders and races also underpin and determine struggles to define and to legitimize certain information as “scholarship” and as “knowledge.” In turn, these struggles dictate perceptions of those who profess to know. I am urging a regard for literary texts not simply as instances of storytelling or as material objects in circulation, but as records of knowledge, as an author’s declarations of *here are the things that I know*, and by their genre and style, *here is how my knowledge is presented to the world*. Literary texts regarded through such an epistemological lens expose the politics of writing and above that, the politics of knowledge. While Michael Wood’s *Literature and the Taste of Knowledge* (2005) tackles this political intervention of literature into epistemology in the works of Henry James and Franz Kafka, we have yet to undertake a similar exploration when it comes to literature by early modern Englishwomen. *Prophecy, Dreams, and Fantasy* is concerned, within this early modern literary politics of knowledge, with the bridging of current cognitive chasms estranging the affective from the empirical. It explicates three illuminating instances in which women’s creative writings not only openly rebel against the dismissal of one faculty of knowing in favor of another, but by their very existences and by their genre and style, reveal how the politics of knowledge and the production of literary texts are mutually directive.

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Introduction

“Thought as Felt and Feelings as Thoughts”: Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen’s Practical Consciousness

In 1662, 1663, and 1669, King Charles II issued three successive charters offering the Royal Society grants for conducting scientific experiments, the endorsement of the king himself as Founder and Patron, and lands in Chelsea upon which to erect Chelsea College.³ The Crown’s official support of natural philosophy seemed to characterize England indisputably in the late seventeenth century as a regime that valued empirical experiments over irrational, intuitive, or affective modes of knowing. Indeed, as Juliet Cummins and David Burchell observe, the era seemed to witness the ascendancy of “‘*Real Knowledge*’ as that, and only that, which is established by mathematical and empirical proofs” (1). But no single ideological voice speaks absolutely. Scholars examining early modern attitudes toward and beliefs in different acts of knowing have found conflicting epistemologies to persist in ongoing debates concerning the definition of knowledge in England between 1640 and 1680 and the stakes in possessing different kinds of knowledge.⁴ These debates not only legitimize or invalidate certain modes of knowledge production at the expense of their counterparts, but expose a complex process of knowledge production in which the various modes

³ Sir Henry George Lyons’ administrative chronology of the Royal Society outlines the different Charters, their contents, and their ramifications, especially in its second chapter, 19-70.

⁴ Stuart Clark outlines the interactions between superstition and empiricism that ultimately produced “a genuinely scientific foundation” in the production of knowledge in early modern England (297); on women’s voices as an alternative adjudication of what knowledge is, and women’s participation in science, see Wallwork and Salzman; on the many intellectual origins that collectively create the dominant ideologies of the Royal Society, see Rattansi. On how ethics influence education and epistemology in early modern England, see Corneanu.

are inter-dependent. Elizabeth Spiller, for instance, highlights the overlap between the sciences and the arts when she writes that “imaginative literature provides a form for producing knowledge [in early modern science]” and “a belief in the made rather than the found character of early modern knowledge unites poets and natural scientists” (2). This commonality is likewise observed by Peter Harrison, who notes that champions of opposing epistemologies nevertheless employed similar, at times even identical, strategies to defend their causes (16). Catherine Gimelli Martin, in her discussion of the definition of knowledge within the mid-century context of the English Civil War and Interregnum, also writes of supporters of the Crown and the Commonwealth alike using “defenses of natural philosophy as ‘antidotes’ to ‘atheism’” (113).

What Spiller, Harrison, and Martin collectively underscore is the significance not of the specific features of the knowledges in question, but of the ways in which these various knowledges are presented by and used to identify the diverse people who profess, or are perceived, to know. When analyzing literature in this period Andrew Barnaby and Lisa J. Schnell find that “knowledge was a social rather than a purely philosophical issue for seventeenth-century writers, and that it was connected to issues involving communities of knowledge and of knowers” (7). Knowledge can just as easily elevate a person’s social status as it can ostracize the knower. This intersection of knowledge with the social, finally, has led Cummins and Burchell to conclude that “the seventeenth century witnessed the beginning of that momentous transition which led not only to the birth of the proto-sciences...but also gave rise to that shift of social perceptions of utility that was to legitimate them” (34). The crux of this dissertation lies in the intersection between knowledge’s legitimacy and its perceived utility.

Prophecy, Dreams, and Fantasy shows that presumably irrational, intuitive, and affective modes of knowing evident in seventeenth-century English women's writings are in their own ways practical, rational, and consequential. Specifically, it explores how three seventeenth-century Englishwomen--Anna Trapnel, Katherine Austen, and Margaret Cavendish-- from disparate backgrounds use prophetic visions, dream divination and numerology, and the imagination to create forms of practical knowledge that fulfill their individual needs in their everyday lives between 1640 and 1680. Linda Woodbridge's *The Scythe of Saturn: Shakespeare and Magical Thinking* and Diane Purkiss's *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* have helped bring the notion that intuitive and affective knowledge can be practical academically: the former explores a spectrum of beliefs about the supernatural in early modern England as may be reflected by Shakespeare to ultimately surmise that the bard himself "believed, at least semiconsciously, in ... magic" (108); the latter takes a closer look at figures of witches in both historical records and early modern literary texts, offering that, far from confined by the regressive and superstitious connotations that they presumably evoke, witch narratives created public meaning in defining good order and contributed to skeptical, even scientific, discourses (2-3). In regards to the women examined in this project, Catie Gill has implicitly remarked on Trapnel's assumption that the political and the spiritual are contingent upon each other in *Cry of a Stone* (1654), when she notes that for the prophetess, "temporal monarchies had to be swept away before a spiritual apocalypse could occur" (19). Raymond A. Anselment, writing on the piety expressed in Austen's financial bookkeeping, believes firmly that the widow's "material concerns heighten [her] spiritual dependency" (14). Lisa Walters,

who looks at Cavendish's flirtations with the supernatural, keenly contends that "though Cavendish was a dedicated materialist, she appropriates theories of magic from early modern science and folklore into her materialist epistemology...[to] explore the plurality and mystery that can exist within an infinitely complex material world" (413). That these studies have not yet pushed these connections to illuminate the practicality of intuitive knowing for Trapnel, Austen, and Cavendish suggests a need to fill this scholarly gap by analyzing what "practical knowledge" meant to these writers in their proper historical context.

More research still needs to be done in carving out a viable definition with which to understand seventeenth-century practical knowledge. In 2006, Sven Dupré, in pursuing his analysis of the transmission of knowledge in early modern Europe, arrived at this working definition of practical knowledge: "Practical knowledge is not to be confused with *material* knowledge. Material knowledge tells you how to make an instrument (for example, what kind of glass to use to make a mirror). Practical knowledge is knowledge from practical experience" (12). Dupré's distinction between knowledge about material objects and knowledge gained from personal experiences helps to tease out the significances underlying the relationship between kinds of knowing and the respective influences they exerted and values they had, as measured by their social relevance and everyday utility. Other scholars, including Catherine Eagleton, Jochen Büther, Peter Damerow, Jürgen Renn, and Matthias Schemmel, apply this concept of practical knowing to their investigations of early modern pursuits such as refining the precision of the sundial and calculating trajectories of cannon balls.⁵ But Dupré's

⁵ See Eagleton 103, and Büttner, Damerow, Renn, and Schemmel 3-27.

definition of practical knowledge as that which is acquired from lived experience, that which may not necessarily involve material objects but which may be instrumental to the conception of objects can be applied more expansively to help us investigate seventeenth-century Englishwomen's prophecies, dreams, and fantasies.

Dupré's idea of practical knowledge is especially important when we examine women's writing in this era because it deals with the personal -- rather than the institutionalized -- formation and transmission of knowledge. While T.S. Eliot's seminal contention of a seventeenth-century "dissociation of sensibility" has enabled a category of reflective poets and that of the intellectual poet (1103), Raymond Williams's more inclusive delineation of Structures of Feeling -- "not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feelings as thoughts: practical consciousness of a present kind" -- is helpful to consider in relation to Dupré's work (132). In Williams's view, which undoubtedly responds in part to Eliot's theory, thinking and feeling are in fact bound up with each other; emotions and ideas are both intellect; and as feeling-thoughts/thinking-feelings are conceptualized in intellectual activity, the present is changed in a real way.

Working through ideas about ways of knowing and how they can be practical can help us trace the impact of knowledge production upon both the theoretical or philosophical and pragmatic lives of early modern people: it can, therefore, help us to refine our understanding of broad concepts, such as education, humanism, sexuality, science, and religion. In particular, this study of practical knowledge in the works of Trapnel, Austen, and Cavendish will provide new insights into issues of gender and women's roles in early modern England. Most studies of early modern Englishwomen that primarily elaborate on female agency, the value of women's writing, and proto-

feminist arguments for women's education leave unexamined how defining practical knowledge can be the linchpin to addressing many of their thematic questions more thoroughly or effectively. How do claims of intuitive or affective knowledge become practical strategies for women dealing with legal issues such as inheritance rights? How do claims to unique forms of non-empirical knowledge lend a woman writer authority? And how does a woman's uncommon knowledge production characterize her as productive, even fertile? As this dissertation shows, these are all fruitful questions that Trapnel, Austen, and Cavendish pose and systematically resolve for their readers.

In my attempts to develop a suitable working definition of practical knowledge for this project, I conducted a survey of published records for the keywords "practical" and "knowledge" in the Early *English Books Online Database (EEBO)* and the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, focusing on the years ranging from 1640 to 1680. The results were telling in their emphases on justifying "usefulness" as knowledge's *raison d'être*, on conflating knowledge and knower, and on overlooking women's active participation when it comes to voicing or even possessing knowledge. *EEBO's* records from 1640 through 1680 show that 2485 publications contained the word "practical," including its variant spellings, and used the term 8099 times. Most of these records are religious tracts, thus bespeaking a general preoccupation with making doctrines from the Bible and the pulpits adaptable to the quotidian. For example, William Rushworth, a Catholic controversialist, priest, and mathematics enthusiast, printed a dialogue titled *The Judgement of Common Sense in the choice of Religion* in 1640, which urged readers to distinguish between "speculative or practical points of doctrines, new or old" (509). Anglican Church divine Henry Hammond authored 48

tracts between 1640 and 1680, and in his text “practical” appears a staggering 508 times. An example of such writing can be found in a series of correspondences between Hammond and a certain Mr. Ch., in their debates at Oxford in 1650, during which the idea of “Practicall Catechisme” was mentioned 25 times. Dr. Hammond’s frequent insistence on practicality is particularly thought-provoking, in light of Katherine Austen’s evident interest in studying Hammond’s works.⁶ In 1647, Puritan preacher Stephen Marshall touted theology as “a gracious and practical knowledge” in his sermon, *The Right Understanding of the Times* (6). Keeping in line with these sources, the *OED* defines “practical” as used in the seventeenth century as “having to do with practice or action,” “being opposed to speculation or theory,” “functional and feasible,” and “likely to succeed or be effective in real circumstances.”

My survey of appearances of the word “practical” in printed records between 1640 and 1680 finds that it is commonly used to label types of persons. For instance, in 1673 Protestant theologian Richard Baxter criticizes “practical atheists” in his *Christian Directory* as those “who doth not profess and honour [God] with his tongue and life” (692). Another such personal identification occurs in 1664, when Scottish Presbyterian divine Alexander Pitcarne writes of the “practical heretic,” who, though “sound and orthodox” in belief, is “poisoned with practical errors in the vitals of Christian life” (754). The multiple meanings of “practical” in the seventeenth century indicate just how much a person’s actions are intertwined with his or her epistemological views. It is glaringly problematic that of the 2485 records of printed works available in *EEBO* that

⁶ See, for instance, her verbatim quoting from John Fell’s biography, *The life of ... Dr. Hammond* (1661), and her dream log titled “Doc: Hammonds Dreame,” p.56.

mention this culturally vital word, none is listed as authored by a woman. This absence of the female voice certainly relates to the fact that the database necessarily excludes manuscript sources.⁷

To be sure, seventeenth-century women -- the Fifth Monarchist Anna Trapnel, the wealthy widow Katherine Austen, and the Duchess of Newcastle Margaret Cavendish amongst them-- feverishly wrote to legitimize the usefulness of what they knew. The absence of female voices in *EEBO*, then, urges us to delve into why women's writings about practical knowledge were not circulated via print transmission as were those publications by men like Hammond, Marshall, and Pitcarne. My project examines Anna Trapnel's ecstatic prophecies, Katherine Austen's numerology of dreams, and Margaret Cavendish's imaginative philosophies in search of precisely such instances where definitions of knowledge -- especially practical knowledge -- are seized, contested, and revamped to return intellectual agency to the thinking-feeling women.

My project confronts a double-pronged prejudice about early modern

⁷ To complement *EEBO*, I have also surveyed the Women Writers Online Database and found that between the years 1640 and 1680, among texts published by women, the word "practical" appears four times, in three unique works. In 1651 and 1663, two editions appeared of Mary Stone Love's published records, titled *Love's Name Lives*, which includes a Mistress Love's (unsuccessful) petitions to the Parliament on behalf of her husband, supposedly accused of heresy, to lift his death sentence. In a letter exchanged between Mr. and Mistress Love, just before the accused was to face execution, Mr. Love offers his mistress some "practical coucels," to keep under an orthodox ministry, to bring up her children in the knowledge of the Lord, to pray and to rejoice in his martyrdom (C4r). In 1671, Jane Sharp publishes her *Midwives Book*, an instruction manual for midwives. Sharp writes of the ideal midwife: "Their knowledge must be twofold, *Speculative*; and *Practial*, fhe that wants the knowledge of Speculation, is like to one that is blind or wants her fight; she that wants the Practice, is like one that is lame and wants her legs" (B1v). And, finally, in 1673, the proto-feminist thinker Bathsua Makin publishes *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*. Therein, Makin insightfully observes that "some things that are more practical, are not fo material, becaufe publick Employments in the Field and Courts, are ufually denied to Women" (C4v). The comparative scarcity of the usage of the word "practical" -- 2485 times in men's writings to 4 in that of women -- and the contexts in which the word is used by women, are still open to interpretation. I tentatively suggest that, at least from the opinions of Sharp and Makin, some women saw practicality as a necessary epistemic/behavioral consideration, but is oftentimes ironically an "impractical" consideration, given their limited career opportunities and highly prescribed environments.

Englishwomen's intuitive and affective knowledge: first, that women employ intuitive knowing because, barred from legitimate, official forms of knowing such as that gained through a university education, they simply did not know better; and second, that intuitive knowledge itself was contrary to both rational thinking and problem solving. Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann explain the intertwined biases that have obscured and disturbed the study of the intellectual culture of Puritan women when they write of the double prejudice endured by the scholarship of puritan women in early modern England -- the exclusion from a public sphere of intellectual thought and culture, and the misconception that puritanism itself was hostile to both popular culture and high art (2). This double prejudice, I argue, results not in Carla Mazzio's sense of an inarticulate Renaissance, but an era of involuted knowing, where knowers are arbitrarily dispossessed of their knowledge by invalidation,⁸ and consequently stripped of their power of influence upon their society and their own lives. Sarah G. Ross examines the situation of the learned female intellectual who speaks as the other voice against "centuries of biblical and Aristotelian antiwoman sentiment and to the patriarchal structure of Western society, a structure legitimized by the texts of these traditions" (5). Such attacks effectively undermined women's production of knowledge and negated the practicality of knowledges proclaimed by women, thus minimizing their powers of influence. My project, instead of focusing on the female intellectual as Ross does, concerns women who become knowledgeable and theorize what counts as

⁸ Mazzio's work explores how early modern representations of inarticulation -- deafness, muteness, aphasia -- express a preoccupation with rhetoric and eloquence, and how such representations influence or are influenced by socio-political orderings and disorderings of their time. Borrowing from Mazzio's concept, I wish to look at how the invalidation of knowledge also serves a similar function for early modern women. What does the stripping away of women's faculties to know do to distort women as knowers in an age obsessed with advancing certain kinds of knowledge?

knowledge independently from established avenues of female – or even male -- education. While Paula Findlen's survey of knowledgeable women portrays the progressive image of learned women rubbing shoulders with the likes of Descartes, Locke, and Leibniz to explore new, co-ed systems of knowledge, this dissertation analyzes how women who know through unorthodox, irrational, associative, or intuitive means speak out against rationalist forms of knowledge and thus contribute significantly to a more organic and inclusive system of knowing.

Chapter One centers on connections among mind, body, and soul, and between alcohol consumption and knowledge production as drawn by Anna Trapnel in her series of ecstatic prophecies in the mid-1650s. By the mid-seventeenth century, the conventionality of the head having "power of directing all the members of the body to that use which the judgement in the head thinkes most convenient" so fondly reiterated by James I had been strongly challenged by rhetoric invoking dismemberment (Halliday, 497). Pathological images of the body emerged, such as Thomas Hobbes' annelid metaphors and John Cleveland's grotesque caricatures of "Noll's nose."⁹ These imageries in turn call for narratives of healing and cure, most notably exemplified by Milton's "Tale of the Wen" in *Of Reformation of Church-Discipline in England* (1641).¹⁰ Penetrating this cacophony of pathology is the prophetic voice of a seemingly frail maid, who, through prayers, raptures, and singing, extols the superiority of her choice of vital organ -- the heart. The purgation could only be accomplished through an epistemological

⁹ For details about Hobbes and the rhetoric of disembowelment, see Halliday, 1998. Laura Lunger Knoppers also provides a compelling counter argument which explores the different ways which royalist propaganda distorts the body politics of the Protectorate (2000).

¹⁰ For an in-depth analysis of Milton's wen metaphor as a language not only of disease and cure, but also of health and healing, see Skerpan-Wheeler, 296-297.

overhaul. Trapnel cautions that knowledge created by the thinking brain and not from the feeling heart will inevitably (and imminently) be struck down by God. Trapnel's displacement of rational knowledge in favor of spiritual or intuitive knowledge is performed both rhetorically and physically. Chapter One teases out those connections between Trapnel's sense of godly knowledge and contemporary notions of alcohol consumption. She introduces an alternative form of education that is politically consequential in its implications; the prophet underscores Cromwell's hypocrisy and undermines the universities, which prefer to view the world through increasingly empirical means.

While this chapter is a literary investigation which regards Trapnel as a poet who figures the heart in her religio-political verses, it is also valuable here in the introduction to consider the physical performativity of her prophecies in relation to drink, drunkenness, and knowledge production. Phyllis Mack astutely observes that, "far from posing a clear dichotomy between mind and body, seventeenth-century men and women *felt* certain kinds of knowledge" (23). Mack explains that, for seventeenth-century knowers, felt knowledge was likened to the influence of sex on the body rather than the power of piety over the soul (23). Analogously, Trapnel physically demonstrates the displacement of what she refers to as "head-piece" knowledge through martyrological displays and descriptions of self-harm, involuntary bouts into and out of consciousness, and sometimes incoherent or unintelligible verbal deliverances. I suggest that Trapnel displays her knowledge through these martyrological acts in order to symptomize the condition of knowing as felt knowledge that affects her body just as much as it does the

mind. These performances, more than strategic calls for attention to her specular self,¹¹ are Trapnel's intimate invitations for her audience to learn and to create knowledge from their hearts as she does. Her affective and physical education relies on the human capacity for empathy. Being a never-married, non-aristocratic singlewoman,¹² Trapnel gambles with these potentially scandalizing identifiers, playing up her physical weaknesses and spiritual vulnerabilities so that, as she recounts taking up her knife in a fit of self-destruction as in *A Legacy for Saints* (1654), her audience may vicariously participate in the cathartic journey. Despite the inconclusive scholarly verdict on how persuasive early modern spectacles of violence could be,¹³ such performances combined with the medium of prophecy undeniably become a particularly compelling avenue of

¹¹ Several scholars have contended that Trapnel's physical performance, rather than signify abnegation, deliberately calls for attention to herself. More cynically, Maria Magro interprets this call for attention as one of the ways in which Trapnel persuades the audience she is not a charlatan and attracts attention (415); Marcus Nevitt also points out that these performances and the attention they garner contributed to the sales of Trapnel's pamphlets, and thus can be regarded for the audience to pay attention to her body. I use Susannah Mintz's term, "Specular Self" -- a powerful self-identifier which directs the gaze of the audience to her body as spectacle -- to denote this irony as part of Trapnel's economic repertoire (8).

¹² I follow Amy Froide's decision to shorten "single woman" as one word here: her premise is that "singlewoman" constitutes "a new interpretive category" that sheds unprecedented light on our understanding of early modern patriarchy and the nuclear family (7).

¹³ While some scholars view the frequency with which early moderners encountered spectacles of violence, whether in the form of public executions, bear-baiting, or duelling, etc. have effectively desensitized the audiences from reacting sympathetically, the more recent inclination is to return due credit to spectacles of violence in their provocative efficacies. These scholars almost invariably study the topic through early modern dramatic representations. Stephen Greenblatt, for instance, argues that spectacles of violence "would have been easy for Elizabethan actors to represent in graphic, realistic detail" due to the prevalence of gory displays in public (179). On the other hand, Deborah Burks refuses to see rhetorics of victimhood under outrageous violence simply as the surrender of power, arguing instead that "the durability and adaptability of violations figure disruptions among superior and subordinate members of society... in fortuitous but often awkward ways" (12). Finally, David K. Anderson takes an epistemic spin on spectacles of violence in early modern tragedies, writing: "tragedians use a scene of deliberate killing as a solution that settles the action, enacts justice and restores order. *It is a cauterizing iron, staunching the wound in the play's society that would otherwise fester*" (2, my emphasis). Acts of violence performed on stage, therefore, force the early modern audience to think and feel, both cerebrally and viscerally. They are a complex process of healing and restoration executed through destruction. Understanding the use of violence and the possible reception of spectacles in which violence is used helps us understand the impact of Trapnel's public displays of self-harm, if not her directorial intentions in putting on these displays.

expression for Trapnel. Trapnel's prophetic performances challenge political order via the upending of traditional, masculinist forms of knowledge itself. It is what we would call today a "grassroots initiative" characteristic of a woman who understood herself to be a vehicle for the holy spirit and saw it her duty to speak for her sectarian group, yet who legally and culturally had no claims to the powers necessary to authorize her for such public speech acts. Her prophesying and the resulting manipulation of the empathic energies of her audience, finally, point to pain and suffering as tangible materials for the creation of heart-piece sense, her brand of true knowledge.

When compared to the singlewoman prophet Anna Trapnel, Katherine Austen had many more resources at her disposal in terms of creating a mode of knowing that would address much more material, secular affairs. After the death of her husband Thomas, Katherine spent many years engaged in legal disputes to keep her marital family's assets under the Austen name. Her experiences and contemplations are recorded in her diverse life writings, collectively titled *Book M*, which employ a method of financing that involves counting, calculating, and interpreting numerically images that appear in her dreams. Chapter Two argues that the wealthy widow carries her habit of shrewd material management over to her interpretation of dreams via the application of a numerological model that also reflects her pious biblical studies. Studies of Austen's life writings so far have generally focused on her extensive engagement with the *Book of Psalms* and the writings of Anglican divines, her status as a widow, her spiritual meditations, her dreams, and her poetic composition. Owing to the research by scholars including Pamela Hammons, Sarah C.E. Ross, and Barbara Todd, we know that Austen was born to a successful mercantile family, that she sent her sons to

university, that she indirectly supported the royalist cause, that she invested in real estate and the East India Company, and that she engaged in litigation to secure her family's estate--a considerable manor named Highbury--a preoccupation which informed Austen's writing and her tactical refusal to remarry.¹⁴ Austen's spirituality and her practical use of her dreams take precedence in studies by Patricia Crawford and Mary Baine Campbell, who not only show that early modern societies gave dreaming women a level of reverence and credit, but also detail how dreams gave rise to theories and forms of language through which early moderners understood their world.

The workaday matters that shape Austen's widowhood and the transcendental musings that shape her worldview occasionally come together. Ross argues with Anselment's unifying notion¹⁵ when she writes that, in light of Austen's pious, literate background, "scriptures provide[d] not only words through which to express interiority, but narratives to be read typologically, as allegories of her own trials and looked-for deliverance" (309). The co-dependence of the secular Austen and the spiritual Austen can be integrally considered as intertwined aspects from which we may trace the epistemological development of the ingenious Austen. This chapter picks up from the point at which Austen's secular and spiritual selves epistemologically collide. It reads Austen's dream logs and poetic contemplations about dreams as the widow's response to epistemic fields occupied by practical mathematicians and mystics. Regarding Austen

¹⁴ This brief summary of Austen's biographical facts collected from Hammons 1-37, Ross 1-39, and Todd 202-237.

¹⁵ Referring to Anselment's statement, "Austen's material concerns heighten[ed] a spiritual dependency" (14).

as a diarist and poet, the chapter positions her among other female writers who versify or theorize their dreams. This comparative analysis draws critical attention to what may be a new subgenre of early modern women's writings.

The final chapter of this dissertation surveys the prolific works of Margaret Cavendish, the duchess of Newcastle. Court lady to Henrietta Maria, the duchess followed the Queen in exile during the years 1644 to 1651, and wrote across many genres, as she claims, to relieve herself from debilitating melancholia. These varieties of generic adaptations reveal Cavendish's conscious and conscientious self-fashioning of a melancholic persona, which then empowers the alleged sufferer of a corporal disease to promote serious study of mental illnesses in her contemporary academies. While the chapter focuses mainly on Cavendish's voice as an advocate in natural philosophy, it is worth remarking here in the introduction upon the duchess' undeniable spirituality. To be sure, Cavendish was not an atheist. Her melancholic persona and her approach to a fanciful yet rigorous scholarship are both intricately tied to her ingenious faith in the divine. One of Cavendish's most memorable philosophical opinions is that "there is no Supreme Knowledge" (111).¹⁶ While this opinion can be read to infer the nonexistence of an omniscient God, to argue thus that Cavendish is an atheist is also to dismiss her insistence on the non-superior status of human empirical rationality. Chapter Three shows that the duchess repeatedly evaluates prevailing scientific methods based on two standard beliefs -- that human capabilities are limited in the face of Nature's infinite possibilities, and that Nature is a higher level of sentient and intellectual being.

¹⁶ From *The Philosophical and Physical Opinions*, 1655.

In honor of the ultimately uncategorizable gnosis of Cavendish, scholars have recently begun to tease out a more nuanced articulation of her worldview. This Introduction has already mentioned Lisa Walters' inspiring study of Cavendish, science, and the supernatural; Brandie Siegfried and Lisa Sarasohn further caution against any definitive inclusion or exclusion of a Christian God in reading Cavendish. "Though the natural world, human nature, and the Divine were all intimately connected for Cavendish and her contemporaries," they note, "there was little agreement as to precisely what role God played in the detailed scheme of things" (Siegfried and Sarasohn, 7). Sara Mendelson calls Cavendish "a skeptical Deist who hedged her bets by proclaiming her allegiance to Anglican orthodoxy" (41); and James Fitzmaurice believes that Cavendish's plays "chime nicely with the definition of Latitudinarianism --- that is, she was irenic in her views and felt that it was foolish to be dogmatic, given the limitations of human understanding" (77). Keeping in mind that Cavendish was spiritual allows us to read her scientific writings not as dogma against religion but as working towards a comprehensive language through which to understand the universe as a whole, a universe which includes without ranking the material and the immaterial, and in which the felt and the thought contribute equally to one's consciousness.

Cavendish's ingenuous spirituality, which transcends institutional dogma to seek understanding beyond materiality, encapsulates what it means to know through a practical consciousness for seventeenth-century Englishwomen. While this dissertation focuses on the thoughts and feelings of Trapnel, Austen, and Cavendish, it looks forward towards some equally inspiring women thinkers who create knowledge affectively in the century

after, the endeavors of which characterize the sense and sensibilities of the Romantic Movement. Briefly surveying works by Mary Hays, Mary Robinson, and Joanna Baillie in the Afterword, I hope to introduce practical intuitive knowing as not a seventeenth-century curiosity, but a natural component of a greater epistemological continuum.

Chapter One

“Head-piece language and heart-piece sense”:
Re-anatomizing the Body Politic in Anna Trapnel’s Ecstatic Prophecies

*For human Arts and Sciences.
because you doat on them,
Therefore the Lord wil others teach
whom you count but Lay-men.*

--- Anna Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*,
1654.

In the 1650s, Anna Trapnel, a seemingly frail maid, travelled around cities in England, falling into trances and singing of the downfall of Oliver Cromwell to captivated audiences. In these prophecies, the kinds of knowledge gained through a university education and from official and religious leaders (i.e., divines and preachers) are decried in versified accusations such as the one delivered in this epigraph. Trapnel’s explicit targeting of “human Arts and Sciences” in *Cry of a Stone* ascribes institutionalized scholarly endeavors to a category opposite to that which is divine, thus associating them with connotations of mortality and original imperfections attached to the fallen state. She directs her diatribe against scholars --who would be men in this seventeenth-century context-- by using a powerful second person pronoun; she shames them by framing their knowledge as inferior. The action for which Trapnel faults scholars exposes an irony that cannot be ignored: university men “doat”¹⁷ on human scholarship; they render themselves foolish with their infatuation. In contrast to such folly, Trapnel’s next line demonstrates her own soundness of reason-- “therefore,” she strategically and logically presses,

¹⁷ According to the OED, “to be silly, deranged, or out of one's wits; to act or talk foolishly or stupidly” (1225-1871).

before asserting God's volition as His secretary in adjudicating causality¹⁸: the Lord will choose others to whom he will impart knowledge. Specifically, Trapnel forewarns that the power inherent in a different kind of knowledge and expertise will be granted to a presumably unskilled demography. She implies that the formerly disenfranchised community of "laymen" shall rise to constitute an influential class in its own right.

The prophet's¹⁹ message is pedagogical, enabling, threatening, and subversive. Trapnel attempts to usher in the dawn of a new model for divine education while executing her own lesson plan, one that proves more rational than that which would typically be perceived as the rational and that seeks to gain more than those who prize the idea of personal property. This chapter will explore how the prophet advocates for a brand of true knowledge based on the heart and how she popularizes this "heart-piece sense" by using the language of alcohol and consumption. Trapnel's merging of allusions to the heart and to alcohol not only displays her internalized understanding of the Bible, but also opens up for us as readers an illuminating point of contrast from which to understand better the general knowledge about alcohol consumption, knowing, and the social and spiritual hierarchies of seventeenth-century England. Indeed, canonical male poets such as Robert Herrick and Ben Jonson also produce poetry that seeks to educate, inform, or even reform

¹⁸ The term "God's Secretary" refers to Diane Watt's categorization of women prophets in late medieval and early modern England. As Watt so eloquently explains, to be God's secretary was to commune intimately with the divine, and to relay dutifully His revelations to others. To be a secretary, furthermore, held connotations of a governmental position held by men, and thus, to be politically influential. As the word implies, it is also to be entrusted with "secrets" (1-2).

¹⁹ In the spirit of legitimizing unorthodox knowers, here and throughout the chapter, I refer to Trapnel as a prophet or prophet-poet. I do so with an awareness that such an address may prioritize a certain wish-granting for Trapnel's personal ambitions over an academic critical distance. In consideration for these thinking/women, who already frequently shy away from identifying as "scholars," my reference bids readers to allow these women the courtesy of expressing their knowledge from the position to which they aspire.

readers through similar literary devices.²⁰ Nevertheless, as we shall see, the prophet makes her approach in ways that are much different and with unique solemnity. Her poetic hybridity underscores the complexity of her knowledge creation and the range of her ingenuity. The practicality of her “heart-piece sense” manifests itself via the political viability of her prophecies, as they construct a Theonomy by which to challenge Oliver Cromwell’s meritocratic²¹ ideologies during the Civil War.

Very little is known about Anna Trapnel. She was a shipwright’s daughter, which meant that her father’s skills in trade and their relative financial stability allowed her a degree of independence and mobility.²² No evidence exists to suggest that Trapnel received any formal schooling and, unlike Katherine Austen’s accounts in *Book M* or Margaret Cavendish’s descriptions in her autobiographical *True Relation*, we have few textual clues from which to garner information about Trapnel’s education at home. However, this apparent disengagement with formal education does not correlate to a lack of enthusiasm for learning on her part. In her own words in *A Legacy for Saints*,²³ Trapnel recalls her childhood as one punctuated by edifications of a different sort:

²⁰ Herrick’s twin verses, “The Farewell to Sack,” and “The Welcome to Sack” (1648), and Jonson’s country house poem, “To Penshurst” (1616), are examples in which seventeenth-century male poets have used alcohol and drink as figures through which to comment upon late-Stuart to Caroline England. The former likens sack, a very sweet, Spanish sherry wine, to a seductress with whom the speaker engages in an adulterous affair. The latter extols the Sidney estate, a place where sumptuous feasts are provided to encourage the nurturing of proper virtues. Both poems relate drinking habits directly to issues of loyalty and good conduct.

²¹ On Cromwell’s selection and cultivation of troops from across social echelons, see Gaunt, 41-43.

²² That she is a singlewoman may have also contributed to Trapnel’s relative mobility; according to Hilary Hinds, “Trapnel...argued that she had been free to travel to Cornwall because she was unmarried and therefore had no conflicting demands on her” (43).

²³ Trapnel’s *Legacy for Saints* follows the popularly recognizable narrative formula in the seventeenth century called spiritual autobiography or the conversion narrative. According to Stuart Sim, spiritual

When I was about 14 years of age, I began to be very eager and forward to hear and pray, though in a very formal manner; Thus I went on some years, and then I rose to a higher pitch, to a more spiritual condition, as I thought, and I followed after that Ministry that was most pressed after by the strictest Professors, and I ran with great violence, having a great zeal, though not according to knowledge [...] I ran from Minister to Minister, from Sermon to Sermon, but I could find no rest; I could not be contented to hear once or twice in the week; but I must hear from the first day to the last, and thought that not enough neither...I still cried out, what shall I do? And all my prayer that was left me was this, *Give me Christ, or else I die*...I am perswaded that bare Professors are the greatest Papists in the world; spirituall idolatry is the worst; and my experience teacheth me, that one may be a great worshipper of Idols, and yet never bow down to a picture. (527, 529)

Her recollection traces an almost experimental process of spiritual and epistemic growth that eventually, and with sound logic, justifies her distrust of formal education and those who deliver it.²⁴ Trapnel's logical distrust is conveyed by the repeated usage of the conjunction "though," as if to say that her achievements in learning are accomplished despite the misguidance of "formal manners" and "strictest Professors."²⁵ She expresses her "zeal" with heavy emphasis not on the mind but on physical and sensual urges: the

autobiographies usually trace a characteristically sinful youth through experiences of anxiety and fear, typically alleviated or exacerbated by interactions with the Bible, and eventually finding deliverance through an epiphany and conversion towards salvation (evangelical). D. Bruce Hindmarsh, in studying the spiritual autobiography of eighteenth-century England, articulates the lasting impact of this genre: "the evangelical conversion narrative represents an alternative version of modern self-identity. One that overlaps in some ways with the modern autobiographical identity, but one that also qualifies the notion of self-fashioning" (6). Although the object of Hindmarsh's analyses is about a century away from the time of Trapnel's writing, this basic formula is still observable in her narratives and, I would argue, still influential in how interpretation of Trapnel's spectacular self may also shape later senses of self-fashioning.

²⁴ This experimental process of knowledge creation, based on trial and error, also underlies the logical coming-into-knowing for Austen and Cavendish in subsequent chapters. It is a characteristic which arguably makes the three thinking-feeling women "scientific" in their endeavor. A comparison between affective knowledge making and Bacon's scientific method will be further explicated in Chapters Two and Three.

²⁵ Because a "professor" can be "a university academic of the highest rank" or "a professed member of a religious order" (*OED*, "professor," 1597-2004), this blending of definitions places both categories of expertise on par with one another. Trapnel balances the value of the arts and sciences with that of spiritual knowledge so that ideas propounded by a professor of a church can be held with the same scornful regard as those pushed forth by a professor of any established university.

prophet “*ran with great violence,*” never “*hearing... enough.*” She continuously “*cries out*” her need for knowledge, and the insatiability of her need – “*I could find no rest; I could not be contented*” – is suggestive of her similar descriptions elsewhere, which more blatantly consider knowing alongside gustatory consumption. These visceral qualifiers for Trapnel’s pursuit of knowledge transform her unorthodox education from theoretical exercise to one that is tangible and practical. Thus Trapnel’s final level of understanding here, “*taught by experience,*” convinces her to redefine idolatry and idols. It is a practical knowledge that essentially rebels against the spiritual as well as the sociopolitical status quo. The resulting “*violence*” in Trapnel’s enthusiastic behavior, lastly, fuels her infamous journey from London into Cornwall like an anti-institutional battle cry, and turns her prophesying body into a disruptive symbol with which to be reckoned.

Trapnel’s position as a prophet, poet, and preacher proves very dangerous in her contemporary society.²⁶ As recorded in *Report and Plea*, she was sent to Bridewell prison in March 1654 on accounts of lunacy, witchcraft, whoredom, vagrancy, and sedition (Freeman 370). Her numerous trances, professions, and her arrest and trial are recorded and published, sometimes by an anonymous mediator and sometimes penned by the prophet herself, in popular titles including *Strange and Wonderful News from White-Hall*, *The Cry of a Stone*, *A Legacy for Saints*, and *Anna Trapnel’s Report and Plea*, (all in 1654). Three years later, concomitant to Thomas Venner’s abortive plot to overthrow Oliver Cromwell, the prophet’s *Lively Voice for the King of Saints and Nations* (1657) emerged

²⁶ Hammons’ *Poetic Resistance* confirms the dangers a visionary woman such as Trapnel is likely to encounter in her society. She writes specifically that “female preachers, missionaries, and prophets faced not only ridicule, humiliation, and imprisonment, but also restraint by iron bridle, whippings, and death threats” (63).

and is the last known work attributed to her. Although scholars generally conclude that Trapnel “mysteriously disappeared from public life” after her infamous journey and incarceration (Freeman 371), newsbooks, pamphlets, and even plays of the day continued to make mention of the “sibyll,”²⁷ “Idolator,”²⁸ or “factious citizen”²⁹ they believed to be “Hannah Trapnell.”

Trapnel’s ecstatic prophecies are obviously a religious tract, less apparently a political commentary, and even more subtly an epistemological manifesto which situates the prophet’s irrational knowledge production in stark opposition to the more established institutions of the church and the university as avenues from which people may seek useful and important information. She challenges the influence of the two in *Cry of a Stone*:

Oh when shall men speak forth from the demonstration of thy Spirit? When shall they go forth in thy garments, not their garments, not with their Surplices and Tippetts; Oh no, they say, these they have abhorred and put off, Oh but they speak their University language, their head-piece language, their own sense: Oh but where is the voice of the new Covenant-teaching, are not they hid and concealed [?] (426)

²⁷ The astrologer John Gadbury, in his *Natura Prodigiorum, or A Discourse Touching the Nature of Prodigies* (1660), refers to “the voices and Revelations of Hannah Trapnel” as one of “Sibylls in their times pretending to deliver their fantasms by inspiration” (190).

²⁸ Thomas Tenison rallies his readers in *Of Idolatry a discourse* (1678) to “make judgment of such as Anna Trapnell, who believed for a while, that God dwelt essentially in his Saints” (309). Tenison includes Trapnel among those idolators who have “rent themselves from the safe Communion” of the Church of England.

²⁹ In a scene of the anonymously written comedy, *The Factious Citizen, or, The Melancholy Visioner* (1685), the character Hangby, dressed in “Red Coats, like Souldiers,” rattles off a list of “paltry Books” kept by Mr. Turbulent, whom they deem traitor to England. The list includes “Lilly’s prophesies, Merlin’s Prophesies, Mother Shipton’s Prophesies, Dabritius his Prophesies, Arise Evans, and the Maid of Kent’s Prophesies, and Hannah Trapnel’s Visions” (Act Four, Scene One, lines unnumbered).

Discrepancies between what is sensed by the spirit (what the prophet likely hopes is also empathically sensed by her audience) and what is ultimately rendered through verbal articulation by the clergy and university men are emphasized here with punctuations of Trapnel's rhythmic exclamations. Each "Oh" she utters reminds her audience that there exists an alternative form of elocution, one that does not ignore the sentiments of the masses for whom she performs. Consistent with the divisive tone introduced between the educated "you" and those counted laymen in the epigraph, repetitions of the pronoun "they" reinforce an underlying disagreement of interests between people. That the "head-piece language" fails to represent a synchrony of one's essential voice and the voice of divine will underscores how shortcomings of formal education may hold grave political, even existential ramifications. Trapnel argues that University language does not necessarily bespeak true learnedness because the voice of the "New Covenant-teachings," which in her opinion is teaching of essential value, is silenced.³⁰ The ignorance of clergy- and university men of an essential knowledge, finally, makes speakers of head-piece languages what we might call today empty talking heads. Putting pressure on this superficiality, Trapnel takes pains to ridicule the Anglican priests by their garments, their "Surplices and Tippetts" that only flaunt the wearers' self-absorption. Later, this chapter will fully develop this

³⁰ The New Covenant is a biblical concept of a kingdom of God, a Messianic Age believed to be commenced by Christ's Second Coming. According to P.G. Rogers, the Fifth Monarchists (among other radical sectarians such as the Levellers and Quakers) revitalized early interpretations of the Book of Daniel and Revelation to envision the approach of the Millennium, a time "when all social and economic inequality would disappear, and private property and all forms of human authority would be abolished" (6). Many Fifth Monarchists saw the execution of Charles I in 1649 as physical evidence of this Second Coming, and in the first years of the Protectorate worked eagerly with Oliver Cromwell – who had a genuine liking for "godly men" – to realize a practical "government by the saints" (19). Trapnel's many jabs at human intellectual capabilities and her sense of existential urgency come directly from this particular world view. Her personal jabs at Cromwell, in particular, reflect the disappointment and sense of betrayal that the protectorate has made little effort in giving way to the Kingdom of God (see later sections in the chapter, p.55).

observation that Trapnel conveys her epistemological criticisms symbolically via references to material objects such as clothing, physical parts of the body, and finally to alcohol. Her insistence upon the persuasiveness of ways of knowing through sites besides the brain demonstrates how knowledge should be internalized, consumed gustatorily, and *felt* above all rationality.

Trapnel directs her charge at the universities: “University men have great knowledge,” she concedes, “but they cannot try the spirit”; she poses the rhetorical question, “Can those that have the form without the power, that have great arguments” (435)? In arguments against the clergy and the university men, Trapnel tackles specifically the inability of institutions to use traditional forms of rational thought to persuade the masses as a whole towards collective betterment. She draws attention to the irony embedded in the phrase “great knowledge,” and highlights what she sees as misconceptions about greatness to upend power dynamics in favor of spirituality. Trapnel succeeds in promoting her own prophetic rhetoric in rivalry with the great orators of her time, particularly in her criticism that university men could not produce great arguments by form alone.³¹ To be truly influential, to produce ground-shifting results on a national scale, Trapnel implies, one must master not only the art of critical thinking, but more importantly, the art of moving emotions. In this view, she adopts a humanist stress on rhetoric (the art of effective verbal persuasion) and proper education (however defined) as essential civic virtues. Trapnel theorizes about what counts as valuable knowledge, even though she has not yet been seen as a great thinker or philosopher of her day. My argument proposes

³¹ It is perhaps this distrust of formal expression that ultimately encourages Trapnel to both mimic and subvert existing poetic conventions, as this chapter strives to demonstrate.

precisely that this visionary woman be included when considering the epistemic contributions of early modern women, that Trapnel indeed belongs in the company of such early and influential female thinkers as Christine de Pisan, Rachel Speght, Bathsua Makin, and of course, Margaret Cavendish.

Trapnel's strategy to persuade the masses yokes together references to the market and learning. She voices her concerns about education extensively in these stanzas in *Cry of a Stone*:

For you have set too high a price
 Upon your Learning here,
 Oh that makes Christ for to come
 out,
 and from you it to tear.

Because you have the honour
 received,
 so much fleece from Christs flock,
 Therefore now you shal be by Christ
 oh made a stumbling block.

Christs Scholars they are perfected
 with learning from above,
 To them he gives capacity
 to know his depths of love

Though learning it be very good,
 when in its place it stands,
 But when it gaddeth forth thereout
 it looseth its great bands.

For in the Chimny the fire is
 useful and precious,
 But when the rafters it doth reach,
 it sets on fire the house.

And so is Learning, when you
 keep
 it within its true bound,
 But when you joyne it unto Christ

he wil then it confound. (418)

In these stanzas, the prophet separates true knowledge from brain-study knowledge spatially. Learning takes place in the physical “here,” while Christ “comes out,” presumably from a divine elsewhere. “You have set too high a price,” she cautions. Her describing knowledge as priced may be metaphorical, tying learning conceptually with the commerce of everyday merchandise and the high regard people hold for sought-after luxury goods. It may very well be literal, too, gesturing to the tuition and other monetary costs of institutional education. Finally, Trapnel may be extending her criticism towards the tithe system. Tithing, meaning “a tenth of something” etymologically, refers to the obligatory portion of a person’s income due to the Church. In turn, clergymen of the Church of England rely on this income and deliver sermons and pardons. The Quakers, and in particular the Fifth Monarchists, were among the most vehement of objectors to this practice, which they saw as dishonorable buying and selling of divinity. In such a context, Trapnel’s accusation that the clergymen “have set too high a price” upon their knowledge, or services rendered by this knowledge, attempts to repeal a long-standing policy. This attempt at political change, like her other criticisms of Cromwell and the universities, demonstrate Trapnel’s active civic engagement.

Trapnel establishes her society’s overvaluation of human learning in order to heighten the keen sense of loss and violence provoked by the idea that Christ may confiscate it. Christ “comes out,” and from the scholars “tears” away their prized knowledge. The act of tearing is multifariously significant. By definition it connotes a forceful pulling asunder of parts, suggesting in so connoting either a stripping away of material assets or even a physical stripping of limbs (*OED*, “tear,” 1386-1902). The choice

of the verb “tear” also carries homiletic weight. In 1649, the bishop Edward Reynolds’ *Israel’s Prayer in Time of Trouble*, a sermon on Chapter Fourteen of the Book of Hosea, touches upon the influence of Satan -- “The Serpent can sting,” Reynolds concedes, “but he cannot teare in pieces” (23). Reynolds’ message intends to empower puritan adherents through an emphasis on the limitations of various “hurting powers,” which are diminished in contrast to the omnipotence of God (23). While the Serpent cannot “tear,” here in Trapnel’s pronouncement of the downfall of mundane learning God surely tears knowledge from the learner. Because the sermon had undoubtedly reached many -- according to the cover page of *Israel’s Prayer*, it was first preached “upon so many days at Braunston in Northamptonshire,” subsequently published once in 1645, and then again in 1649, this time emphatically as an “enlarged second Edition by order of the honorable House of Commons” -- Trapnel’s imagery of God coming out and tearing knowledge away hearkens to the sense of omnipotence that many must have felt while experiencing Reynolds’ popular sermon; it must have also conveyed a similar sense of one upmanship by which both human learning and all other creatures are dwarfed in comparison to divine power.

Trapnel lectures about the true meaning of ownership by introducing the concept of honor. She reasons with her audience, “Because you have the honour/ received / so much fleece from Christs flock.” Juxtaposing the fragile illusion of personal property associated with a phrase like “your learning” against the more humbling reminder of “honour received,” the prophet bids her audience to rethink what was assumed to be entitled ownership now as a privilege. The perverse pastoral image of fleecing the flock (as opposed to caring for them) mirrors the violence of God’s “tearing” to critique those

false, greedy preachers who have rather dishonored their congregations' trust by extorting monetary payments. Trapnel specifically mentions fleece (or wool) to make her argument for its biblically, epistemologically, politically, and commercially important significance. Not only is fleece the experimental object which Gideon puts out in The Book of Judges to methodically understand the truth of God's words (6:36-40),³² it is also, according to Roze Hentschell, a capital good of unparalleled cultural influence particularly in late sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England.³³ The mention of wool and sheep occurs frequently in the Bible. Trapnel's gesture at the wool industry ties implicitly with her critique of consumption, formal education, and proper leadership. It is likely that her connection draws influence from the First Epistle of Peter. Therein, the Apostle lectures, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1:5:2). A true leader "feeds" or provides for his or her followers, and guidance is given "willingly," without coercion and care for profit.³⁴ Peter also stresses the importance of "a ready mind." In linking learning to Christ's flock, Trapnel binds concerns about education, political

³² Trapnel often associates Cromwell with the biblical figure of Gideon. In a later instance, the prophet likewise confronts the Protector with this address (see chapter conclusion, p. 64). Her reference to fleece in this context must therefore also account for an oblique comment on Cromwell's personal and political faiths. It is possible that by reminding the public that they have "received fleece," Trapnel gestures to Gideon's – or Cromwell's -- testing of the verity of God's words, and to general empirical misgivings about divine truth as well.

³³ Hentschell argues that the wool cloth industry in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England reached beyond its commercial value to become a locus for nationalism transcending socio-economic boundaries. First, wool was collectively believed to be among the most ancient technologies, and its implication of a venerable tradition allowed England to equate herself with the craft; however, accusations of malpractice and dissension concerning either foreign trade or desire for luxury items that naturally accompany the industry also placed wool at the center of England's moral debates (See her introduction, p.1-2).

³⁴ This reciprocal exchange is later elaborated upon as the chapter delves into discussion of patronage and Trapnel's contemporary poets. The idea of "feeding the flock" and of maintaining "a ready mind" here again emphasizes the pivotal link between physical nourishment and knowledge production.

leadership, devotional faith, and the ethics of commerce together to demonstrate how contemporary scholars have perverted what she believes were the true teachings of elders according to Scripture; in remediating contemporary narratives about teaching and learning with the language of food and alcohol, Trapnel adheres to the admonition of Peter and properly provides for the knowledge-hungry.

On an existential note, Trapnel warns that the dishonorable abuse of God's gift would result in the degeneracy of the individual, if not the demise of humans as a species. "Now you shall be by Christ / Oh made a stumbling block," she declares. A stumbling block is an obstacle in the way of progress and to belief or understanding (*OED*, "stumbling block," 1593-1912). As with previous discussions about early modern usages of the word practical,³⁵ here a misguided person is "made" a stumbling block and embodies that human obstacle towards advancement, spiritually, intellectually, and morally. Reading the embodying usage of such key words as "practical" and "stumbling block" in juxtaposition truly drives home the consequence of personal responsibility which undergirds both Trapnel (and Cromwell's) revolutionary rallies. Any individual's personal qualities, in terms of their virtues and vices, and in terms of their singular actions, can characterize him or her as a "practical citizen" – someone who tangibly acts upon the society within which he or she resides; similarly, these practical effects propel said individual's community towards collective betterment or, in very real ways, impede human progress. By arguing that every individual is valuable in their respective causes, Trapnel and Cromwell kindle loyalty in even the most humbly-born and disenfranchised.

³⁵ See introduction, p. 6.

In lieu of those who have “stumbled,” Trapnel proffers another, more “perfected” learner -- “Christ’s scholar” who receives knowledge with “learning from above.” While brain-study trains the university men to speak witty phrases, these Christ’s scholars are “give[n] capacity” to know God’s profound “depths of love.” She explains why Christ’s scholars possess a more perfected knowledge than that of the Arts and Sciences by pointing out shortcomings of the latter. “Though learning it be very good,” she begins to concede, “When in its place it stands / But when it gaddeth forth thereout / It looseth its great bands.” Her evaluation of brain-studied knowledge being “good”³⁶ only to a limited extent bids her audience to re-evaluate what is good and urges re-evaluation of rationality. University learning is by institutional approval considered good in the sense that it is suitable for mundane purposes of obtaining understanding of things. It is also good, as a commodity like food or medicine, qualified as fit for consumption. In pertaining to rational learning, that it is good gestures to its having a justifiable, factual, and credible basis. These final points of understanding about good as a value judgement refer particularly to a soundness of mind — they require that something that is good be rationally so. Trapnel juxtaposes this rational soundness, which she sees as good, with dichotomized actions of “standing in place” and “gadding about” to illustrate motions of the body and physical behavior as symptoms of mental well-being. Being able to discretely stand in place, for Trapnel, shows a rational mind’s knowing control of the body while an irrational wandering out of one’s prescribed space shows a debilitated mind (and evidently, a dangerous mind, too).

Trapnel’s analogy of good knowledge as fire in the chimney evokes another important value judgement about knowledge, that good knowledge is *practical*. She warns

³⁶ Subsequent reading based on *OED*, “good,” 1275-2007.

of the consequence of misusing fire to caution her audience about the consequence of abusing knowledge: “But when the rafters it doth reach, / It sets on fire the house.” Images of flames licking the rafters and then engulfing a person’s home must have been an ever-present and viscerally felt apprehension that haunted the everyday lives of early modern English people. Ellen Mackay writes of “the apocalyptic pressures that fire always exerts upon its early modern chroniclers” (143).³⁷ Trapnel uses the real fear that people have and the profound awe they feel towards fires to rectify their attitudes about the concept of usefulness. She instructs her audience on the proper applications of things they assume to be practical. Embedded therein is also an oblique commentary on the fickleness of loyalty, which would have potentially threatened Cromwell along with any other mortal leader. The epistemic moral of Trapnel’s analogy is that brain-studied knowledge must never be confused as Knowledge — the true knowledge of Christ, her heart-piece sense. The resulting consequence is that “letting fire to the rafters,” or using knowledge without discretion, would “burn down the house” or devastate the nation as a whole. Formal learning is indeed useful and precious, Trapnel concludes, but only insofar as it remains secondary to learning about the divine. “Joyned” perversely with Christ, this mundane form of knowledge will not enlighten the learner but rather “confound,” causing humanity’s demise.

I began my exploration of Trapnel’s prophetic lyrics with this lengthy close-reading from *Cry of a Stone* to demonstrate the range of how she uses practical knowledge, which

³⁷ Culminating in the Great Fire of London in 1666, Mackay echoes Henry Wotton, who saw the “familiarization of greatness” that pervaded “print accounts of passing comets, lightning storms, church, house, and town fires, and just about any report of unexpected burning” (143). She understands the significance of early modern fires through John Sedgwick and Saint Salvian’s reasoning behind the sublimity of providential burnings, how through fire theaters are “‘overthrown, and destroyed’ as a result of the abominable fervor that plays inspire” (144).

Trapnel defends as having been obtained from sources outside of formal education. From her familiarity with scripture, to her drawing influence from poets and poetic conventions contemporary to her,³⁸ to her sensitivity towards early modern commerce and popular psyches of desires and fears, these demonstrations constitute repertoires for an alternative education that is both an adaption a degree besides conventions and intimately tied to the lived experiences of her contemporary people. The idea that knowledge can have a price becomes pivotal in the next chapter, as Katherine Austen's hope of achieving and maintaining gentry status rests largely on her meticulous numerological accounting of her dreams; as we will see, Austen is not ignorant of possible incriminations about her unorthodox ways of knowing (and the faith she places on this unconventional method): throughout *Book M* the widow polices herself and tries to align her mysticism with her professed piety. Trapnel, less concerned with the overall economy of knowledge than the sentiments of the consumers of knowledge as commodity, focuses on eliciting from her audience the visceral and instinctual reactions at the thought of having knowledge confiscated.

³⁸ Although we know little of Trapnel's exposure to formal and literary education, studies have shown that religious practice and poetry composition are oftentimes mutually constructive and mutually instructive. Barbara Lewalski considers the kinds of meditations undertaken, prevalent emblems, as well as moral questions of aestheticism when it comes to presenting Protestant truth as major influences on the literary styles of seventeenth-century poets (Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, Taylor). She observes that "Puritan worship focused even more exclusively upon the Bible for readings and sermon texts. Such constant communal reading and hearing was surely a major means by which poets became conscious of the poetic elements of scripture, and of the models it might present for Christian lyric poetry" (12). In the analyses of this chapter, it is easy to find synchrony between Trapnel's lyrics with elements of Cavalier poetry, Petrarchan love lyrics, as well as direct references to the Bible. These occasions of synchronicity may not necessarily indicate that the prophet either studied courtly poetics or was ever intentional in her mimicry of her contemporary, higher ranking poets. Rather, they serve to demonstrate how the spiritual practices of her time influenced seventeenth-century poetics in myriad unexpected ways.

Trapnel's denunciation of scholars who inappropriately claim to possess brain-studied knowledge as a secular right mirrors passages from the Book of Matthew, in which Jesus enters the temple of God and expels the moneychangers:

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said to them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves. (21:12-13)

The biblical image of Jesus "casting out" the moneychangers and "overthrowing" the seats and tables is vividly fraught with physical violence. It is an outward exertion of which the frail and afflicted prophet herself is presumably incapable. By evoking the image, Trapnel compensates for her apparent physical frailty with the inherent power of her verbal reference. Orality is significant in this pre-crucifixion tale as well, insofar as the violence portrayed here lies not simply in Jesus's physical actions but in His verbal proclamation: "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves." Jesus does not call His house the house of prayer — He decrees that the house *shall be called* the house of prayer, a command for everyone to speak similarly. We will find that Trapnel employs a similar strategy: she exemplifies proper drinking and knowing, but more importantly, in her invitations the prophet ultimately aims for her audience to drink and speak properly themselves. As it pertains to civil war politics, Trapnel layers a new story—that of the divine Christ coming down to reclaim his truthful reign over England, expelling, as He does so, the false wielders of power: Cromwell, the Church of England, the money market --over Matthew's cautionary tale.

Trapnel conveys an urgency in addressing the decline in England's moral well-being. She firmly believes that in order to subdue this spiraling degeneration the nation

must be treated--in both senses of regard and cure--as a political body, an anatomical body, as well as a metropolitan-based corporate system.³⁹ Again in *Cry of a Stone*, she entreats the Lord to

take away all that sowre leaven that is upon the earth...Take it out of thy Children that are in the midst of the earth, and keep thy lump that it may not be infected; many are infected, their language is infected, it was sweet before, but now it is confused, it had an harmony, but now it hath no rellish.-- Oh, that thy Children should drink up inflaming Wine, not like thy inflaming wine, for that's a beautifull inflaming, but an inflaming of rednesse and burning. (412)

Trapnel likens the corruption of clerical voices and university language to spoiled bread that no longer nurtures the body. Once eaten, it infects God's Children, their speech acts, and causes inflammation. That the Church and University are denounced through imageries of eating, drinking, hearing, and touching emphasizes Trapnel's aim of influencing how people think by making an impact on how they sensually felt and consumed sustenance. The prophet intentionally delivers her entreaty to the Lord here through a synesthesia of various forms of sensory perceptions – Trapnel speaks of God's children's language being infected, an observation of a disability in speech; of their language being confused, a disability in logic; of it being no longer sweet or harmonious, a value judgement based on hearing; of the drinking up of inflaming Wine, a description involving digestion and physical reaction; of a beautiful inflaming involving sight contrasted by an inflaming of burning, which, finally, involves touch. This complex mixture of sensory perceptions opens her audience (through *watching* and *listening* to her perform these sensory-description-

³⁹ Here I am primarily referring to Margaret Rose Hunt's examination of early modern England as a religion-driven social system and as a proto-capitalist social system. Hunt cites polemics on "practical divinity" such as William Bagshawe's *Trading Spiritualized* (1694, 1695, and 1696) to argue that preachers and successful merchants of the seventeenth-century admired and employed one another's strategies in promoting their ideologies and trades, evolving in a symbiotic working relationship (20).

laden lines) to the many possibilities of processing information with non-rational parts of their bodies. It also highlights how intangible things such as what one sees, hears, or speaks can have tangible bearings on their physical health. Trapnel capitalizes on the many correlations of the word “consumption” to eating, drinking, the buying of goods, and bodily atrophy.⁴⁰ In many of the prophecies examined in this chapter, she consistently returns to these multiple meanings of consumption to produce practical poetry, specifically to educate, convert, and cure. Helen Smith delineates such interplay between education, conversion, and cure among remedial narratives during the period as an effective exercise in studying rhetoric. “Corporeal suffering offered an opportunity for the good Christian to meditate upon his or her spiritual health,” Smith notes, “and vice was routinely manifested in physical symptoms. Meanwhile, popular works about illness embraced the need for religious rectitude as much as for dietetics or domestic cure” (473-474). It is this popular equation of the physical to the mental, and ultimately to the soul which led moralists to lash out against drink with polemical tracts such as Edward Bury’s *England’s Bane, or Deadly Dangers of Drunkenness* (1677), William Hornby’s *The Scourge of Drunkenness* (1618), William Prynne’s *Healthe’s Sicknesse* (1628) and J. Srenock’s *God’s Sword drawn against drunkards and swearers* (1677).⁴¹

While polemicists such as Trapnel and Prynne seek to persuade toward moral rectitude through talking about bodily consumption, actual substances such as alcohol and tobacco --and as we shall see in the case of Margaret Cavendish, narcotics-- effect

⁴⁰ According to the OED, “consumption” originally means “an abnormality of loss of humours, resulting in wasting of the body,” later to mean “a disease that causes wasting of the body such as tuberculosis” (1398-2007).

⁴¹ A. Lynn Martin has done a thorough study on the moralist attacks on drinking culture in early modern England, and specifically on the content and reach of these pamphlets in Chapter Two (2009, p.15-17).

economic and political change with palpable results. James Nicholls explains that contrary to those previously mentioned anti-drinking campaigns, it was actually not the fact that one drank, but what one drank, which separated the acceptable and unacceptable comportments associated with alcohol consumption:

Wine, always the drink of the privileged classes, had come to signify the loyalism of those who supported the monarchy through the Interregnum, and the urbane anti-Puritanism of Cavalier culture and its legacy. Beer, the grass-roots national drink, had survived persistent attacks on alehouses in the early years of the century and re-emerged as the symbol of honesty and a down-to-earth Protestantism -- with all the political potential that associating such values with “Englishness” could afford. (31)

Further demystifying the assumption that drunks are relegated exclusively to the struggling, savage lower class, Phil Withington underscores the actual clout carried by those most often seen to tip a glass:

The growth in the market for beer, wine, and tobacco was driven by those affluent social groups regarded as the legitimate governors of the English commonwealth. For men of a certain disposition and means, the consumption of intoxicants became a legitimate--indeed valorized and artful--aspect of their social identity: an identity encapsulated by the Renaissance concept of “wit”. (631)

In this view, to participate in the alcohol and tobacco market by consuming these commodities is to be included among the powerful. Trapnel, in picking up the rhetoric of drink when she refers to the misguided as “children who drink up inflaming wine,” represents herself as an alternative but legitimate influencer of the English commonwealth. By repeatedly returning to drink as a theme for her arguments in her prophecies -- in figuring knowledge as potable, in inviting her audience to drink in *A Lively Voice*, in characterizing herself and her audience as different kinds of drinkers – the prophet develops her own unique art of persuasion.

While most existing studies on Trapnel position her among other visionary women (these typically include Elizabeth Poole, Jane Turner, Eleanor Davies, Jane Ashburner, and the like),⁴² some historians mention her name in their historiographies of the Civil War,⁴³ and still others mention her in discussions of active women who successfully breach Habermas' masculine public sphere,⁴⁴ only a few appreciate that the shipwright's daughter also composed lyrics. Hammons' *Poetic Resistance* highlights Trapnel's drawing of influence from David's Psalms, the Song of Songs, and the Sternhold-Hopkins psalter to authorize herself as a poet, prophet, and preacher (84, 87). Trapnel typically writes in ballad form, with four-line stanzas having an *abcb* rhyme scheme and alternating lines carrying four and three accented syllables, respectively (Gahan, unnumbered). According to Diane Dugaw, ballads in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could mean any popular song; she cites Samuel Johnson, who describes ballads in his *Dictionary* as "trivial verse" (114). Johnson's offhand remark on ballads being trivial may be significant in examining Trapnel's composition once we consider her general choice of self-representation as ostensibly meek and unimposing. She frequently refers to herself as a maid, and elaborates on her physical frailty (mostly as symptoms of her inspiration and of her fasting). In later sections of this chapter, discussions of Trapnel's deliberate associations with small beer and muddy drafts will also highlight this strategic meekness. In sum, it seems only

⁴² See contextualizations in Davies, 1998; Feroli, 2006; Henderson, 2007.

⁴³ See Chapter Three in Purkiss, 2006, p. 39,

⁴⁴ In particular, Tamsin Spargo's discussion of how publicizing Trapnel in the marketplace validates the prophet as "a physical symbol of the divine" (264); Erica Longfellow tries to bridge the division of the public and the private through an analysis of Trapnel's metaphors of mystical marriage (Chapter Five); Mintz and Henderson also touch upon similar issues in their discussions.

appropriate that Trapnel's humble self-representation is accompanied by her prophecies' equally modest verse form.

Ballads deliver prophecies effectively. The ballad, according to Dugaw, shares intimate ties with hymns in its definition and practices, so that a poem in quatrains may be identified as a ballad just as well as a hymn (119). But the ostensible modesty of ballads does not preclude its reach and prevalence. Natascha Würzbach points out that the relative freedom from censorship that ballads enjoyed (in comparison to other forms of publication, such as plays, pamphlets, scriptures, etc) boosted the volume of their publication and made the genre a kind of early modern bestseller (21). The rise of ballads as bestsellers may have factored into Trapnel's own rise in celebrity-prodigy status; but the rise in popularity of ballads did not give rise to the reputation of ballad publishers en masse. In this sense, even if we are to take the cynical approach and to regard the prophet as simply a shrewd promoter of her stories, we must recognize the success of her strategy as a ballad producer. As it stood, ballad publishers received "absolutely no support through privilege or subsidy," and their humility contributed to the general regard of street ballads as wares (Würzbach, 22). Trapnel, all things considered, enjoyed both support from faithful followers along her journey and supporters of her faith who wanted to mass produce her texts. She presumably lacked the kind of means Cavendish enjoyed in order to print her own work, yet her *Legacy for Saints* was allegedly published for her by fellow Fifth Monarchists, who "judge [her] legacy will be of much price and use to the Lords people" (2). Würzbach's comparison of ballads to wares is also telling of the social relevance of Trapnel's adopted form. "Copies of a ballad were handed round at a low price like fruit

and vegetables,” Würzbach writes (20). It is ultimately this inexpensive and pervasive characteristic of ballads that allows the verse form to saturate and to integrate into the quotidian of Trapnel’s targeted lay audience.

The “trivial” form of the ballad through which Trapnel delivers her ideas, her displays of self-harm, and her specific choice of drink all coordinate to characterize her prophetic performances as public acts of (gendered) body regulation. Regulation of the body through strict or no food intake is a particular practice that characterizes the narratives of many early modern women who seek to influence. Nancy Gutierrez writes about narratives of starving women and women fasting in early modern England, pointing to the female body as “sites of political apprehension and cultural debate” (20). Gutierrez argues that stories and plays about female food refusal, for instance, “portray a social order that controls the unruly nature of woman’s body, *at the same time* as they show the helplessness of that same social order to keep that body under control” (111). The body politic and its physical microcosm, the human body, thus mirror and reinforce each other’s constitution as much as they continuously challenge each other. In the theater of Trapnel’s prophetic spectacles, the prophet manipulates her own unruly (and perhaps consequently) fasting body. She recalls her childhood years: “My nature was as corrupt as any, a child of wrath as well as others, and forward to do evill, and backward to that which is good” (*Cry*, 526). She showcases her corrupt and wrathful self under divine inspiration with an emphasis on how little she eats. We see Trapnel’s body under control most vividly elaborated in *A Legacy for Saints*. The prophet divulges:

Further on the Lords day after, (so indeed it was to me a Lords day) in the fore-noon as I lay in the strength of the fever, burning very much within, but without like a clod, and my stomach being shut up, not able to take the creatures, nor to hear them spoken of, my stomach was so weak, that all that fortnight I lay and took nothing but small beer, and a little juice of cherries, or conserve of currants, I took a little sometimes for cooling of me, I did so burn my throat and stomach; I remained thus like a dead carcase in respect of bodily strength, but filled with the spirit. (28)

Trapnel's narrative of bodily self-regulation is not unique.⁴⁵ For Trapnel, at least in this particular instance, the need to elaborate on her physical torment seems rather to elicit from her reader/audience the capacity to feel a similar pain through empathy. Each descriptive phrase invites the reader/audience to envision the state of the prophet's suffering as an experience of his or her own. The prophet produces texts, in both the literal sense of subsequent publications and the figurative sense of conveying information to the audience/reader through invitations to scrutinize their bodies.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Trapnel diverges from Cavendish in that her accomplishment here lies in drawing attention *away* from her spectacular body rather than *to* it the more she elaborates on her ailing conditions.

⁴⁵ Besides Margaret Cavendish, one of the more prominent women who used fasting to establish an authorial voice is Lady Arbella Stuart. During her marriage negotiations, Arbella reportedly feigned illness and starved herself in order to delay transportation between her house arrests. Sara Jayne Steen thus argues that Arbella "discovered that her illness gave her some control over her situation...Fasting forced others to react... Stuart's consciousness of herself as a political entity, a medium of exchange" (34-35).

⁴⁶ Perceptions about a visionary's body greatly varied in seventeenth-century England. Phyllis Mack acknowledges that many indeed regarded women's physical performances such as that of Trapnel's prophecies to be "an embodiment of the true wisdom of the heart as well as a positive political emblem" (85). Nevertheless, more conservative attitudes also exist which feared that these volatile bodies would symbolize the dissolution of a nation and culture. The difference in such opposing opinions seems to center on the fluidity of the female body. Mack explains that "this preoccupation with and repulsion over the idea of a body that both absorbed and exuded fluids and could be touched by anybody is not surprising in a culture in which refined body language was becoming increasingly important as a sign of both social respectability and individual autonomy" (85). The humorological view that the female body was cold and wet, compounded by the act of drinking or crying, makes bodies such as Trapnel's physical spectacle doubly threatening. It is perhaps precisely for this controversial attitude towards women's fluid body that Trapnel so elaborately proffers her invitations to drink and so strategically choreographs her own drinking.

Indeed, unlike the ambitious Duchess who “seeks a fame” for her verbosity, distinguishing her singular self from that of anyone else, Trapnel’s narrative works to dilute the identity of its speaker into anonymous archetypes.⁴⁷ By referring variously to traditions common to the Bible, folklore, and old wives’ tales, these descriptions become so familiar and relatable to her peers that her usage of “I” gestures less and less to the speaker but associates more and more with the every(wo)man they knew so well.⁴⁸

Trapnel’s referential “I” satisfies what Deborah Harkness observes is the privilege of credibility offered to the sufferer when it comes to early modern body curiosity.⁴⁹ The prophet describes herself as “laying in the strength of the fever, burning very much within, but without like a clod,” her body “like a dead carcass but filled with spirit.” These counterintuitive phrases are reminiscent of more blatant oxymorons such as Romeo’s string of “heavy lightness, serious vanity, and misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms” (I.i.1.169-170). While Shakespeare utilizes these oxymorons to underscore the overpowering influence of lovesickness upon young Romeo’s rational faculties, the prophet uses

⁴⁷ Trapnel’s diluting of her narratives of self-harm through archetypal representations of an ailing speaker may serve ideological as well as practical purposes. Hilary Hinds believes that “when prophesying, Trapnel could not differentiate between the different constituents of her audience: one utterance must serve all, and the utterance that does so is, of course, the one from God, for it is he that ‘taught me to speak before them *all*’” (166). In other words, to allow her audiences multiple avenues of identification and empathy with her suffering self is to make her travelling performances practically relatable to a diverse viewership; it is also conveniently a testimony to the universal truth of God.

⁴⁸ In arguing that Trapnel’s descriptions ironically draw attention away from her identity and reflect the reader/audience, I consciously qualify extant arguments of scholars who regard her prophecies either as calls for attention to the prophet’s specular self, or as “carefully choreographed piece[s] of political theatre” that enabled her the kind of celebrity status akin to false idolatry (as presented by Nevitt, 10). Certainly, the success and efficacy of Trapnel’s deliveries have an effect of making her an extremely notable figure. However, I wish to emphasize not the prophet’s personal ambitions and intentions, but rather how the relatability of her personal experiences is meant to elicit the edifying self-awareness of her viewers. Just as much as she fashions herself as the chosen handmaid, Trapnel equally promotes the idea that her experience can be had by anyone, that her knowledge can be universal if only people distance from the many corruptions that obstruct progress towards truth and to God.

⁴⁹ This is discussed further in the chapter; see p.52.

counterintuitive images to push the boundaries of a range of physical conditions that a human body can possibly experience. Beyond the boundaries of possible experiences, this description of an inexplicable yet insurmountable illness elicits the kind of fundamental sublime terror discussed previously in Trapnel's analogy of fire in *Cry of a Stone*. Equally harrowing diseases, such as scarlet fever and the bubonic plague, which exhibit symptoms that could fit descriptions here, also haunted the English people every day. That these fatal diseases are now implicitly invoked by a young woman who apparently has overcome them to tell the story of her sufferings compels Trapnel's audience to submit to the powers of what she alleges. In this manner, Trapnel's functioning, "healthy" body, which sustains the telling of her prophecies, becomes non-verbal testimony to her truth just as simultaneously that same body is interpreted as ailing and suffering. It is therefore arguable that as the prophet produces knowledge at that nebulous moment between thinking and feeling, she necessarily maintains her physical body at the liminal condition between functional and dysfunctional.

Trapnel complains of her stomach "being shut up" from sustenance. She believes that her physical lack of appetite affects her ability to tolerate "hearing [food being] spoken of." She produces a synesthesia of sensory perceptions in which one physical condition negatively affects the ability of another, and indirectly contends by this relation that no faculty operates in isolation. As a result of her diametrical shutting-off of faculties, Trapnel resorts to a few symbolically significant types of sustenance: "I lay and took nothing but small beer, and a little juice of cherries, or conserve of currants." There exists an interesting medley which intersects the popular choice of small beer and the Edenic berries that allows for the imagination of a divine present, a virtual reality wherein the holy and the secular

collide. Trapnel plays up the proletarian image attached to drinking small beer rather than wine, opting for an Englishness characterized not by royal blood but by piety and the practicality of the laboring class. Citing biblically obscure species of berries which hold medicinal potential also allows the young prophet to establish a knowing voice of her own.⁵⁰ Because Trapnel claims to “take a little [of the berries] sometimes for cooling of me, I did so burn my throat and stomach,” without substantial basis in formal medical studies, she inevitably appears to promote a certain cure from a nontraditional angle. As will be further explored in Chapter Three, women with knowledge about herbs and plants clash with authorized apothecaries and physicians. These strategic performances of Trapnel’s diet therefore arguably discredit established medical knowledge in favor of the unconventional way of self-healing through following God.

Trapnel demonstrates self-healing particularly through her choice of drink. Witnesses of the prophet support that Trapnel in *Strange and Wonderful News* among other instances drank small beer (3-4). At about 2.5% alcohol by volume, small beer, also called small ale, is a low-proof substitute to the expensive brews used for festivities in Europe and England from the medieval to early modern eras. Often produced in the privacy of the household rather than in breweries, this unfiltered, porridge-like drink was served to servants, field workers, the poor and to children.⁵¹ Due to its perceived inferiority to other

⁵⁰ The specificity of citing cherries and currants, on the other hand, calls for further research. References to the two particular berries are scarce in the Bible; however, in many folklores and mystical traditions, the reddish-black color of these fruits oftentimes allow symbolism of life, passions, or the blood of mythical creatures. In some rituals, then, berries are so used (Cunningham, 79). Another interpretation comes from the Hebrew idea that wine, or “tirosh,” meaning “fresh or new wine,” need not be fermented grape juice (Proverbs 3:10). Therefore, it is possible that by adding juice of cherries or conserve of currants, Trapnel offers soberer and thus safer alternatives to alcoholic symbolism.

⁵¹ See *Beer Break*, 2003. for the making of small beer, see Washington, 1757.

kinds of alcohol, the term “small beer” eventually lent itself to public expression to denote anything trivial, inconsequential, and unimportant (*OED*, 1616-2010). That Trapnel, like the many folks who must have watched on in awe as she drifted in and out of trances, drank this cheap, popular, and unimposing drink certainly endeared her to the populace. Biographical disclosures aside, the reference to small beer can also be seen as rhetorically strategic. Not only does Trapnel position herself squarely among the “honest and the down-to-earth” but also, being very aware of her place, she accentuates her femininity.⁵² It is a drink with which the elite class would not deign to wet their lips. However, it is also fine enough to be had with God’s prescribed sustenance. Trapnel’s tactic in treating her controlled, suffering body with berries and small beer sends out a powerful message of subversion. It convinces her beholders, again without words, of the fragility of the hierarchy of men in the face of divine commandment.

Trapnel’s bodily sufferings, whether interpreted as divine affliction or self-imposed fasting, authorize the prophet’s voice as a resisting force with which to be reckoned. Because drinking held suggestive powers of economic and political importance, alcohol concomitantly became a marker for particular types of citizens and the potentials they held to sway the nation. As popular rhetoric about alcohol developed closely alongside

⁵² A. Lynn Martin’s records of medieval to early modern drinking culture support the hypothesis that Trapnel’s contemporaries would have shared in a “fellowship of the drink” which helped “reinforce ties of identity and solidarity” (96). He argues against Richard Boyatzis’ observation that “drinking makes women feel more feminine, less assertive and aggressive, and less concerned with power,” insisting instead that, at least in traditional Europe, “alcohol made women assertive and aggressive, and it made them challenge patriarchal power. *Women drank to escape subordination. At least that was how men perceived drinking women*” (96, my emphasis). Although the empowering or enfeebling effect of alcohol on drinking women remains an open debate among historians, it is clear that, by publicly consuming an alcoholic beverage of humble repute, Trapnel displays her engagement in an unmistakable power struggle with those who perceive it.

developments in social movements, to intervene in political events soon came to require commenting upon drinking culture (and vice versa). Whether it was a backlash against the degenerating libertinism from voluntary moralists, whose numerous private prosecutions eventually led to the formation of the first Societies for a Reformation of Manners in 1690, or the levying of taxes in alcohol production and trade, or prohibitions enforced on sites of alcohol consumption (such as alehouses and taverns),⁵³ attempts to regulate drinking were always intricately related to attempts to regulate policy and behavior. These attempts, Withington points out, are invariably propelled by Renaissance humanism and evangelical Christianity (“Intoxicants and Society,” 633). They concern, primarily, the betterment of the individual, however defined, through adherence to a better way of drinking. The concern casts an undeniably moral and pedagogical importance on early modern drinking culture; by the end of the seventeenth century, commentators “had no doubts that the English had been well schooled in the lessons of intoxication over the previous 150 years” (635). Trapnel’s prophecies constitute a new kind of learning which teaches believers to unlearn drinking heedlessly at the risk of moral and political downfall in order to learn the right drinking habits that refine the soul and strengthen the nation. Beyond education, it is a process of what we would in today’s terms call “rehabilitation,” a process that treats the reader or audience as pupils just as much as they are patients.

⁵³ For example, James I’s Act “to restrain the inordinate haunting and tipling in inns, alehouses and other victualling houses” in 1604 outlawing serving customers to the point of drunkenness; the 1606 Act which made drunkenness itself a crime subject to statutory legislation; the 1618 Proclamation which targeted brewers who supplied to unlicensed sellers and banned trading of alcohol on Sundays during divine service; the Acts of 1623 and 1625 tackled travelers who drink, extending the ban of drunkenness beyond local drinkers and made landlords liable if any guest tiddled on their premises. An extended description of these acts and legislation is found in Nicholls 13-16.

Trapnel treats her pupil-patient in *A Lively Voice for the King of Saints and Nations* by beckoning them towards a transformative way of drinking:

O come and drink,
 And then you will not run,
 To any Calculation Book
 To know Time and Season.
 O come and drink Salvations Cup,
 It will refresh you sure,
 You have too oft drunk muddy drafts
 Come onto this that's pure. (12)

Trapnel creates an image of knowledge-crazed people “running” towards “any Calculation Book” --implicitly a reckless dash away from the Bible, the one book of true knowledge. The calculation to “know Time and Season” possibly relates to studies such as astrology, consulting almanacs, and newer efforts in natural philosophy. These fields potentially compete with religion to impact the lifestyle and behaviors of early modern English people. Rather than toiling in “calculations to know,” the prophet draws her audience to a cup that is “pure” and will “refresh.” Her contrasting statement that people have long “drunk muddy drafts” coheres quite possibly with opinions about the quality of drinks popular among her contemporaries. The correlation of the word “muddy” to the condition of impurity and pollution (1628-1998) initially describes the cloudy color of the draft, which carries sediments remaining from its casual brewing procedures. According to the OED, “muddy” also holds several meanings that gesture beyond the word’s literal relation to mud (1571-1934): it denotes one’s mental state of “unclearness and confusion” (1571-1934) and the condition of the soul’s “sinfulness, immorality, illegality, corruption, and carnality” (1600-1993). These nuanced understandings of the notion of muddy drafts highlight how a debased texture and color of a drink not only implicates the quality of that drink but also proves consequential in debasing the moral character and rational faculty of the drinker.

Finally, in relation to expression, because the word “muddy” is used to describe writing, speech, and thought that are “obscure, vague, confused, or illogical,” a drinker of muddy drafts also becomes vulnerable to accusations of inarticulation (1611-1995). Trapnel’s call to drink from Salvation’s Cup, beyond simple invitation towards finer wines, is a call to critical thinking and to eloquence. To an audience of laymen, many of whom must be unacquainted with classical training in rhetoric, the prophet delivers an open and unconventional education for obtaining such knowledge.

Trapnel’s urgings to ditch the muddy drafts echo an ale wife calling to customers towards better fare. It appeals to a consumer culture increasingly fastidious about quality and gratification. Natasha Korda’s study on early modern working women provides us a powerful visualization of the auricular and dramatic collision that Trapnel’s cries might have had on her audiences. Korda reminds us that although working women’s cries (those of oyster sellers on the streets or orange vendors in the theaters, for example) were everywhere present in the early modern quotidian, they were more often than not absented in literature or, when represented, were done so dismissively: “The vocalizations of female criers became a convenient rhetorical weapon deployed in the *poetomachia* to stigmatize the productions of rival players or playwrights as vulgar, ‘unworkmanly,’ and amateurish” (146). Given this premise, Trapnel’s title, *Cry of a Stone*, becomes her powerful interjection to the *poetomachia* which works overwhelmingly to suppress her. A “cry” is a loud and chiefly inarticulate utterance of emotion (1297-1813); it can also be “an importunate call, a prayer” (1300-1849); a cry can hold public authority as “a formal authoritative summons” (1292-1837) and as “a war-cry and a battle-cry” (1548-1883). As a “crier,” Trapnel elevates herself as “a person employed to make public announcements” (1387-2004). A

“stone,” on the other hand, has traditionally emblemized (e)motionlessness, constancy, deadness, stupidity, deafness or silence; in literary tradition, hearts are commonly referred to as “stone” not only for their similarities in shape, but also rhetorically to denote unfeeling, dumb, or unenlightened individuals (*OED*, “stone,” 1225-1852). It is significant in many ways finally to receive Trapnel’s prophecies as “cries of a stone.”⁵⁴ The title envisions the breaking of silence from an otherwise mute and unfeeling unit, and to elevate the expressivity of otherwise inarticulate manners of speech. As a political call to action, the “cry of a stone” can practically be heard as a battle shout, rousing the passive to action against the detriments of a culture that communicated solely via head-piece languages.

In the *Report and Plea*, Trapnel lays out characteristic vulnerabilities of head-piece languages:

None of mens strong liquors of Arts and Sciences can do, neither can any compounded water of human invention be so effectually, though they still it in the Limbeck of brain-study, draining it through the long pipe of curious witty phrases, yet such liquors will soon lose their spirits. (520)

What makes the strength of the Arts and Sciences transient, Trapnel suggests, is its complicated method of production. Because the Arts and Sciences are fundamentally human as opposed to divine, they, like people, eventually lose their key essence. The idea

⁵⁴ Trapnel’s title, *The Cry of a Stone*, hearkens particularly to Habakkuk 2:11-16, “For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it...For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to *him*, and maketh *him* drunken also ... the cup of the LORD’S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing *shall be* on thy glory.” The reference extols the miraculousness of the Lord by instilling inanimate objects and the natural universe itself with knowledge and expression comparable to human manners of communication. It sets the tone for the prophecies that follow, which reform through alcoholic imagery, by cautioning any mortal who presumes to “give his neighbor drink” and become “drunk” with wine that comes not from the cup of the Lord.

that the Arts and Sciences are nothing but invented “compounds” highlights not only the inauthenticity of rational human knowledge but also, by its evocations of drunkenness, associates the effects of knowing with the effects of inebriation. The process of “limbecking” references a nascent technology of the late seventeenth century that would eventually, around and after the wars against France in the 1690s, foment into a phenomenon called the Gin Craze. Stringent regulations and taxes levied on beer and ale, coupled with the relatively inexpensive production costs of gin, drove many early modern consumers (and persons in the business of alcohol) to turn their attention to spirits (Rogers, 133). A spiked increase in consumption and demand for gin -- a cheaply distilled spirit of juniper berries and various herbs -- witnessed sudden establishments of thousands of unlicensed gin joints accompanied by a rise in crime, death rates, and illnesses.⁵⁵

The irrational compulsion to drink the wrong beverage to excess, to look outside England, and to seek unnatural knowledge are all timely sources of social panic on which Trapnel seizes figuratively in order to assert her political-epistemic agenda. Her self-aware denunciation of the Arts and Sciences in *Report and Plea* employs rhetorical strategies that include discounting the primacy of the brain in favor of the heart, equating the process of knowing and learning to the production and consumption of different kinds of alcohol, and highlighting a preoccupation with usefulness. The prophet specifically faults the Arts and

⁵⁵ Roughly between the years 1729 and 1751, a series of Gin Acts were finally passed, levying taxes on retailers and enforcing licenses on gin production in response to the many social problems associated with the gin market. The sudden rise in popularity of gin provoked more to a wave of criticisms against dipsomania. That people were suffering from a compulsive propensity to be constantly drunk resembled a mental illness of sorts and marked drinking an irrational behavior. Furthermore, because the distillation of gin is a sixteenth-century innovation from Holland, opponents of the Gin Craze (like Herrick’s satire of sack) often associated the fanaticism for gin as a fanaticism for foreignness. Finally, because distillation is not a naturally occurring process but a technological paradigm shift, the rising fondness for gin became synonymous with the unhealthy curiosity for newfangled, unnatural knowledge. See Warner, 2003 and Chapter Six of Rogers, 2012. See Nicholls, 2009, p. 35.

Sciences for being “ineffectual,” unable to benefit people in tangible ways. She describes the painstaking, though ultimately futile process of “brain-study” with a double-entendre: knowledge, like alcohol, is “drained” and limbecked through a pipe. This “pipe” not only represents the alembic which yields distilled liquors but also represents a person’s windpipe which allows for the uttering of “curious witty phrases.” Brain-studied speech is deemed inappropriate for its lack of interiority; it is solely intellectual, and therefore necessarily ignorant and inauthentic. In contrast, Trapnel’s affective education guides the reader/audience to discover and to obtain the truth of the Holy Spirit in a learning process grounded on self-knowledge in distinction from self-absorption. To use modern phrasing, the prophet would emphasize what today’s psychoanalyses term the super-ego as the standard of knowledge over the ego. Liquors of brain-study and verbal expressions thereof, like the imperfect mortals who learn them, will soon “lose their spirits,” i.e., ring hollow to the ears or, more vividly, give up their ghosts. The adjective “curious” which modifies the conventional scholar’s “witty phrases” is sufficiently derogatory, off-setting any positive connotations of wit representing the sophistication that a Renaissance humanist should boast. Instead, the would-be oration of an educated man is reduced to strange and amusing prattlings. Trapnel’s transparent belittling of curiosity perverts the greater context of supervision of knowledge which inscribed and sanctioned scholarship during her time. Rather than a top-down institution dictating that a specific type of knowledge -- university knowledge -- is permissible and commendable, Trapnel voices an alternative decree which targets the university as a heretical institution that teaches false knowledge. Her dismissal mirrors satirically the kinds of cautionary tales against knowing too much (and the reactionary tales for it) which can be traced as far back as Hesiod and Plato’s versions of

the Prometheus myth, to Dante's digression on Ulysses' punishment in the *Inferno*, to Prospero's renunciation of magic in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, and John Milton's call for liberating licensure in *Aeropagitica*. She absolves man's intuitive faculties from its stigma by tabooing brain-studied speech as wayward curiosity.

Besides the more incriminating connotations of being "desirous of knowing what one has no right to know" (1340-1873), and of "devoting attention to occult art" (1549-1606), the word "curious," according to the *OED*, also denotes that quality of persons "careful, studious, ingenious, skillful" (1386-1782) and those who are "clever, expert, careful as to the standard of excellence" (1489-1821).⁵⁶ Trapnel forces her audience to reconsider the lines of epistemic acceptability by blurring these lines herself. Her strategy is not without precedence from the far side of curiosity: Joanna Piccoiotto's study of the practice of natural philosophy as "innocent labors" of the invisible college, the precursor group to what later became the Royal Society of London, highlights the pains that natural philosophers such as Francis Bacon, Thomas Sprat, and Robert Boyle take to describe their scientific pursuits as in absolute alignment with God's intentions and the greater good of mankind (116, 119). Barbara Benedict describes how curiosity challenges tradition and distracts the thinker from his or her prescribed station; to offset the subversive nature of curiosity, early modern critics often described it as "useless" in the sense that "the proliferation of intricate artistry in 'curious' works frittered away valuable labor" (4). Such

⁵⁶ In this respect, Trapnel's flirtations with notions of curiosity (and later wonder) thus function similarly to Cavendish's capitalization on the ambivalent ramifications of melancholia, what she interprets to be a privileged affliction that haunts only the selected elite. Both curiosity and melancholia straddle between the socially unacceptable and the stigmatized, and both the prophet and the duchess use this blurred boundary to challenge established discourses of institutions such as the church and the academy.

criticisms expose once more a preoccupation with practicality as a standard for morality.⁵⁷ Peter Harrison further develops Benedict's observation when he points out Francis Bacon's adaptation of Matthew 7:16, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," to contend that "the mark of the unworthy investigator was knowledge that was worldly, illicit, or useless" (273-274). The precedence of Bacon and his use of the Book of Matthew accentuate the extent to which practical applications of biblical knowledge serve to curb perceived aberrations resulting from forbidden knowledge.

To dissuade people from seeking bad knowledge, in other words, is not to suppress creation of knowledge but rather to channel that inherent drive to creating elsewhere. That elsewhere oftentimes originates from within. Deborah Harkness invokes the Latin phrase *Nosce Teipsum* to stress that the rehabilitative culture of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England began foremost from knowing oneself. The pursuit of medical and anatomical knowledge, both professional and amateur, or "body curiosity," as Harkness puts it,

was centered on a subjective study of one's own body rather than a nominally objective eye-witnessing of the dismemberment of someone else's body. English men and women regarded patients as best suited to judging a medicine's effects based on a close reading of their own body's reactions to a given therapeutic regime, rather than over-privileging the perspectives of medical practitioners such as Vesalius or John Banister. (177)

⁵⁷ To turn the reputation of natural philosophers from that of curious undertakers to contributing citizens and good Christians, Benedict and Harrison concurringly observe, defenses of *scientia* began reframing curiosity under notions of admiration and wonder (Benedict, 32, Harrison, 266). A series of literatures published during this time have allowed R.J.W. Evans and Alexander Marr to trace the two notions to conclude that curiosity and wonder have always shared "an intertwined history bound up with the passion for knowledge" (1-2). Trapnel's *Strange and Wonderful News* appeals to this blending of curiosity and wonder, as explained in later pages (53-54).

Early moderners tended to credit first-hand experiences of the speaker (and especially the *allegedly suffering* speaker) over authoritative voices of pundits when it came to medical concerns. Herein lies the efficacy of Trapnel's sentimental education. As discussed earlier, the prophet showcases her own suffering body in a relatable, archetypal way that diffuses itself into the identities of every(wo)man. Through a strategically selected diet, she treats this suffering body in a public spectacle of self-cure. Because her deliveries emphasized eliciting empathy from the audience, these displays of disease and cure perform as if administered by the audience themselves. By subtly bringing her personal message to a greater political and epistemic dialogue, these administrations target not only a healing of the body but constitute a popular rehabilitation of the mind and remediation of speech and knowledge.

Trapnel's prophecies derogate curiosity, but they also make attempts to appeal to a sense of wonder. She makes her prophecies a marvel to consume — as analyzed previously, a synesthesia of seeing, hearing, reading, and otherwise empathizing. In producing and performing these wondrous experiences for her reader/audience, the prophet convinces them that she is indeed wonderful (that is, an extraordinary individual instilled with supernatural and miraculous powers).⁵⁸ The title of her *Strange and Wonderful News from White-Hall: or, the Mighty Visions Proceeding* (1654) introduces the prophet and her prophecies by highlighting precisely these effects. It appeals to the

⁵⁸According to the OED definition of “wonder,” meaning: “a marvelous object; a marvel, prodigy” (700-1977); “a deed performed or an event brought about by miraculous or supernatural power” (950-1846).

senses both of taboo curiosity and exalted wonder, drawing attention to its readers without allegedly corrupting them with harmful knowledge. The cover page informs readers of all rank and backgrounds that the publication contains news exclusively

from Mistris ANNA TRAPNEL, to divers Collonels, Ladies, and Gentlewomen, concerning the Government of the Com-monwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland; And her Revelations touching his Highness the Lord Protector, and the Army, With her Declaration touching the State-Affairs of Great Britain; Even from the Death of the late King CHARLES, to the Dissolution of the last PARLIAMENT.

This description obliquely opens what is purportedly intended only for a select, privileged audience — those “divers Collonels, Ladies, and Gentlewomen” — to any who happen to read it. *Strange and Wonderful News* thus fulfills Trapnel’s grassroots ambitions of mass participation in the nation’s political narrative. Regarding concerns for “the Government of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland,” Trapnel’s readership voices an agenda with gravity tantamount to an alternative Parliament. The prophet’s “revelations” are divine inspirations, but they are also an exposition of the unknown and, not without a hint at political scandal, a revealing of secrets of the Protectorate. Her “revelations,” coupled with her “declaration” in the following line, function similarly to Trapnel’s other title, the *Report and Plea*, in which a pairing of verbal nouns collaborates fluidly and strategically to shift the authority of the speaker in a manner that allows the prophet both to command and cajole. The *News* finally spans “even from the Death of the late King Charles, to the Dissolution of the last Parliament” underscoring Trapnel’s insertion of the Fifth Monarchy into a grand history with an air of permanency.

The Fifth Monarchists, of which Trapnel was a vital member, were a radical sectarian group that started in the early 1650s, at the height of England's Interregnum. Alongside parallel oppositional movements initiated by the Levellers and the Diggers, the Fifth Monarchists stood out in their claim to the "right and indeed the duty of taking arms to overthrow existing regimes and establish the millennium, and also in its detailed formulation of the political, social and economic structure of the promised kingdom" (Capp 1483). Their conviction that Jesus Christ would return to reign in divine kingship made any mortal who presumed to rule intolerable to them. However, the exaltation of Oliver Cromwell was, according to historians, not initially dreaded by the Fifth Monarchy. There was great hope that the rise of the protector meant the end of human rule over England and a future of collaboration among the politically influential and the religiously powerful to prepare for the Second Coming. Louise Fargo Brown, for instance, records several potentially constructive meetings between Fifth Monarchy preachers and Cromwell himself in the early years of the protectorate (47). The series of attempted collaboration between the Fifth Monarchists and the protectorate did not last long. As Cromwell gained power, it became increasingly clear to many radical groups convinced of Christ's imminent rule that the protector had become just another mortal usurper (67).

Trapnel's invitation in *A Lively Voice* is a powerful confrontation against what seemed to be Cromwell's betrayal of a faithful nation. She employs the rhetoric of drink to counter his characteristic rhetoric of sobriety.⁵⁹ The prophet addresses those who do not drink:

⁵⁹ Scholars of Oliver Cromwell, such as Laura Lunger Knoppers and Martyn Bennett, have occasionally noted the protector's puritan sobriety. At the opening of the Little Parliament in 1653, Cromwell gives a speech in which he notes the Apostle in the Twelfth of the Romans to promote "a Ministry and such Ministers as be faithful to the Land"; in that speech, the protector, echoing the Apostle, "beseecheth [his audience] that

O come you sincere sober ones,
 For its prepared for you,
 For they are relished and toucht
 But by a very few;
 Poor hearts you that do sigh and groane,
 Come drink of spirits wine,
 It will carry to Jesus Christ,
 And will your souls refine. (50)

Her invitation recruits those adherents to the temperate protector over to the prophet's side. It could also be interpreted that pure libations were prepared specifically for the purpose of such realignment. Emulating Parliament's formation of the New Model Army, Trapnel likewise creates a distinguished class of the privileged, a select few for whom the spirit's wine is reserved. Her professed selectivity circumscribes a community of "laymen" to instill within it an unprecedented measure of power evaluated through standards of piety. She addresses the people with an endearing synecdoche, "poor hearts." This expansion of the heart to signify the individual takes a step beyond the prophet's usual manner of direct discourse. It discounts the impact of the brain on the characterization of a person. So discounting, Trapnel allows rhetorically for the "drinking of spirits wine" in the following line to flow straight to the ailing heart, which "sighs and groans" for it. That the heart vocalizes without verbal articulation is an important point of interjection at which Trapnel seeks to replace "curious witty phrases" with genuine expression. It is a moment of divine intimacy and an instance of redemption. It is also a portrayal reminiscent of consummated

they would not esteem highly of themselves, but be humble and sober-minded" (see transcript, "Speech One – 14th July 1653" provided by The Cromwell Association/ Cromwell Museum online). His admonition urges beyond simple abstinence from excessive drinking. It is an admonition against ambition and imagination. Cromwell's personal opinions on drink and his counter-reputational investments in various alcohol establishments, on the other hand, forge an intriguing if not contentious relationship between the protectorate and certain Civil War sentiments. The type of alcoholic drink productions that the protector helped subsidize materially affected the Cromwellian government's reputation, and related accusations such as Trapnel's have practical impacts on the government's eventual downfall (Knoppers, 164-165 and Bennett, 184).

love. The souls of the imbibers are elevated in quality as well as spatially: they are “carried to Jesus Christ” to be refined, and this refinement begins with the vital origin of one’s heart.

In both the circumscription of an alternative elite and the synecdoche of the heart as addressee, Trapnel illustrates the profound transformation that humans undergo simply by switching to a divine epistemological mode. For Trapnel, this transformation may be subliminal, but like the chemical-biological changes that naturally occur in one’s body while drinking, it is undeniably physical as well. To depict this effect, Helen Smith’s explanation is most apt:

Metaphors of conversion and cure were not simply structured by the physical experience of pain and disease, but constitute a moment at which the distinction between the thought and the felt wavers. The capacity for converts to feel divine agency in the flesh, and for that sensation to be conveyed to the susceptible reader, opens up a category of imagined perception that cannot be fully divided from perception itself. (477)

Trapnel’s writing situates itself precisely at this moment which “the thought and the felt wavers.” In *A Lively Voice*, the prophet invites her audience to

come and drink Salvations Cup,
 You shall not from him rent;
 But you shall much rejoyce in him,
 That hath your hearts to bent.
 O come and drink Salvations Cup,
 And your spirits shall rise,
 And you will much admire him,
 And his new Covenant prise. (11)

In contrast to God’s “tearing” from the person his or her intellectual property in *Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel binds the receptive audience with Christ through the exchange of drink. “You shall not from Him rent,” the prophet articulates, sealing this bond. The articulation

is at once instructional and imperative. It is instructional as it directs the audience's experience not unlike the style of a guided meditation. It is imperative as Trapnel seizes this moment to speak with the authority of the clergy. Trapnel appraises the efficacy of the binding. Focusing back on the vital site of the heart, she concludes the first quatrain by declaring that the bond between the drinker and God "hath their hearts to bent." This declaration of efficacy completes the preparation of the drinker not only to receive God's love but to take on an active role, so that, by the conclusion of the second quatrain, a different level of interaction is enabled. "Your spirits shall rise," Trapnel asserts. And through this sense of wonderful "admiration," a "new Covenant" is raised out, or "prised." Trapnel's strategic use of the verb "prise" here captures the proto-capitalist sentiments of the political market culture of her time. The loaded word, meaning "To raise or move by force of leverage" (1574-1992); "a blast on a hunting horn indicating that the quarry has been taken" (1300-1952); and "the seizure of something by a lord for his own use from his feudal tenants or dependents" (1325-2002), appropriately denotes that act of claiming useful resources, especially from a party with superior authority and financial means. In drinking from Salvation's Cup, the prophet means to say, these laymen shall "prise," taking for their true benefit the new Covenant with the force of a conqueror.

Trapnel's description of inspired drinkers bound to God in a mutual pledge empowers her audience to create a new community of elites, one that no longer suffers from bouts of curiosity and egotistical learning and self-expression, but is motivated in all things by a sanctioned sense of divine wonder. The Salvation Cup that is used for this pledge replaces the biblical Cup of Trembling which purportedly ails those in the Book of Isaiah— "Thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine," there the Lord addresses, "I have

taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, [even] the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again” (51:20-21). The cup of trembling encapsulates all sins and vices which would bring down the wrath of God. In the context and epistemic preoccupations of Trapnel’s prophetic lines, these sins and vices take on a scholastic nature to point to the “muddy” knowledge of the arts and sciences. Trapnel likewise compares university scholars to stumbling drunkards, afflicted with the muddy drafts of brain study and warranting God’s imminent fury. She takes their trembling cups away with these gentle invitations to Salvation’s Cup. As she does so, the prophet mirrors God’s similar action in Isaiah quoted above. This mirroring fuses the humbly-born female prophet’s words and actions with her divine patron. It reminds Trapnel’s audience that her behavior is not entirely voluntary. Nevertheless, Trapnel’s gentle coaxing sets her method of rehabilitation apart from the commanding prohibition, “*Thou shalt no more drink it again,*” of her biblical reference. She offers a softer, perhaps even amatory or erotic approach not only to appeal and appease her audience as an advice-giver but also to highlight the fluidity of gender subjectivities of her prophecies.

The amatory-erotic characteristics of Trapnel’s prophetic lyrics find their inspiration from The Song of Songs. Particularly, her invitations echo the opening lines of “The Bride and the Daughters of Jerusalem,” not the least in their comparison of (divine and sensual) love to fine wine. A presumably female speaker begins the Song with dedications to King Solomon of Israel:

The Song of songs, which is Solomon's.
 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:
 for thy love is better than wine.
 Because of the savor of thy good ointments
 thy name is as ointment poured forth,
 therefore do the virgins love thee.

Draw me, we will run after thee:
 the King hath brought me into his chambers:
 we will be glad and rejoice in thee,
 we will remember thy love more than wine:
 the upright love thee. (12:1-4)

While the Song keeps gender identities of its lovers as well as the nature of its amatory contents ambiguous, its message of sublimation through fluidly moving between notions of love, drink, and cure remain consistent with *A Lively Voice for Saints and Nation*. “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,” the speaker bids. This request, just as her later imperative, “Draw me, we will run after thee,” mingles passivity with authority. The speaker becomes the object, one that is kissed and drawn, at the same time that she becomes the instructor, one who calls for the kissing and the drawing. Consequently, the identity of the speaker becomes that of a peaceable lover who is kissed, at the same time as she assumes the identity of a fighting sword to be drawn to action. The passive lover and the active fighter retains her sense of honor, a progressive understanding of female virtue as beyond sexually chaste -- “The *upright* love thee.” These instances function similarly to Trapnel’s narrative of a reverse- penetration where God figures as courtly beloved. In both cases attention is given to the agency of the mouth and to the faculty of verbal articulation.⁶⁰

Trapnel focuses on speech in her prophecy delivered on “Octob. 14. 1657: From Eight of the Clock till about One, there was a speaking to particular persons”:

O love the Law, O love it deir,
 For it is very choice,

⁶⁰ Emma Rees draws suggestive connections between the “mouth and vagina, between volubility and chastity” that signify the subversive powers of early modern female speakers and the oppressive powers of those who use language figuring the oral and vaginal “lips” to curb “unruly women” (106). Although she focuses on these connections as delineated by Shakespearean characters Cordelia and Lavinia, similar anxieties can still be discerned in the case of Trapnel’s prophetic performances and in her consequent persecution. One accusation posed upon the travelling prophet is the accusation of promiscuity, instilling, even if belying Trapnel’s intentions, the heavily sexualized consequences of her oration.

A School Master indeed that hath
 A very teaching voice.
 O the Lords choice beloved Saints,
 That now lye in the grave,
 O they did keep unto thy Law
 And counted it moft brave.
 Thy Fervants counted it moft dear,
 And for the King did cry,
 O they did teftify for thee
 With witneffe very high. (43)

Trapnel stresses the superiority of learning intimately and personally from direct contact with the Holy Spirit (as opposed to, implicitly, second-hand instructions from the Church). She extols as example those Saints who lived “[in keeping] unto the Law” and died as (presumably) martyrs for their convictions. She bids her audience to “love the Law” – what the bible actually says regardless of interpretations by the fallible human professors – as their School Master. Highlighting the act of learning as an act of loving offers agency to the would-be pupil; Trapnel suggests here that passively reading and understanding the text of the bible is insufficient, that one must actively practice their divine knowledge. Not only do these true “servants” of the Lord “cry” for the King (as Trapnel’s own physical performances do), but their knowing comes from “testifying” and “witnessing” divinity in lieu of mere abstraction. These visceral primers for the knower to love, to lye,⁶¹ to cry, to testify – collectively urge physical demonstration and embodiment of certain epistemic identities. There is perhaps also an effort to self-validate in the lines. Trapnel, as God’s

⁶¹ Certainly, from the context of the line, to lie in the grave meaning to die, but also important here is how Trapnel subtly mingles ideas of lying down as a martyr and lying down as a lover to convey a complex sense of what it is to know God.

handmaiden channeling His divine voice, calls for her audience likewise to participate in such personal interaction. In so calling, her prophetic lines achieve a new level of knowledge through a pedagogical, almost erotic, form of communication.

Trapnel engages in an erotic mingling of pedagogical voices when she urges her audience in *A Lively Voice* to:

Let the great God know what you say,
His love is sweet and rare:
O let it swallow up your hearts,
For he is passing fair;
O let this enter in your souls,
Not in your head and brain.
But in your inward vital parts,
Even your hearts and reins. (9)

Pedagogy and seduction collaborate to encourage Trapnel's audience to articulate effectively. "Let the great God know what you say," she encourages. Divine knowledge and the laymen's voices are by this encouragement unified. Trapnel reiterates the "sweetness" and "rarity" of God's love, again employing the thematic languages of alcohol consumption and of the heart. She urges the audience to take in God's love through a mutual "swallowing" and "entering" into their "inward vital parts" — the "hearts and reins" — in lieu of the "head and brain." The verb "swallow" points to the gullet and stomach, materializing the ethereal concept of the divine by instilling it with corporeality. Trapnel compels her reader/audience to "let the great God know what you say," routing silence in subject-object alternation. This brief moment of reversion from God as object is quickly checked as Trapnel proceeds to ask that the audience reciprocate. Let God's love "enter your souls," she guides them, reclaiming her own authorial directive. Immediately, regulated dominance in the interplay between God and his enlightened pupil is properly

restored to God as subject. Trapnel specifically clarifies that not only is divine inspiration penetrating through intuitive rather than rational faculties — “Not in your head and brain, but in your hearts and reins”— but by this restoration illustrates the limits and temporariness of the human agency even as it has been touched by God. The proliferation of discourses focusing on the heart as an intellectual, moral, or affective mover competed with narratives about the brain that dominated rational conversations during the era of England’s scientific revolution.⁶² It is a too-often dichotomized set of discourses into which Trapnel intervenes by contending, through her prophecies, that the affective heart and the cogitative brain are in fact one concerted developing epistemic narrative.

Trapnel’s mentioning of the “reins” in company with her emphatic references to the heart in *A Lively Voice* foreshadows a later instance, when the prophet escalates her promotion of divine drink and divine knowledge to create a counter-narrative against some of the popular public narratives by or associated with Oliver Cromwell. The prophet declares,

The anointings of the Lord

...

is so high and sublime;

It doth not favour anyone,

⁶² Depictions of the believer or lover’s heart in devotional and love poetry is a commonplace figure in early modern lyric conventions. Robert Erickson has studied figures of the heart in English literature between 1600-1750. In that study, he concludes emphatically that the heart “was the single most important word referring both to the body and to the mind,” and that it was the essential symbol denoting “the source of desire, volition, truth, understanding, intellect, ethics, and spirit” (11). Jonathan Sawday, writing in agreement, further contends that more than a figure of speech, the language of the heart discloses an “emergence of a new image of the human interior, together with new means of studying that interior” in early modern England (viii). These observations on the literary history of the heart evince a parallel development whereby an increase in figuring the organ in imaginative writing seemed to stimulate innovations in anatomical understanding of the organ in scientific writing (and vice versa). Both literary treatments of the heart as lover/believer, and scientific treatments of the heart as an organ and vital part of the human body, constitute literary agents with political impact and gesture to early modern writers’ attempts at re-anatomization of England’s long-standing paradigm of the body politic.

It is not from the braine,
But it doth search the heart throughout
And it doth try the reins. (51)

The “reins,” meaning the kidneys, is also homophone to the word “reigns,” referencing the doubtful rule of the protector.⁶³ Trapnel deliberately stresses that divine delegation, executed by the touch of a person’s body in a ritual of anointing, “doth not favour anyone.” Rather, it is deserved by deeds of passion. This disclaimer of equality and justice alludes to Jeremiah 17:10, wherein it is recorded that “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing.” Aligning her own voice with a biblical one, Trapnel usurps with a Theonomy wherein the law of God coincides with Cromwell’s ever popular rhetoric of meritocracy.⁶⁴ The reference counterargues the protector’s famous statement, written to the Earl of Manchester: “I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else. I honour

⁶³ From the OED, “reins,” meaning “the kidneys.” The word also gestures to the seat of feelings and affections, and, indirectly, sexual impulses and desires. (1150-2008).

⁶⁴ Historians and political scientists commonly credit Oliver Cromwell as the pioneer of meritocracy and democracy in England (see Swaim, 201). When surveying the letters and speeches by the protector, we find this sentiment reflected not only in Cromwell’s open commendations toward godly, passionate, and patriotic young men and women regardless of their birth, but also through his actions: his correspondences reveal care and appreciation for the everyday person – in expressing affection towards and providing financially for the “young man and maids, for which God is to be praised, [and whom] I will have for my regiment” (Letter XIII, Huntingdon, 2 Aug. 1643); in interceding for an anonymous young man so that he may re-enroll in college (Letter LI, “To Dr. T. Hill: Windsor, 23 Dec. 1647), and especially in his speeches, one of which most notably expresses his sense of mission in the Civil War. Therein, Cromwell declares, “Finding the People dissatisfied in every corner of the Nation, and ‘all men’ laying at our doors the non-performance of these things ... truly we did then think ourselves concerned, it we would (as becomes honest men) keep-up the reputation of honest men in the world” (Speech I. “Opening of the Little Parliament, 4 July 1653). The necessarily strategic pomp of the speech’s rhetorics aside, these lines divulge the impressive scale of responsibility that the protector must have personally taken on. It is considerable that Cromwell truly believed his part (and the part of his New Model Army) could make a positive change in the lives of every individual in England, if not on a global scale. That he places himself and his men among “honest men in the world” parallels Trapnel’s equally epic vision that the epistemic shift in consciousness carry consequences at the broadest human level. (Letters and Speeches from Carlyle, 1871).

a gentleman that is so indeed.” This overlap reinforces scholarly agreement that emphasis on religious rectitude often fueled emphases on nationalism, and Cromwell, according to many historians, is notorious for incorporating notions of piety in his campaigns.

In *Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel challenges Cromwell’s providentialism, incisively asking,

Oh Gideon, is it thy Statesmen shall carry on the work of the Lord, when they are together in brain-work. What is an head-piece to a heart-piece? O dost thou think to joyn hand in hand with head-pieces? (427)

Echoing the moniker to which Cromwell so aspires, Trapnel’s rather patronizing sigh, “Oh Gideon,” betrays the ridiculousness of his ambition that mortal “Statesmen shall carry on the work of the Lord.” The prophet emphasizes the smallness of these statesmen’s endeavors, dismissing them as busying “together in brain-work.” Her incisive adverb “when” in this depiction argues that it is exactly this distracting busying in brain-work that impedes men from achieving the true greatness that is divine work. Trapnel crushes the smallness of politicians with one compelling question after another: “What is an head-piece to a heart-piece”? She asks. Her question returns attention to the triumph of the heart over the head thematic of the prophet’s political and epistemological agenda. The triumph which accompanies Trapnel’s rhetorical question solidifies not only her anatomical reordering of primacy but also her personal triumph as an advocate for an alternative form of knowing with the heart over those for the brain — and over Cromwell himself.

Trapnel variously and skillfully incorporates her keen understanding of scripture, the market economy, and political culture of her time. These diverse understandings create compelling vocal performances that do not always need to be intelligible to convey a sense of knowing. Trapnel’s deliverances, sometimes masterfully eloquent, sometimes

inarticulate sing-songs, and other times nonverbal bouts of physical demonstrations, caused a stir not only in the paranoid mind of Oliver Cromwell,⁶⁵ but more importantly engendered numerous textual publications that mark her as an authorial participant in seventeenth-century print culture. In the context of this dissertation, these preliminary examinations provide comparable points from which to understand Katherine Austen and Margaret Cavendish, the thinking-feeling women to be visited in subsequent chapters. Trapnel's commentary on the price of knowledge and her arguments about what it means to be honorable feature prominently in the contemplations of Austen; her preoccupation with knowledge as a factor that can infect or heal the body in a real way converges with Cavendish's writing as both an exhibition of the symptoms of her illness and a habit nurtured for therapeutic purposes. These points of comparison offer us a glimpse of early modern epistemic culture thriving among women beside the mainstream of the masculine rational institution.

⁶⁵ Proclamations of the Fifth Monarchists, Trapnel's doubtlessly included, gave Cromwell misgivings about his political prowess enough to address their detractions. Freeman asserts that Cromwell had kept close watch on Trapnel's activities as she travelled to Cornwall (370). According to Brown, the Protector spoke bluntly of "the mistaken notion of the Fifth Monarchy," adding, "Notions will hurt none but them that have them. But when they come to such practices, — as to tell us, that liberty and property are not the badges of the kingdom of Christ...this is worthy of every magistrate's consideration" (62).

Chapter Two

“Well Guarded with Wealth”: The Numerology of Dreams in Katherine Austen’s *Book M*

*There is nothing I doar more in this world then Ingenuity,
And an ingenious spirit is seene in all thinges.
What is Ingenuity.
I take it to be dexterity and aptenes to vndertake all things readily,
with life and apprehention,
with Iudgement and solidity,
as suites with the vndertaking
And for the proper derivation of the word
I am not a scholar to know from whence it comes.*

---Katherine Austen, *Book M*,
1664-1666.

Meditating upon her approach to life and learning, Katherine Austen crafts a working definition of ingenuity in the above epigraph, taken from her book of life writings, *Book M*. Austen approaches her contemplation about ingenuity from an angle that gives primacy to her affections. She begins, “There is nothing *I adore* more in this world...” Her declaration initiates understanding not by internalizing conventional wisdom but by imposing her subjectivity unto the external world. Austen’s candor about and deference to her affections authorize her private writings to impact her reality practically. Through this act of life writing the widow’s assertion, “I adore,” instills meaning into abstract ideas (and, as will be seen in other parts of the *Book*, into material objects as well), transforming them into something either more sublime or more useful. Austen’s purposeful adoration is pivotal to this transformation: to adore is to love deeply, and in cases to go beyond secular love. According to the *OED*, to adore is also to worship (1300-2009)—an act which Austen undertakes with much deliberation — and to honor

(1350-1996) —a concept with which she frequently struggles.⁶⁶ Austen chooses ingenuity as a vehicle through which such nebulous but essential qualities may be manifest, expressed, and experienced. From what the naked eyes would have dismissed as “nothing in this world,” ingenuity makes visible, being “seen in all things” and manifests by a ready mind to “undertake all things.”⁶⁷ The widow engages in a Socratic exercise, rhetorically asking herself, “*What is Ingenuity?*”? She provides an answer that is wholly original and authoritative — “*I take it to be...*”⁶⁸ Echoing her opening profession, “*I adore,*” this subsequent performative seizes definitive authority over the notion and reinforces the acquisitive power of the widow’s affections. Austen’s autodidacticism exhibits the kind of leadership that Trapnel promotes. The prophet draws from lectures

⁶⁶ See page 71.

⁶⁷ This interpretation derived from contrasting the OED definitions of “nothing” and “thing.” The former means “not any (material or immaterial) thing” (1225-1986), “Not anything, or anybody, of importance, significance, value, or concern; something or somebody of no importance” (1382-1996), or “That which has no existence or being” (1535-1978); the latter means “A cause; *spec.* a matter brought before a court of law; a charge brought” (1469-1769), “Cause, reason, account; sake” (1225-1818), “A matter with which one is concerned (in action, speech, or thought); an affair, a business, a concern, a subject” (1200-1998), “That which is done or to be done; a deed, and act, a transaction” (1275-2002) and, finally, “That which is thought; a thought, an idea, a notion, a belief, an opinion” (1300-1991). The contrast here lies in intention and signification, both are arbitrary and subjective influences (i.e., a material or immaterial object is made to exist or hold meaning because the beholder or thinker wills it so). The arbitrariness of existence is crucial to an approach to dream things. It is a concept that Austen seems to fully grasp in her epigraph. She seems to have idiosyncratically picked out ingenuity among all qualities and, through her persistent intentions, tapped into its lucrative potential for herself. This “ingenious spirit” will be illustrated throughout the chapter, and its “something-out-of-nothing-ness” may also constitute a kind of fertility of a writing, thinking, feeling woman. Austen, being a widow with children, has professedly rejected the possibility of remarriage. Yet her self-fashioning as a productive member of society (in both the constructive and the procreating senses of the adjective) carries over in her writing of dreams. The characteristic of fertility in writing is also present in Cavendish’s philosophies, see Chapter Three.

⁶⁸ From the OED “take,” “To gain possession of (a town, building, vessel, etc) by force; to seize, capture, esp. in war; to win by conquest” (1325-2004) Austen’s sentiment resonates provocatively with lines previously visited in Chapter One, wherein Trapnel insisted on the effects of drinking Salvation’s Cup, which allows for laymen to “prise” God’s New Covenant. As I argue in that chapter, Trapnel’s strategic use of the verb “prise” captures the proto-capitalist sentiments of the political market culture of her time. Austen’s “taking” of the meaning of ingenuity in order to create a practical working definition parallels Trapnel’s peremptory “prising,” which, finally, gestures to her vehement intentions to “take” Highbury (see Chapter One, page 58).

of Peter the Apostle, who urges willing oversight of his flock with a ready mind.⁶⁹ Here, too, Austen encourages herself to “undertake all things readily.” Her ready attitude pledges not only an eagerness to learn, but also to obtain knowledge organically, without artifice or unnatural force.⁷⁰ As will be discussed, the idea of divine suffering weighs heavily on Austen’s mind as she records her life as a widow and as defendant of her estate, *Highbury*, in a court of law. Despite her empowering rhetoric of enterprise, Austen curbs herself by qualifying that ingenuity must be undertaken “as suits the undertaking.” She acknowledges established boundaries marked by “proper derivations of the word,” but submits, not without defense, that “[she is] not a scholar to know from whence it comes.” That Austen fully demonstrates her commitment to create practical knowledge only then to distance herself from the label “scholar” is a significant moment bidding us to consider how she -- and perhaps many other women in seventeenth-century England -- grappled with the conflict between her whetted appetite to know and her hesitation to embody that knowledge as an integral part of her identity. This chapter takes such a moment of consideration to reveal Austen’s unique style of ingenuous knowledge-making. It looks at how Austen’s preoccupations with ownership are manifest through navigations between materiality and immateriality, through liminal spaces expressed both poetically and quasi-scientifically.

Austen’s preoccupations and rhetorical navigations bespeak the kind of gentle rank she pursues. As she steadfastly defends her refusal to remarry, so too she iterates a longing for her definition of a perfect companionship; as she strives to signify immaterial virtues into tangible assets, so too does she shun the uncouthness of explicit greed, and strive

⁶⁹ See page 28.

⁷⁰ From the OED “readily,” “With alacrity or willingness; willingly, obligingly” (1330-1996); “Without difficulty, easily” (1390-1990); “As may easily happen; probably, naturally” (1638-1896).

to justify how her material assets testify to her virtues; as she repeatedly challenges, even outwardly ridicules, established avenues of social advancement, so too is Austen diligent in portraying herself as a faithful adherent to Christian orthodoxy and to the Crown. It is therefore important that we read *Book M* as writing produced at the fringe of London's wealthy classes. Indeed, unlike Anna Trapnel, whose radical prophecies actively position her and those laymen she rallies as outsiders charging in, and unlike Margaret Cavendish, whose philosophical writings are published from a nucleus of aristocratic privilege (albeit at times from a position of exile) and push her ideological envelope outwards to the "unschooled,"⁷¹ Katherine Austen writes at that liminal space of respectability about ideas that would position her in a true and consummate state of knowledgeability and material richness. This chapter begins by unpacking the idea of ingenuity so integral to the widow's maxim for life. It unveils the role of rationality in Austen's whimsical but appropriate study of dreams, and clarifies how in particular a numerological study of those dreams practically aids Austen in making important decisions about her investments and inheritance.⁷² I take my cue from Kate Gartner Frost's

⁷¹ See analysis of Cavendish's account of her upbringing in *True Relations* in Chapter Three, p.138.

⁷² Numerology is the use of numbers to interpret a person's character or to divine the future (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). This chapter describes Austen's method as such in the absence of alternative established definitions. While many spiritual practices, Christian or pagan, incorporate elements of numerological symbolism, there is no defined outline of traditions for the practice, which is eclectic in nature. As such there is no evidence to conclude that Austen knew well the conventions of particular practicing numerologists, nor that there was ever one coherent numerological philosophy under which her number symbolisms functioned. This chapter deals primarily with biblical number symbolisms, and occasionally gestures to contemporary (although arguably fundamental) pagan understandings to supplement interpretations. There is an integral part of numerology that my project does not incorporate in forming these readings – the gematria, an Assyro-Babylonian-Greek system of numerology later conventionalized in Jewish culture which assigns numerical value to certain words or phrases in an attempt to interpret sacred texts, natural phenomenon, or personal matters. It is under this system that Christians popularly believed 666 as the number of the Beast or that the Greeks saw 888 as the number for the name of Jesus. A gematrial examination of Austen's poetry, though exciting, would digress from the scope of this project. I cannot argue that Austen composed her dream poetry with definite intentions to bring about change through mystical means. But surely her overt devotions bespoke the widow's hopes for divine intervention.

insistence on the significant influence of numbers upon pre- and early modern writings⁷³ to turn from a close reading of Austen's dream logs to a close reading of her poetry, which are frequently either inspired by or about her dreams.

Many of Austen's dream and life writings, as the epigraph of this chapter reveals, vouch for the widow's striving to embody her definition of ingenuity, which encompasses ideas of being free, well-educated, and cultured. The OED defines the word "ingenuity" as used by Austen's contemporaries as that "quality that befits a free-born person," "high or liberal quality (of education)," and "intellectual culture" in general (1661-1662). To be free is to obtain upward social mobility, to be well-educated is to be associated with qualities of masculine authority, rationality, and intellectual superiority, and to be cultured a testament to having accomplished all of the above. The OED describes the ingenuous person as exhibiting "nobility of character, honourableness, high-mindedness, and generosity" (1603-1716). While Trapnel frames honor as deriving only from God, Austen sees honor as coming from the "good experience" in handling her "succes of two thousand poundes" (91).⁷⁴ She establishes her relationship with honor primarily through her relationship with her wealth:

I esteeme Honour not any thing worth, vnles it be well guarded with wealth, that it ravel not out to a degree, farre meaner then Yeomandry is. So that the Fortune I Iudge to be the real Honour. And the Title is the ornament, the embellishing of that Fortune, *which* makes it look a litle brighter to dazle common eyes... True Honour consists not so much in those preferments and titles of the

⁷³See page 123.

⁷⁴ These are excerpted from her essay, "Of Honour. Contraries," in which no grand notion of nobility is mentioned but she considers how best to grow her fortune. Austen supplements her counter-intuitive statements about honor here immediately after with another piece on honor, in which she elaborates how Fortune should be the real Honor. This is examined later in the chapter, see page 72.

world, which for the most part are vaine like it selfe, But in holy wisdome, grauity and constancy which becomes a *christian*, either in well doing or in comely suffering[.] (92).

This is a point in *Book M* at which Austen's struggle with competing definitions of honor becomes explicit.⁷⁵ The widow's class consciousness dominates her moral dilemma. Austen divulges her sense of superiority over the yeoman class as she reveals her insecurities about losing that status at any given unfortunate event. Her evaluation of things (a moral and logical faculty of judgement) is by extension of her insecurities "well-guarded" by her constant references to material possession.

Austen's insecurities about losing her social status and wealth are not unfounded. Born to a successful draper's family in 1628, Katherine Wilson differed significantly from that of shipwright's daughter and singlewoman Anna Trapnel. She became wife to Thomas Austen, a barrister with vast family holdings in 1645, and was quickly widowed in 1648.⁷⁶ Austen's position as *feme sole* bespeaks power to hire and the ability to make various investments, both of which provide her with leverage to negotiate with men and the freedom of autonomy that the contrasting *feme coverte*, beholden to husbands may not enjoy.⁷⁷ Due to these pragmatic considerations, she unapologetically declares, "the

⁷⁵ The following elaborations derived from the OED, "honor, *n.*": "Great respect, esteem, or reverence received, gained or enjoyed by a person or thing; glory, renown, fame; reputation, good name" (1225-1996); "Exalted status or position; dignity, distinction" (1300-2001). Notably, when used in reference to a woman, "virtue as regards to sexual morality; chastity; virginity; a reputation for this, one's good name" (1393-2004). As will be explored further in this chapter, Austen takes great pains in presenting herself. Interestingly, as concerned as Austen seems to have been with coming across as a perfectly chaste widow, she focuses on notions of honor that pertain solely to rank and social status (as they would have done for men), not gender.

⁷⁶ Ross, Intro. 10-11, and Todd, 1997, 209.

⁷⁷ It should also be noted here, and as the chapter proceeds with discussions on Austen's proprietary attitude towards her wealth, her knowledge, and her faith, that as the widow records her legal battles to secure Highbury and as her entitlement to claim it is continuously challenged, Austen's understanding of property also evolves. Along with this evolution, the widow's awareness and bearings as *femme sole* find

Fortune I judge to be the real Honour. And the Title is the ornament.” Austen’s juxtaposition of fortune, title, and honor demystifies truth as an appearance put up by the noble. Yet in order to maintain her affiliation with the social elite, the widow takes great pains to showcase herself participating in this very charade, for “the Title is the ornament, the embellishing ... which makes [Fortune] look brighter to dazzle common eyes.”⁷⁸ Her compounded usage of words, “ornament” and “embellishing” makes her performance transparent.⁷⁹

more and more nuanced expressions both in her life writings and in her dream poetry. Hammons’ “Rethinking Women and Property in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England” outlines different ways in which legal, cultural, and lay perceptions regulated people’s understanding of property ownership. Emphasizing the equal significance of subjective treatments on personal property, Hammons writes, “People—including writers like William Shakespeare and Lucy Hutchinson – act as if all sorts of things are true, without necessarily conforming to precise legal definitions” (1387). She pushes for further studies in imaginary writing – especially in women’s poetry -- to illuminate areas which male canonical literary works could not illuminate about the topic. It is my hope that reading Austen’s dream numerology with the widow’s developing consciousness of her properties in mind would respond in ways to Hammons’ invitation. For as much as Austen elaborates on her hopes and anxieties about proceedings at Parliament, and as much as she tries, essentially, to divine and effect mystical changes upon the outcome of her suits, her methods and her claims remain largely (as far as a reading of her writings can determine) subjective. Austen’s dream poetry and many instances of writing show, in accordance with Hammons’ observation, how a person who may or may not be legally literate attempts to figure her proprietary influences through writing, and more importantly, through a level of intuitive and affective mental activities.

⁷⁸ “The image of nobility—as something pure, unmediated, even innocent,” writes David Posner, “is one which late Renaissance nobility liked to hold of itself, at a time when the possibility of artless, unconstrained public self-presentation seemed as if it were rapidly being foreclosed” (1). Posner’s study of select seventeenth-century drama and literature by Montaigne, Bacon, and Corneille focuses on this aspect of nobility as show, and in many ways highlight how Cicero’s concept of *actor veritatis*, or “performer of truth” is intertwined with a noble identity (10).

⁷⁹ From OED, “dazzle,” meaning, “Of the eyes: To lose the faculty of distinct and steady vision” (1481-1672), or “To overpower, confuse, or dim (the vision) with excess of brightness” (1536-1857). And From OED, “common,” meaning, “Of general, public, or non-private nature” (1382-1875), “Belonging to all mankind alike; pertaining to the human race as a possession or attribute” (1487-1868), and “Of ordinary occurrence and quality; hence mean, cheap” (1425-1878). These definitions supplement Posner’s observation in the preceding footnote about nobility as performance. In particular regards to Austen’s awareness of show, it is a performance which allegedly takes advantage of the comparatively “dim” capacity of the lay audience to understand what they see. This is an elitist attitude, and one which Austen holds not only to reinforce her sense of superiority in social status but also in her knowledgeability.

Austen's focus on the visual proof of nobility highlights her uncertain relationship with empiricism as a way of knowing – the widow at once clarifies her awareness of the artificiality of show, but affirms its practicality by her undeniable participation.

Austen undermines her own construction of (fortune as) honor in a moment of self-policing. Taking an anti-climactic turn, she appears to correct herself by dismissing her version of honor as mere worldly vanity, suddenly suggesting that true honor lies “in holy wisdom, gravity and constancy which becomes a Christian” (92). Austen wavers between heavenly, spiritual thoughts of the sublime and her obsession with basic, capital gains. She also wavers between adhering to established definitions and grasping for her own working principles. Her tendencies to self-police archive her process of producing knowledge with practicality above all: she endeavors to find a stance to live by which maximizes her fortunes. Austen moves frequently between active assertions and obedient observances, between writing down original axioms and recording orthodoxy. She puts both definitions of honor in practice throughout her *Book* by highlighting her own good conduct and patience to endure various hardships.⁸⁰ In striving to be ingenuous, Austen conscientiously selects her sources in writing *Book M* to include only narratives from the mainstream and the social elite. These influences include foremost the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, prominent English divines such as Jeremy Taylor, poets and playwrights such as Shakespeare and John Donne⁸¹; her style of writing in response to these influential voices frequently fluctuates between that of an assiduous pupil and a

⁸⁰ See section on divine suffering, page 131.

⁸¹ On Austen's orthodoxy and sources, see Ross, 21-22 and Todd, 212.

casual form of sharing among intimate friends. These fluctuations in attitudes divulge the widow's reverent regard as a student towards those whom she references as well as her confidence in being a competent interlocutor in the conversations she constructs.

Austen appears to work through her discordant emotions by grounding them in her priorities of realism and usefulness. The utilitarian attitude of the widow can be gleaned from parts of *Book M*, where her ad hoc note-taking shows evidence of autodidacticism. Austen's more polished pieces of original writings, on the other hand, showcase her familiarity with scripture and major thinkers of her time as well as her ability to compose prose and poetry. Together, textual evidence in *Book M* speaks for the widow's disciplined efforts to educate herself through an eclectic selection of sources, both well-established and esoteric. One such effort can be found in the following passage, in which the widow takes a stance on money, love, and marriage:

Neither is it riches I want: Heauen has gaue already most bou[n]tiful.
Tis a person, whose soule and heart may be fit for me is the chief
riches to be valued. Yet since this is more dispencable in men. not so
much to consider termes: And hath a reflexion of disrepute when
womens inclinations are steered all by Love. A Rich woman must not
marry with a person of meane Fortune. (94)

Austen steadfastly begins this personal meditation with a denial about “wanting riches.” She does not “want” -- in the sense of desire and in the sense of lack -- those conventional ideas attached to the image of being rich. According to the OED, the adjective “rich” and its synonym “wealthy,” when applied to a person, held similarly dichotomous meanings of “having much money or abundant assets” and “having an abundance of immaterial possessions, esp. blessings or good qualities” (1160-present). Therefore, when Austen continues to elaborate that her not wanting riches is buttressed by bounties given by Heaven, she not only celebrates her material wealth but also her spiritual

blessings. The widow states, “Tis a person, whose soule and heart may be fit for me is the chief riches to be valued.” Belying her steadfast rejection of such a proposition, the widow appears seriously to consider matrimony in this statement. She professes to long for remarriage above mundane riches, but sets her condition that it must be with someone whom she considers truly worthy. Austen wraps her practical considerations in the language of spirituality (“whose soul and heart may be fit”) and financial necessity (“is the chief riches to be valued”). Her eventual state of singlehood, therefore, argues not for her antipathy towards prospects but presents readers a common dilemma faced by marriageable women. Unlike men, who enjoy much freedom to marry for love (“more dispencable in men not so much to consider termes”), women who prioritize love over all else risk disrepute.⁸² Austen considers her “terms” – factors legal, financial, as well as moral, which collectively sway her attitude towards potential suitors -- through a carefully worded third person perspective here that emphasizes her discretion.⁸³

To underscore the unfavorable plight she suffers, Austen includes the reminder that women risk disrepute when their romantic intentions are known. The widow comes to her hardened conclusion: “A Rich woman must not marry with a person of

⁸² The moral restrictions on when, to whom, and if a widow remarries, in addition to social status and economic considerations, all contribute to what Barbara Todd observes to be a general decline in widows remarrying during Austen’s time. For details see Todd, 1985.

⁸³ Other parts of Austen’s *Book* also shed light on her discrete handling of the matter of her remarriage. In particular regards to her suitor, whom Todd identifies as Scottish physician Alexander Callendar (1997, 210), the widow writes, “For my part I doe noe Injury to none by not Loveing. But if I doe I may doe real Injuries. where I am already engaiged. To my Deceased Friends posterity. As for my body it can be enjoyed but by one” (147); shortly after, she insists, “I declined all things might give him a vaine encouragement. And told him I was like pennelope, always employed” (148). These other instances, in addition to what is quoted in my examination, come together to reveal the extent to which Austen polices her behavior (or at least presents herself insistently as such). They also reveal that the widow does not, in her strict self- discipline, deny her own passions – instead, the widow sublimates her ardent love in the sanctioned “engagements” to her “deceased friends posterity” (presumably the legacy of Thomas Austen) and to divine love.

meane Fortune.” Austen’s resolution is controlled by her own sense of helplessness. As a rich woman, she “must not” marry below her esteem. Her dismay at the lack of otherwise viable options are silenced by definite “reflexions of disrepute” bound to befall her. Austen’s specification of those “person[s] of meane fortune” targets at once those who are of an inferior social stratum, who are less wealthy than she, and significantly those who are comparatively powerless in regards to political prowess.⁸⁴ There is also curiosity about supernatural forces in Austen’s specification; the widow seems to avoid consorting with those whom “Fortune ill favors” for fear that their lesser fates would somehow negatively impact her own blessedness. Such awareness of profound influences, conscious or not, likewise guides Austen in her approach to life and writing, and I believe, motivates her in pursuing a numerological interpretation of dreams. It is also, finally, Austen’s affinity for the supernatural and her oblique political involvement that make her writings so meaningful to explore after similar discussions about Anna Trapnel in Chapter One. Although their methods are starkly dissimilar — Trapnel’s prophecies being delivered as public appeals, Austen’s entries as private ruminations — both express the women’s belief that knowledge garnered outside of mainstream institutions can exert profound impact on the larger environment of their community and the nation as a whole; both, either by maintaining the status of never-married or ever-married, seek to draw authority and agency outside of a married state.

⁸⁴ Taken from the OED, “mean,” as in “inferior in rank or quality, of low social status” (1375-1991), “poor, badly off” (1400-1776), and “of a political body, authority: weak, comparatively powerless” (1525- 1786). The reference to political influence is important to keep in mind as later sections of this chapter consider Austen’s oblique participation in Restoration politics. Remarkably, the idea of mean also implies “inferior in ability, learning, perception” (1387-1993), which carries with it the idea that forming an alliance with “a mean person” would also impede one from steady pursuits of knowledge.

While many scholars have noted Austen's refusal to remarry as a (debatable) expression of self-reliance, her independence also points to a heavily rational-intellectual ideology.⁸⁵ Indeed, when the widow writes that women are seen as disreputable if it seems that their "inclinations are steered all by love," she leaves unspoken the basic premise that to act upon a woman's instinctual desires is to (unjustly) vindicate the stigma of irrationality placed upon early modern women.⁸⁶ Austen understandably distances herself from such a stigma, as we have previously examined, by shunning any association with those of mean fortune; she also does so by continuously reinforcing her own spirituality. This reinforcement comes first by way of propriety.⁸⁷ Austen writes of seeking the right kind of knowledge, and of her faith in its practical benefits: "I wish I may rightly vnderstand of things. and consider my Condition may be happy if I wil help to make it so. For surely I must put in my helping hand, or God wil not aid me with his" (84). Complementing her ideas about fortune, she seeks understanding with the aim of improving her own conditions so that it may be "happy." According to the OED, this

⁸⁵ See, for instance, Anselment, 6.

⁸⁶ Whether it is from a humorological or polemical standpoint, femininity's correlation in the early modern period with the impulsive and the irrational has been variously documented. Sarah E. Johnson remarks that "The literary convention of making the soul feminine rarely produces empowering representations of women as possessing superior intellect, morality, or other faculties of the soul, in the way that the association of women with the body connects to such disadvantageous representations of women as weak, irrational, and lacking self-control" (15-16). Early modern discussions of reason frequently denigrate women, if not completely exclude women from such discussions, as Erica Fudge points out: "Women were certainly human, but their humanity was perceived to be more fragile, and as such somehow closer to – although always different from – animals" (41).

⁸⁷ "Propriety" in the sense according to the OED, "The quality of being proper, or that which is proper; particular or individual character, nature, or disposition" (1400-1876), "Appropriateness to circumstances or conditions; suitability, aptness, fitness, conformity with what is required by a rule, principle, etc. Rightness, correctness, accuracy" (1612-1989). At the same time, the word also means, "the fact of owning something, or of being owned by someone; right of possession or use; ownership, proprietorship" (1486-2000). Lastly, in relation to faculties of expression, meaning "correctness or purity of diction or language" (1550-1988). Thus Austen's propriety is one that is sanctioned, and sanctioned based on having ownership over something of authorizing value; it is a propriety that gives the widow the right to speak.

means not only an enjoyment of good fortune but significantly living “pleasantly appropriate to the occasion or circumstances” (1400-1991). Austen believes that the way to pursue happiness is not simply by knowing, but beyond knowing, by “rightly understanding.” She also believes in her personal ability to “help make it so.” She keeps her assertions within balance between the acceptance of God’s providence and individual willpower. Taking the notion of divine grace out of the concept of predestination and into discourse with that of earning in such a way also raises Austen up from the place of worshipper (who “waits at God’s altar,” as will be cited later) to one with negotiating power.

Austen’s confidence that as long as she upholds her part in proper learning, the knowledge she obtains will merit for her the assistance of divine providence symptomizes to her a definitive trait of humankind. Austen asserts that “tis observed. the ignorant man is compared to a Beast: But he is far worse then a Beast. their nature is to be ignorant: Tis mans fault if he be so” (99).⁸⁸ Austen’s reflective note taking in this simple excerpt is quasi-scientific because it mimics an empirical production of knowledge: the widow “observes” the difference between man and beast, and creates from such an observation an axiom that works for her. Her emphasis on the visual faculty (cued by verbs “observe” and “see”) in *Book M*, as mentioned previously, evinces Austen’s epistemic appeal to both sense and reason. The widow constantly fluctuates between seeing physically and

⁸⁸ Austen’s sense of obligation as a human to learn can also be gleaned from Trapnel’s prophecies, when the prophet suggests that the dishonorable abuse of knowledge may jeopardize man’s existence in the face of God’s wrath (“Now you shal be by Christ / Oh made a stumbling block,” see analysis in Chapter One, page 29). It is also echoed by Cavendish in *The World’s Olio* (1655). Cavendish justifies her desire for fame by naturalizing what may well be termed vanity and greed to an essential aspect of being human. “Fame makes a difference between man and beast,” the duchess declares, “those men that die in oblivion, are beafts by nature, for the rational Soul in man is a work of nature, as well as the body, and therefore ought to be taught by nature to be as indulfrious to get a Fame to live to after Ages.”

seeing mentally to tease out a way of knowing that is neither wholly secular nor wholly devotional. She explains in hopeful terms how knowledge created between the material and the immaterial goes along with rather than against her religious teachings. “If the benefit of humane Learning and knowledg, can bring such aids to the vnderstanding and Iudgement of a person,” Austen posits, “What a far blessedder condition to be daily. supported and directed by the aid of Heaven” (84-85). Austen’s concept of “humaine Learning” dovetails with Trapnel’s criticism against “brain–study”: both understand human knowledge to be inferior to knowledge of the divine. However, unlike the prophet, who sees university knowledge only as a derailment from the true path towards divine knowledge, Austen believes that learning on the secular level in fact encourages learning spiritually. Such endeavors, she suggests, enable the learner to catch a glimpse of the fuller benefits provided by the divine. Austen’s focus on the “benefits” of learning characterizes her pursuit of practical knowledge. Her faith in the potential of human learning is a logical conclusion drawn from estimating proportional gains from secular versus divine knowledge. The accumulation of knowledge occurs for Austen in conjunction with the accumulation of wealth.

Austen’s holding of wealth in the form of immovable properties, and the weaving of her mobile body around them, circumscribe her ownership both conceptually and physically.⁸⁹ Tallying her assets, Austen writes, “We have about 40 Considerable Houses placed in aduantageous ground” (129). These advantageous grounds range from East Essex to Kent to the outskirts of London. In managing her properties, Austen publicly

⁸⁹ The mobility of the woman’s travelling body and her epistemic agency signified thereby manifest themselves not only in Austen’s weaving through her real estate but also in Trapnel’s journey through Cornwall as a singlewoman. Likewise in Cavendish’s “exiles of the mind.”

performs her authority and the extent of her wealth: Barbara Todd observes, “[Austen] moved through, momentarily occupying, the public spaces and the streets and lanes of London. She used the coach bequeathed by her husband; it not only marked her gentle status but made possible her public activities” (184). In owning these numerous physical houses (expressing said ownership through leasing them to tenants and through investing in the buildings, by constructing and selling them) and in demonstrating her claim over these houses (expressing such claims by “moving through, momentarily occupying” them to a public audience), Austen distinguishes herself as separate from other women, who, either by their domestic duties or merely by their inability to afford travel, are comparatively stationary. Austen’s various occupations and public traversings through her real estate are atypical to a woman of her stature. Todd observes that, “roughly speaking, the higher a woman’s social position, the less likely she was to share or invade male physical or psychological space” (210-211). Austen thus presents a curious exception to Todd’s observation. She asserts her gentility precisely by penetrating (or “invading”) the male spaces that preclude her presence.

Austen’s marking of and maneuvering through the tangible and social boundaries are also markings of her epistemological relationships with the geographical spaces she occupies. Todd argues that certain spaces such as the domestic household and the birthing room, in which female expertise is presumed, affirm a woman’s right to control it over that of a man (205). These affirmations are particularly significant in their validation of female agency by legitimizing the woman as the knower. Austen’s management of and traversing through real estate effectively declares her knowledge of that which is associated with those spaces. Her real properties are translated into intellectual

possessions when they are versified or otherwise rendered through literary texts. Writing about physical spaces (such as a room or a building) allows the woman to lay claim figuratively to the space as property, both in the sense that she is able to own the aspect of the space about which she writes and in the sense that she is able to exert rhetorical influence over how the space is construed or how it functions. Austen claims, even if she does not yet possess it legally, a part of Highbury by writing frequently about it. She keeps her compositional finger, so to speak, on the pulse of every change in situation concerning her suit on the estate. It is an act of claiming that is fiercely intellectual not only because we can trace Austen's different attempts at describing Highbury – thus building a vocabulary repertoire that is both appropriate and effective in expressing her case for her claim – but also because, as we shall see, these diverse texts written around Austen's thoughts about her case are frequently cross-referenced and applied to her numerology of dreams. Because a country house like Highbury is a public landmark as much as it is a private domicile, Austen's consistent writing, when regarded as a knowledge-based act of claiming executed by a wealthy widow, underscores those characteristics which would mark her gentle status. Austen's prose and poetry concerning Highbury are best explicated through the context of early modern country house discourses. Kari Boyd McBride, in looking at country house discourse during this era, works under the premise that an estate like Highbury represented “not only a source of income but also an expression of lordship, a means of local influence and a mark of social position” (quoting Michael Bush, 3). Thus, the more Austen reiterates her

entitlement to the estate, the more she reminds her readers of such local influence and social position. At the same time, as a woman writer adapting this discourse, Austen subverts assumptions about the direction of power that is transferred by it.⁹⁰

Austen's desire to obtain wealth motivates her to write about her assets; her possessions, in turn, motivate her to write. She contemplates this mutually productive relationship in an entry in her diary titled, "Vpon my jewel":

Surely in *the* sparkes of this Iem I can see the sparkes and shinings of Gods love dart out to me. O that I may waight at his Alter, all the dayes of my life, and pay my vowes which I have made to him when I was in trouble. (124)

Austen's repetition of the jewel's "sparkes" and "shinings" reiterates her material richness just as it reaffirms her state of divine fortune. This convergence of material and immaterial wealth is expressed through an ingenuity that allows her, as articulated in the epigraph, to discern the "spirit seen in all things." Austen "sees," in a kind of empirical testimony, "God's love" for her, and such divine favor entitles her to a privileged position next to Him, as she "may waight at his Alter, all the dayes of [her] life." Like the amatory prophecies of Anna Trapnel, Austen's declarations here mix divine love with unmistakable eroticism — God's love "darts out" to her; the sexual innuendo hints at the widow's fantasy of a perfect lover.⁹¹ Austen gives in to this perfect union by interjecting

⁹⁰ In dialogue with McBride, who argues that both "nobility and legitimacy were understood to be fundamentally and ontologically male. That is, the exercise of power depended...on the control of everything associated with the feminine by those who claimed the fullness of masculine privilege" (5).

⁹¹ Hammons reading of Austen's poem, "On Vollandines day this 14 ffeb:1665/My Jewel," highlights Austen's regard of her jewel as a love token from God. Her celebration of the jewel, subsequently, allows the widow to self-identify as the special recipient of God's love, and concomitantly God as an ideal lover

her depiction of the jewel with a sigh, “Oh,” an interruption which divulges her affective train of thought. The widow transforms, in her intermingling of objective description (the seeing of the sparks) and wishful imagination (the seeing of God’s love), her empirical observations into instruction that then directs her actions (living piously). This series of cognitive transformations then produce, as a record of her mental conceptual development, her prose meditation. Contrasting Trapnel’s appeal to a general audience, Austen’s self-described position as handmaid to God only elevates her from the realm of the mundane. In “vowing” to wait on God, Austen discloses a contract that further precludes any mortal propositions of marriage. Austen’s secretarial privileges to God are not strictly devotional. Unlike Trapnel’s emphasis that speaking in God’s stead to a laymen community should elevate the secular audience to a higher level of knowing, Austen’s professed covenant carries a much more commercial tone that, in effect, distances her from the laypeople. She “pays” for these vows, apparently to defray her debts to Him “when [she was] in trouble.” The covenant in which Austen enters is a business contract just as well as it is a spiritual binding or a mingling of erotic and divine love.

Speaking of her jewel in such complex terms as demonstrated above allows Austen to validate her fortunes, but her exaltation of the jewel and other such possessions is always curbed by her commensurate diligence in suiting her self-presentation to public opinion. Indeed, much less ostentatious than Margaret Cavendish, who, as we shall see in the following chapter, accentuates her singularity, Austen rather negotiates her

(1). Hammons also elaborates on the peculiar transaction between Austen and God through her poem centered on this love token; the precious gemstone gestures towards divine love, but also “grounds an escapist fantasy in which the poetic speaker imagines God’s fulfillment of his promise to her of socioeconomic advancement” (103).

unorthodox epistemologies to justify her sense of belonging, even as she strives to prove her own salience among it. The widow writes preemptively, “Some persons may think me void of ordinary vnderstanding to make so much of a Trivial thing of so smal extern value. Yet it cannot invalid my eminent esteeme. For sure I may very well place that Embleeme as a Hand and Figure that relateth and exprees. Aduersity. And prosperity” (126-127). Austen associates “understanding rightly” with the proper valuation of things; her practical knowledge is mindful of, but constantly in parlay with, not only public opinion but mainstream views of financial costs. She is an active participant in the public realm of the marketplace. Austen uses the jewel as her proxy of communication, “as a Hand and Figure that relateth and exprees” her lived experiences. She situates herself safely in the private, the silent, and the domestic space while at the same time affording the vantage point of looking and exerting her influences outward. Her jewel, manifest as an extension both undeniably separate and inextricably a part of her expressive faculty, safeguards her. As such, Austen’s jewel is figured by her as an emblem of divine protection as well as the widow’s blessed condition.

Austen’s usage of a protective proxy to communicate her ideas is ever more apparent in her projection and derivation of meaning from her dreams. Like her gem, which gives material grounding to her ethereal intuitions, her dreams proffer an alternative space from the everyday realities she faces in which to test and to create knowledge. According to A.C. Spearing, “Dreaming is a form of sleeping experience that stimulates waking experience: it occupies the whole field of consciousness and is extended (however illogically) in the dimension of space and time” (1). The world of dreams exerts its influence over living experiences at the threshold dividing wakefulness and

sleep, consciousness and unconsciousness. The dreamer engages in the activity of dreaming, which is both rational and intuitive. Patricia Crawford notes that dreams, as a source of (self)knowledge, commonly afforded women an additional leverage in authority when speaking from the perspective of the dreamer due to their inherently mystical qualities and the perceived intuitiveness of the female mind (130). As tangible objects elicit meanings in the abstract, so do the abstract find manifestation through objectified representation. Both can be regarded as “things that talk.”⁹² In her work on early modern dreams, Mary Baine Campbell categorizes “dream things” (157) as the collective of “the visible *explananda*--the unsummoned images, motions, and events--of dreams” (38).⁹³ These things lie between the empirical and the rational as visible and tangible objects processed by the brain, and the mnemonic and the imaginary as felt and conjured objects processed in the mind. They are, in ways, raw material: dream things only become valuable and useful after the dreamer signifies them through interpretation. In this respect, the practicality of dream things is by default *in potentia* only. The

⁹² Lorraine Daston’s seminal collection of essays explicates this relationship between object and speech from two perspectives: one, the false-idol-versus-self-evidence dichotomy, wherein language is carved from either superimpositions of portentous pronouncements by the devout worshipper from sanctified objects, or from the matter of fact that certain things speak for themselves (12). Second, that “the language of things derives from certain properties of the things themselves, which suit the cultural purposes for which they are enlisted” (15). Her contentions about the loquacious capacities of material objects complements this project’s premise that dream things hold interpretive, literary, and practical values. Unhinging materiality from its stigma of being a hindrance to human imagination (17), Daston’s work interacts with this chapter’s observations in that it highlights not only Austen’s praise of her jewel as fitting rightfully within the framework of things that talk (Hammons, 10), but also that the liminality of dream things capitalized by Austen’s readings of them can expand on how her treatment of “material objects” may be defined.

⁹³ It should be noted here that Campbell’s work tackles the genre of dreambooks (ie., dream dictionaries) across multiple cultural backgrounds (the Iroquios nations in America, the Montagnais of Canada, some Greek and Latin liturgy and hymns, as well as readings by Robert Plot in Oxford, among others) and ranging from medieval to the early modern eras. Campbell’s comprehensive and theoretical framework gives context to my approach to Austen’s dream writings in that it picks up on the dreamers’ obsessions about property and money which motivates record keeping of dreams (160); it also underscores the prophetic nature of dream writing – dreamology often orients “towards the future rather than to a personal past or immediately present situation” (162); and, finally, it concerns the practicality of dream writing as a method of problem solving as well as contribution to empirical knowledge (166).

unrealized value of dream things may have contributed to dreams being deemed controversial as sources of knowledge creation, both then and now. Campbell writes that the dreaming brain “seemed to seventeenth-century intellectuals to be ‘of no advantage’ in the marketplace, or in other communal and social business that constitutes the ‘proper’ and ‘natural’ habitus of ‘men.’ Its knowledge is too subjective, imagined thus as personal, individual, private” (38). Austen’s contemporaries disparage dream thing knowledge, in other words, by excluding it from the marketplace which they deemed a sanctioned realm of rationality, masculinity, usefulness, and publicity. Austen’s decision to record some of her remarkable dreams represents a deliberate subversion of that common disparagement. It is a subversion that emphasizes the liminality of dreams in order to position the (female) dreamer at the threshold, if not the active center, of the marketplace. Dream work and dream knowledge, as a result of Austen’s subversion, become not simply objects to be traded but agents of influence that act upon the marketplace of the dreaming woman. Campbell recognizes dream work and dream knowledge as constituting an intervening microcosm within the macrocosm of the commercial market as a whole, an (in)tangible market dictated by “psychic currents of need” (170). She calls attention to this economy of dreams,

organized and various, sensually perceptible, collectively recognized and participated in, represented, theorized, and, from the perspective of the populous genre of the dreambook (or the customs of the Iroquois), full of consequence [...] Dreams, like so much else, have been privatized. So have things, and so has thought. (170)

This description of the dream world economy not only stresses the unique kinds of property that are dream things -- dreams are valuable commodities because they are personal and irreplicable -- but also reiterates the commonality shared by dream

property, material property, and intellectual property -- all three can and should be properly managed. If handled strategically, all three kinds of property may reward the investor with great wealth.⁹⁴ Austen's adherence to liminality is successful in keeping her squarely at the virtual doorway that allows her maximal participatory agency while remaining respectfully within the prescribed position of a widow. This is important to keep in mind as we examine some of her most detailed records of dreams. Austen pays special attention to liminal spaces within these dreams, such as stairways and the thresholds of rooms. The various locations of people who appear in her dreams also inform Austen of what is to come in subsequent waking realities. To preserve the integrity of these records, and to avoid inserting external meaning on to the way Austen interprets them, these dreams will be excerpted in full in the following analyses.

Austen's dreams serve as a prompt to produce knowledge. She writes in retrospect of one of her dreams:

What shall I say of my foregoeing Felicities. I found of that Ioyful intimation of my soveraignes restoration in a Dreame. *Book K*: pag 207: And shal it be that my Lord and Kings comeing in must prove a fatal blast to our Estate. It cannot be. Yet if we are condemned by his Cleere Iudgement (and not by the violence of our craveing Aduarsaries) I submit. Since he is returned in peace I sacrifice life and Fortune. And Let that blesing on a Dying Nation Take all that I can offer. (122)

Austen refers to another book she keeps, *Book K*, which is now lost. She reveals two things about her autodidactic habits: one, that the widow creates and accumulates a working archive of knowledge, a personal database apart from scriptural or canonical

⁹⁴ Incidentally, Campbell's observation that "dreams, like so much else, have been privatized" comes not without a hint of lamentation. Reading Austen's writings as contemplations about her private ownership, either of dream things or material objects, opens the door to understanding how this trend in increasing privatization with regards to property management reflects much about the emerging culture of capitalism in early modern England. See later section in the chapter that deals with Austen's privatization, page 87.

literature; and two, that she continuously builds on and revises her extant knowledge based on new events that transpire. These two points characterize Austen as an active autodidact and independent scholar in her own right. Austen's production of knowledge and writing develop proportionally. She urges herself to create and to verbalize new ideas: "What shall I say of my foregoing felicities"? Her insistence on saying something about recent fortunes is consistent with her habit of accounting.⁹⁵ It demonstrates Austen's need not only to tally assets but to verbalize the value (beyond that of the monetary, the epistemic, or the sentimental) of what she owns. While these ideas, having been recorded in the fashion of note taking or loose meditations, remain fragmented to readers, they make traceable the writer's efforts to connect what she understands from her dreams to her understanding of her current financial solvency and how the nation's political events will impact it. Austen makes use of the dream knowledge here by deducing that the return of Charles II "must prove a fatal blast to [her] Estate." Her method of deduction is unclear and her resolution remains purely subjective. This line of intuitive free association is present in many of Austen's dream analyses. Despite their non-linear, associative, and informal nature, Austen's dreams galvanize her

⁹⁵ An instance of Austen's meticulous accounting can be found on pages 151-152 of *Book M*, wherein the widow lists "the divers emergincies put to for the supplying [of] great vndertakeings." The items on this list include with them specific amounts spent and/or received, for instance, "The Lending money to Cosen *Williame* in necessity, £336-0-0," "Then when I was to git & did git for them builders, £300-0-0," and "The abateing of *the* rent of a house I had let, £20 *per annum*." These accounts are framed not simply in financial terms, as a list of expenses, but tellingly as an elaborate evidence of Austen's pious perseverance. She titles her accounts, "Meditations on the Sickenes and of Highbury," merging the act of tallying with the act of spiritual reflection. She also frames this list with characteristic numerological language of negotiation. The sentences preceding the list read, "Through six afflictions God has promised to cary his children. and in the seaventh they shall be delivered. Six I have passed. Six yeares of Divers mixtures full of accidents and encounters extraordinary for a single woman to pas." These iterations of the numbers six and seven divulge Austen's insistent counting of her life events and sets the arithmetic tone of the passage. It is a tone that not only takes stock of Austen's sufferings with a utilitarian conviction that her pains will reap proportional gains in return but also that the quantity of her sacrifices – beyond the nature of her suffering – dictates those warranted gains.

approaches in life. “It cannot be,” she resolves. Austen’s fluctuating emotions influence her rational acts of self-teaching either by contesting against or corroborating with hard evidence.

Austen’s non-linear, associative, and oftentimes random interpretation of her dreams allow her indirectly to validate herself as a politically active member of her community. She justifies her possible financial losses, reframing them as her own royalist contributions: “Since he [the king] is returned in peace I sacrifice life and Fortune.” A deliberate give-and-take that is founded on rational thought occurs in her framework: Austen’s agreement to her sacrifices is expressly contingent upon the king’s “condemnation by his Cleere Judgement.” It is from instances like this where Austen’s private epistemic pursuits fluidly transition into her involvement into the public. By rewording what seems superficially as a personal financial loss as a worthy sacrifice for the safe return of the king (especially as the monarch is viewed as a delegate for the divine), Austen sublimates her secular activities in managing her wealth. This sublimation effectively officiates a relationship of causality between the widow’s wealth and the well-being of the nation, thus establishing political authority and importance for Austen.⁹⁶ Alternatively, it can be argued that the widow may seek to reconcile with her financial losses emotionally via this act of rewording. Both functions of officiation and reconciliation empower Austen. Her framing and re-framing of the situation are not simply a play on words but practically reinforce a healthy state of mind. To this end, Crawford

⁹⁶ Although the widow never directly participated in Restoration politics, her financial contributions, as iterated in this instance and as discerned from evidence of her investments in the East India Company (Todd, 1997, p.210), mark her indirect influences on the nation’s politics. Women’s indirect participation in politics, either through oblique actions or through writing, has been a popular topic of academic discussion. For detailed explorations see Ross, 2015, and Suzuki, 2003.

contends that Austen's interpretation of dreams is therapeutic. She observes, "Austen found comfort and courage in reworking the dreams' details in her waking mind" (134).⁹⁷

Austen writes of a dream "a while before," wherein the delivery of wealth enabled the delivery from calamity:

I had thieftes came to my bed side. And there was my Husband came & gave me two Ringes. One His Fathers Gold Sealed Ring. the other a Diamond Ring of his Brothers. And his Father was in the entry. but did not come in, And thus I was delivered from the Thieftes. And when I waket I hopet I shud have the better of my Fathers estate. of Highbury: & of my *Brothers* estate of the Red Lion. now at. this time *which* I am in Law with by my sis[ter] Austen. (112)

The dreamer demonstrates implicit understanding of familial hierarchies and their corresponding levels of intimacy, particularly as they apply to the protection of her family's integrity -- Austen equates the two rings with her two estates; her husband, who gave her the rings, stands closest to her at (presumably) arm's reach, and then the thieves, at her bedside, and then her husband's father at the entry way at the threshold of the bedroom. From the immediate space in reach of the widow's person, to the bedside, to the parameters of her bed chamber, Austen marks the several locations at which men seem collectively to surround her but are allowed limited access. She writes, "His father was in the entry, *but* did not come in, *and thus* I was delivered from the thieves." The two conjunctions "but" and "thus," so emphasized, denote this understanding as they clarify the importance of boundaries to Austen's mental grasp on disputes regarding her assets. She suggests that it is owing to her father-in-law's

⁹⁷ In the following chapter, emphasis is placed on the therapeutic qualities of Cavendish's writings. It seems that Trapnel, Austen, and Cavendish all use writing as a device for healing, whether it be spiritual healing of the masses or emotional (and moreover pseudo-clinical) healing at the personal level. Although scholarship has frequently tackled the idea of early modern women writing as means to empower or authorize, the issue of writing undertaken specifically as therapy (as apart from advice or medical writing) seems seldom explored. See corresponding discussions about Austen and divine suffering, page 131.

deference to her (and her husband's) right to privacy of their bedroom which ultimately expelled the thieves. Austen insists on the practical impact of her dream by adding to this simple record, "And when I waket I hopet I shud have the better of my Fathers estate." By bringing her explications of a dream to explications of the waking world, Austen establishes a direct relationship between what she feels in her sleep to how she acts "in law." The dream not only gives the dreamer "hope" for the outcome of her litigious troubles but also offers symbolic hints and visible rationale as to how this hopeful outcome should come to fruition.

Austen's discursive transition from the dream world to the real world is not simply a matter of feeling and acting; it is numerologically functional as well. In the dream of two thieves, the number two appears to be an important correspondent in Austen's stream of associations. She clearly sees the patterns of two rings, two thieves, and two estates as significant reminders concerning her household, because interjecting between these dream-related passages the widow makes this curiously random remark: "I have had these two yeares in my house. an vnfaithful seruant. And when I found out his knavery, was forced not to accuse him of it, but to keep him" (112). The lingering of the unfaithful servant in the Austen household must mirror in profound ways the thieves that hover in the widow's dreams. Both conjure images that speak to Austen's insecurities about being (what she perceives as) the single protector of her estate in the midst of many "craveing Aduarsaries."⁹⁸ In this sense, what Austen sees in her dreams are also empirical data, visible and tangible observations that instruct. While there is no documentation of action taken either way consequent to the reminder of this unfaithful servant, that Austen

⁹⁸ See page 88.

makes connections from her dream to her lawsuit to her servant-keeping outlines a stream of consciousness which works under her own logic. That she makes the effort to write these connections down precisely in this order exposes Austen's values in judging useful knowledge. This value judgement is especially evident when taking into account that the widow kept numerous books such as *Book M* and *Book K*, and frequently cross-references them for guidance in diverse matters. It is ultimately reasonable to argue that for Austen, discerning number patterns is an integral method in her dream interpretation.

The instructive qualities of numbers and spaces are elaborated further on January 2, 1664, when Austen records that she dreamed about a curious incident on the way to a wedding:

I dreamt I was going to a weeding. and took my leave of my Mother, then I went vp a high paire of Staires and came into a Roome where was a long Table in *the* midle at the vper end sat my Husband. a discoursing with a *Gentleman* in a Gowne. siting at the side of the Table. I Looket upon them and went downe, as I went downe a few stepes I saw my Husband agen. I kised him. and asket him how he could come downe before me since I left him siting. He told me by a Backe staires. So downe I went. And then I forgeting my muffle. I went up *the* backe staires for it. But I had not gone up aboue 8: or 9: stepes but I waket. This ran in my minde divers dayes afterwards. and I concluded. the First paire of staires signified to me to the end of *Ianuary* and the second was so many dayes in *February* and then something wud fall out to me. And indeed I was troubled that some vnhappy aduventure wud come. as I dreaded every day. wishing *February* out. (106).

The notion of mobility complicates Austen's previous explications regarding numbers and spaces in this dream. Austen writes not of the occupying of set parameters but of the traversing between these areas — she “goes” to a wedding, “leaves” her mother, “went up” stairs, and “came into” a room. The rooms of the house, as well as the sanctified space which prescribes the ritualistic occasion of a wedding, all function similarly to the

previously examined physical real estate that the widow holds; the liminality of the staircases mimic informative markings of epistemic boundaries in Austen's dreams as she does traversing through actual locations in the waking world. These spaces and movements are paratexts that the dreamer reads and from which she may create meaning.⁹⁹ Because Austen sees herself in several locations vis-a-vis her husband, she is able to inquire and to support her inquiry with reasonable suspicion. "I asket him how he could come downe before me since I left him siting," she records. The dream also haunts Austen for days precisely because it leaves her rationally unsatisfied. Austen was never able to retrieve her muff because she "had not gone up about 8: or 9: steps but waket." Her effort to compensate for this dissatisfaction is doubly important. After careful consideration, Austen writes, "I concluded. the First paire of staires signified to me to the end of *January* and the second was so many dayes in *February* and then something wud fall out to me." In one respect, this act of compensation highlights how the dreamer's brain virtually continues to dream long after waking — Austen's waking thoughts *fill in the blanks* of what her dream leaves unrevealed; it continues the dream narrative that her actual dreaming had left unfinished. In another respect, the compensation highlights how the dreamer's waking reality takes shape under the influence of her dream.

⁹⁹ Ann Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle emphasize the value of dreams as a vehicle of knowledge production. In their introduction to *Dreams, Dreamers and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World* (2013), Plane and Tuttle point out that "the dream is perceived as an actual experience for the dreamer, one that helps the dreamer in processing or in coming to know things that cannot be said or known any other way" (6); addressing dreams recorded in literature, Plane and Tuttle clarify that "although dreams are, by their nature, individual experiences, dream reporting is a social act" (6). Their observations are significant inspirations for my approach to Austen. By acknowledging that dreams are in unique ways empirical and epistemological, Plane and Tuttle's premise allows me to interpret Austen's management of dream images as a means of knowing grounded on tangible evidence. From their argument that dream writing transcends the private-public dichotomy, I am encouraged to suggest that Austen exerts practical control over her legal troubles through a sense of confidence and self-assertiveness gained from writing about her dreams. In turn, this chapter hopes to contribute to the conversation established by Plane and Tuttle by turning focus on early modern Englishwomen, and by inserting numerology and the mathematical dimension as a complementary discourse to dream writing.

Austen confesses that she “dreaded every day, wishing *February* out.” Her numerology to compensate for the logical gaps in her dream is spelled out in its method as well as in its being a direct cause of her dread. She very clearly records how the eighth and ninth steps intuitively signified the days of the months, and this hard evidence, as arbitrary as it is, dictated her lifestyle. While prophetic in their nature, Austen’s dreams are categorically dissimilar to the visions of Trapnel. The widow adheres more to what we would now consider a scientific method than does the prophet. Trapnel apparently supplants empiricism — her brain study — with her heart-piece sense in order to honor what she has interpreted as the will of God. Austen, on the other hand, takes heed of her dreams conditionally. She willingly revises her dream interpretations to suit her reality.

Austen’s prophecy based on this dream of stairs finds legitimacy in what transpires uncannily on the ninth of February. “It came to pase,” she writes, “that on the 9th of *february* I was appointed to be that day at the *Committee* of Parliament: And when I came into the Roome it was the same as I saw in my Dreame. the situation of the Roome the same with *the* Table. And was soone as I cast my eye on *Sir* Iohn Birkenhead. I was confident he was the very same man I saw my *Husband* with” (107). It is an essential part of diary keeping to track the dates and times of various events, and Austen is meticulous in this regard. But her diligent recording of dates, including estimations of “the end of January, and so many days in February” in the previous passage adds a certain mathematical element to her quasi-scientific endeavor. Austen’s “calculating to know,” to use Trapnel’s terms, either in the form of counting days or counting objects, and the sheer presence of numbers or number-related words (“February,” for instance) have profound ways of impacting narrative according to literary historians like

Barbara Fisher. Fisher seeks to underscore the simultaneously concrete and abstract qualities of numbers in order to showcase canonical literatures such as the works of Milton, Shakespeare, and Henry James as a science of storytelling.¹⁰⁰ It is helpful to read Austen's numbers in these dream logs in a similar manner. We too can count Austen's experiment with dreams as a science because in all of these cases of dream interpretation she employs the same approaches of observation, hypothesis, testing, and conclusion. The numbers she records in these dream logs heighten her narratives' liminality as an instructive medium that transitions between the abstract and the concrete; that these numerical figures can be seen mirroring each other from the dream world to the real world buttresses Austen's implicit belief that dream interpretation can be an applicable science.

The science of Austen's dream numerology can be applied practically to the widow's coping with legal woes as much as it can serve as an engendering force for Austen as a producer of literary narratives. When considering Austen's dream narratives beyond their utilitarian function, reading *Book M* as diaristic storytelling benefits from Fisher's numerological perspective in that it gives unique occasion for the dreaming widow to write ingenuously. Contemplating the esoteric significances of numbers motivates Austen to rethink her understanding of specific words. Thus reflecting upon her dream of stairs as they portend the situation at Parliament, Austen rewrites her analysis:

This busines was a weeding: for it was a Contract. a Confederacy to take away our estate. And I shal noe more be of that opinion gennerally observed in Dreames that a weeding foretels a bur[y]ing.

¹⁰⁰ Referring to and extending from Gnostic and Cabalistic interpretations, Fisher contends that numbers "inform a text in singular ways as agents and counteragents, as simple devices or transcendent abstractions.

and a bur[y]ing a weeding. But that itis danger of Conspiracy against one. as This was to us:

^ By my muffle goeing for yt I was to be laped warm as it fel out. went in muff. & veluet hood & mantle.^ (107)

Austen's associating the wedding with a contract, and then with a confederacy in this passage¹⁰¹ differs from her other interpretative usages of dream things, which apparently has no logical bearings. We can trace a connotational, if not etymological link among these three words. Specifically, Austen makes use of the common image that these three words portray — that of a union or agreement officiated based on trust between two parties — to project what happens in consequence to the breaking of trust. Thus a wedding, which is symbolic of such a union, devolves into a contract, a predominantly business or legal version, devolves into a confederacy, a union with possibly hostile intentions. Austen's word-play uses a re-signification of specific words to potentially alter the existing principles of her dream interpretation. The widow declares, "I shall no more be of that opinion generally observed," and this declaration speaks volumes not only in its testimony to Austen's ready mind to amend her existing knowledge, but also in its gesturing to an extant greater conversation of dream interpreters of which Austen esteems herself a part. By this declaration, Austen steps out from the supposed privacy of her *Book M*, and into the public of an alternative mainstream ("opinion generally observed").

¹⁰¹ The subsequent interpretation derived from OED definitions of "wedding," "contract," and "confederacy," respectively, are as follows. Specifically, the word "wedding" as it denotes "close union or association; the action of pledging or wagering" (1380-1503); the word "contract" as "a mutual agreement between two or more parties that something shall be done or forborne by one or both; a compact, covenant, bargain; esp. such as has legal effects; a convention between states" (1386-1884) or "a business agreement for the supply of certain articles or the performance of specified work at a certain price, rate, or commission"(1602-1881); and finally, the word "confederacy" meaning "a union by league or contract between persons, bodies of men, or states, for mutual support or joint action; a league, alliance, compact" (1387-1861).

Austen's dreams actively inform because they forewarn her of the troubles brewing against her. She reinterprets her forgetting and subsequent retrieval of her muff in the dream as a symbolic commentary and advice on her legal plight. The entry provides an insert which clarifies, "By my muffle goeing for yt I was to be Laped warm / as it fel out. went in muff. & veluet hood & mantle." The evolving notions signaled by Austen's dreams, from that of a wedding to a contract to a confederacy, caution the widow that external aid (as represented by protective clothing) is necessary for her victory in her suit concerning Highbury. In determining the wedding as a "confederacy against one," Austen voices her insecurity of being the isolated target of many; in eventually going "in muff and velvet hood and mantle," she credits her dreams for ultimately bringing necessary aid into reality. The unsettling image of the widow as a singular defender against a multitude of threatening unknowns, finally, is an important part of her poems, and an important constituent of her numerology. Besides associating by numbers, as previously observed from Austen's relating among two rings, two thieves, and two years, here we find that Austen is in touch with how numbers provoke feeling. She utilizes the knee-jerk reactions to certain numbers to make sense of situations and to compose text. Such function of numbers to build upon (and parallel to) words in a text is noted by mathematician Brian Rotman. Rotman theorizes numbers as "sign systems" with their own "grammar," "implicated at a deeply linguistic level, in any form of distinctly intellectual activity" (1). His understanding of numbers sheds light on Austen's work as something more than mysticism, and more than storytelling. It includes her dream numerology among distinctly intellectual activities such as geometry and physics, and

Austen, as this chapter ultimately demonstrates, adheres to a numerical lifestyle with the same rigor and discipline which rivals the most studious mathematicians and physicists.

Austen records:

I dreamt I think it was about *the* 20th August 1664. the last night before I came from Twickenham That my Father Austen and my Brother Austen was partners at one Game at Cribage. and my Husband and I: and as soone as the Cards was dealt, my Husband sed he wud deale againe. I was vnwilling. & sed I had a good Game, For I had three Ases:& I sed that was six; And this I thought intimated to me Six monthes. And some thing wud happen. Which now *that* six monthes is past. I think *that*. and my 4 moones Dreame related, to our estate of Highbury which then was caled in to a most dangerous questions. by persons who is ready to doe *what* they pleased. the special providence of God doe not prevented them: That troublesome business might wel be compared to a game at Cards. wherein my Father Austen and all of us have been concerned in *the* takeing care of an defending. (111)

Cribbage is a card game that operates on numbers, visual patterns, and probability. Austen partakes in the necessary calculations in playing even in her dream. She repeats the phrases, “I think” and “I say” in a number of revealing instances. She begins the dream log by writing, “I dreamt I think,” symptomizing her habit of both as concurrent actions. She says in the dream that she had a good game, and that her cards were six, demonstrating an assertiveness over situations (and control of numbers) unprecedented in her other dream records. She follows this assertiveness with two confessions of clear thought, “This [six] I thought intimated to me Six monthes,” and “now *that* six monthes is past. I think *that*.” The two confessions suggest that Austen’s dream space is one which fosters rational thinking, and which corroborates with waking reality to establish thought. They also support Austen’s way of thinking and of establishing analogies as practices that are tried and seasoned by time. It is finally in this dream log that Austen seems to

extract herself from the position of an isolated sufferer. She leaves her record with a sense of unity. “My Father Austen and all of us have been concerned in *the* takeing care of and defending,” Austen concludes. The cribbage dream stands salient among Austen’s many dream logs as one which indicates the widow seeking solace in her oneiric universe. Beyond fostering a space for rational thinking and perhaps divine guidance, Austen’s dreams afford her a moment of respite from her Penelope-like affliction to find comfort in the feeling that those absent from her waking life still stand by her side in sleep.¹⁰²

The dream logs of *Book M* count and calculate dream things; Austen creates a computational method that makes sense to her and yet is irrelevant to mathematics. Her calculating to know is a literary activity. She uses words to give meaning to numbers, and produces texts in lieu of algorithms to arrive at answers. By adhering to seemingly whimsical sets of associations, Austen works with analogies beyond common logic and demonstrates her impressive, if unconventional, literacy. In these lengthy recordings, we find not only a mystical Austen divining her sufferings but a meticulous, trial-and-error method by which a rational, experimental thinker of an ingenious subject matter works at the periphery of sanctioned scholarship. Austen’s rigorous research represents one out of the countless endeavors of thinking-feeling women who, studious and alone, produce practical knowledge that they live by daily. This notion of hard work done in isolation¹⁰³ likewise takes an active role in shaping Margaret Cavendish’s persona.

¹⁰² Austen’s usage of the spiritual men who appear in her dreams as sublime consolation for her waking vulnerabilities can also be gleaned from her prose and miscellany notes throughout *Book M*. Hammons, for instance, likewise make mention of “a poetic fragment that Austen copied into her manuscript, [which] centers on the notion of male protection from beyond the grave” (120). I seek to suggest the possibility that Austen may attempt to maintain profound connections with that kind of otherworldly aid through writing numerologically. See later sections in this chapter.

¹⁰³ Isolation is an essential characteristic of Austen’s self-portrayal as divine sufferer. As the chapter continues to unpack her numerological language, we also find that this sense of being outnumbered, of

Book M contains a series of dream logs from diverse predecessors, about which Austen studiously comments. These sources include one from Dr. Hammonds, in which the doctor traces his achievement of salvation through piety and which ultimately proved mortally prophetic (49-50, 53); the dream of Lady Burton, which inspired her to keep “a coach 4 horses, and married at The Hague a lord and did so” (50); a series of dreams from Sir Edward Thurland and the family of Sir Robert Wotton (54-55); Henry, a German prince (55), Bishop Laud, Lady Diana, and an unnamed apothecary (56). The sheer volume of Austen’s sources and the selective quality of the elite persons she cites testify to Austen’s pursuit of dream knowledge as both “exclusively orthodox” and “common across the religious spectrum” (Ross, 24). Such selectivity may also indicate a filtered availability of logs (it is much easier, after all, for persons of wealth and power to publish works and to disseminate their ideas and opinions, considering license, funding, and education, which is often still the case today). Austen constructs an elite society of like-minded dream numerologists into which she may figure herself a vital part.¹⁰⁴ As a potential category of literary genre and convention of knowledge production, her deliberate enumeration of predecessors helps justify dream writing as an alternative narrative form.

being one-against-many also characterizes aspects of her rationalization in knowledge making. Nevertheless, for all her protests of “not Loveing” (147) and self-imposed loneliness, Austen is not without company. Her *Book M* coyly suggests an ongoing courtship with a certain “Gentleman,” the Scottish physician Alexander Callendar. “He was one that much observed Dreames,” Austen noted (148). The two shared many interpretations of their dreams and used their interpretations to support each other through hard times. When Callendar’s life story ends at the end of *Book M*, Austen is left lamenting, “When his Sickenes did. increase My own Feares suggested his end was nigh. and revoulued to me a Dreane. in its full meaning” (149). Austen’s financial insecurities may have built the widow an emotional wall rejecting possible suits of remarriage, but her faith in a personal numerology of dreams ultimately sustained some precious attachments to like-minded individuals.

¹⁰⁴ This is done in a manner similar to Lanyer’s construction of a community of virtuous women in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, as will be further discussed in this chapter (p.27).

Austen's treatment of her body of dream works demonstrate how dream things, operating within its specialized economy and moved by psychic currents of need, have been privatized (ref. Campbell, footnote 43). The widow makes a disclaimer in her *Book* which privatizes her knowledge for her personal benefit only:

Whoso euer shal look in these papers and shal take notice of these personal occurrences: wil easily discern it concerned none but my self: and was a private exercise directed to my self. The singularity of these conceptions doth not aduantaige any. (53)

Austen emphatically directs her work to her "self." Each directive symbolically redraws the boundaries of the privacy within which Austen's personal occurrences are put into practical use. The boundaries drawn by such directives superimpose on the very boundaries that inform Austen's identity, merging what she does and knows with her very being.¹⁰⁵ Austen excludes others from making use of her conceptions by exaggerating their "singularity." This strategy of branding one's work as "singular" is optimized by Cavendish, as will be seen in the next chapter, to extract the duchess from extant conventions. For Austen, it is a way of laying claim to her extraordinary understanding and the advantage of their applications. Her optimism about her legal disputes over *Highbury* and the *Red Lion* after the dream of two rings exemplifies a

¹⁰⁵ This is a rhetorical internalization that diametrically opposes the kind of deliberate distancing seen in the chapter's epigraph -- when Austen wrote about the idea of ingenuity, she deliberately stated that "she is not a scholar" to know the word's origins and intended definitions. Her disowning of that definitive knowledge, juxtaposed against her act of privatization here, exposes an exclusionary attitude towards women's knowledge. It seems to suggest that intellectual participation in established epistemic discourse may be frowned upon for early modern women if it is not created or expressed for the sole purpose of personal (read: private and/or domestic) use. Read in another way, perhaps the same may suggest that framing knowledge as for domestic and personal use offers early modern women an excuse to further their endeavors in knowledge creation.

unique application of practical material knowledge. Indeed, Austen's privatization of her thoughts in *Book M* sheds light on a different aspect of early modern Englishwomen's material knowledge in general.¹⁰⁶ While another person may easily borrow a household object for his or her use, dream things may not be given away or loaned out. As a result, the authority that dreamers have over their dream things, when demonstrated to an audience, is non-negotiable.

The absolute authority that privatized dream knowledge affords, coupled with Austen's personal conviction of divine providence, allow her to conflate material consciousness with spiritual piety. This combination of material capital and sense of higher purpose moves Austen to critique the shortcomings of existing educational methods. "I am of oppinion," Austen writes, "They who have noe other Court breeding. come not to be principaled neither in Religion nor sollid Learning" (87-88). Her misgivings about formal knowledge lead her to admonish institutionalized education to her son, Thomas. "You are very happy *Sir*," she reminds him, "you have received *your* first Education in the Vniversity, Tho it be for breeding Gentlemen, some *what* a clownish place" (87).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Sarah Mendelson and Patricia Crawford observe that early modern women's understanding and usage of material goods have offered a sort of "psycho-logical' or 'moral proprietorship' that lend them credibility in otherwise misogynistic settings, such as in the case of legal disputes among an all-male judiciary" (219-220). Similarly, Natasha Korda highlights women's understanding and usage of "household stuffs" --clothing, kitchen ware, etc.--as transformative of domestic life and domestic relations. Knowledge about material objects provides the knowing women means of displacement from otherwise confined positions in society. These "symbolic dimensions of household things and historical dimensions of household words," created by women's personal interpretation and signification of domestic materiality, constitute a distinct archive of practical knowledge that are applicable to other epistemological realms of influence, such as the court and the marketplace, thereby challenging any predisposed masculinity, rationality, or publicity attached to those spaces (147-148).

¹⁰⁷ In dismissing Thomas's university as "clownish," Austen may very well be referencing the ambivalently regarded occupation of the court jester, or also known as the "licensed fools." Historian Beatrice K. Otto's study on court jesters around the world underscores not only the education and skills entailed in qualifying the fool for the role of jesting, but also the actual impact that fools, usually employed under patronage of financially or socially powerful households, have in contributing to policymaking and in swaying

Her belittling of university gentlemen as being “clownish”¹⁰⁸ synchronizes with Trapnel’s dismissal that university men “doat” on the pursuit of the Arts and Sciences. Indeed, while Trapnel questions the substance of worldly knowledge -- “Can those that have the form without the power, that have great arguments” (*Cry*, 435)? – Austen suggests that universities really do not work successfully for “breeding Gentlemen” – that proper breeding, in terms of rank, would be better pursued through other means. Both Austen and Trapnel’s accusations hinge on highlighting the irrational, foolish, and unproductive behaviors of supposedly learned men. These notions of being “doating” and “clownish” hold gendered connotations that complicate the women’s assessments of university men as knowers. Both women insinuate, by calling into question what learned men know, their gentlemanly qualities and their supposed masculinities. Austen declares to Thomas, “A Fellow of a Colledg is made up of pride and vn-mannerlines. And they that are fellow commoners, learne those ill habites. I repent me of nothing more I made you one” (87). Pride, an inordinately high opinion of one’s own worth and the first of the deadly sins,¹⁰⁹ and unmannerliness, which is rude, discourteous or inappropriate behavior,¹¹⁰

cultural significances. Otto specifically outlines the many intersections among the “slighted” jester and more “respectable” stations such as scholars and clergymen:

The court jester’s relationship to scholars and clerics was multifaceted. They could be targets for his irreverence -- the pompous, pedantic scholar, the money-grubbing monk, the absurdity of many religious or ideological tenets -- and the jester would rarely resist the temptation to laugh at them. The other side of the coins had scholars, officials, and clerics in the guise of jester, either ad hoc, if they perceived that the only way of gaining the ear of the monarch was by making him laugh, or if their character naturally lent itself to playing the fool. (157, 159)

The precarious position of the jester embodies the mocker and the mocked, the idiot and the wise. Austen deliberately hints at the idea of the court fool to remind her son of the ambivalent accomplishment that is having a university education.

¹⁰⁸ From the OED, “clownish,”: “Of, belonging to, or proper to a clown or peasant; rustic” (1570-1824); “Clown-like, rude, boorish; uncultivated, ignorant, stupid, awkward, clumsy, rough, coarse” (1581-1826).

¹⁰⁹ From the OED, “pride.”

¹¹⁰ From the OED, “unmannerly”: “Of a person: lacking in manners; impolite; behaving rudely, discourteously, or improperly” (1425-2001); “Of an action, conduct, speech, etc.: characterized by a lack

are the pillars of Austen's argument against university education. Both vices have strong implications on a person's breeding and class; both, according to Steven Shapin, negatively impact a person's pursuit of true knowledge. Shapin examines seventeenth-century aristocracy and nobility and how they potentially influence developments in early modern science. Pointing to the society of gentlemen-philosophers including Robert Boyle, Thomas Hobbes, and of course, Francis Bacon, Shapin stresses the deference that early modern societies paid to the gentry class as legitimizers and protectors of knowledge. "The definition of gentility implied a conception of truth," he observes, "just as the location of truth in that culture might invoke a notion of gentility" (42). To be noble or, to use Posner's concept, to perform nobility, is to have conquered half the work of "understanding rightly." Austen actively inserts herself in the very institution that she criticizes by "repent[ing]... of nothing more" that she "made" her son a university fellow. Her repentance works ambivalently, at once withdrawing the widow's participation in institutional learning via proxy and establishing the reality that she, as the mother of the university fellow, played an undeniably causative role in the establishment's functions and her son's (however questionable) accomplishments.¹¹¹

of manners; rude, discourteous; inappropriate, improper" (1450-1996).

¹¹¹ Despite its questionable merits, the education of gentry sons through the university route is not uncommon for those wishing for upward mobility in early modern England. Historians Patrick Wallis and Cliff Webb record that:

The role of the universities in providing both an education and a source of social opportunities for gentlemen's children is well established. A period at one of the universities, for example, might be seen as a source of general instruction or as an increasingly necessary step towards a career in the church or medicine... The behavior and achievements of gentry sons at university were much as one would expect. Few bothered to complete a degree: only 35% took a BA and 25% took an MA... That said, for a few sons, university offered a career in itself. (45)

Wallis and Webb's statistics show that a university education, while publicly acknowledged as an integral stage in an aspiring civil servant's road to a career, is also publicly dismissed as something unnecessary to have completed. It is this general dismissal of university education's testament to a person's knowledge and ability which makes "brain study" the kind of clownish charade that Austen's admonition to her son makes it out to be. In spite of all ridicule, the widow's participation in this popular ideology evinces her vicarious ambitions and aspirations for her sons. Both Hammons and Todd note that Austen sent her two sons to

Austen reminds herself that there are avenues that lead equally (if not more nobly) to important knowledge. She paraphrases the sermon by royalist bishop John Gauden: “The Fathers observe of the Sybols, and other oracles. That they were possessed with such shakings. and transports. as bereaved them of their reason. But Divine inspirations, and Oracles preserve the harmony of the soule” (62).¹¹² Here, as well as in other places throughout *Book M*,¹¹³ we find glimpses of the widow cautiously weighing precedents that may allow her a similarly affirming view on the legitimacy of affective knowledge. These paraphrases and their applications consider how acts of knowing can be expressed through speech and writing as well as through demonstrations from visceral and bodily reactions. Austen, like Trapnel before her, displaces Reason’s primacy in favor of a more sublime condition for the soul. Both women strive to prove that nonverbal expressions of knowing may surpass verbal ones in quality and in truthfulness. Their endeavors seek to trump (the gendered) man’s empirical knowledge with a woman’s own enabled right to question and with corroboration from God’s word, which they hold to be absolutely superior. At the same time, Austen’s careful adherence to mainstream epistemology, even in the act of citing and responding to her carefully selected sources, buffers her simultaneous distrust of it. Her inclusion of

university in hopes of specifically raising them as gentlemen, not as merchants; the decision also demonstrates Austen’s concession that human resources are a cultural capital determined by the specifics of their education.

¹¹² The sermon begins by quoting 2 Corinthians 4:18, which stresses the validity of the intangible over what can be empirically observed -- “*The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.*” Gauden refers variously to Moses and Elias’ visions, the Montanist movement, the Quakers, and classis scholar Issac Causabon, among others, to evaluate the epistemic legitimacy of inspired passions. Austen, in duly noting Gauden’s sermon and in applying his ideas into her personal introspections, is evidently influenced by similar considerations.

¹¹³ See also Austen’s record of Socrates’ questioning of auricular versus visual information, p.63.

divine intervention into the range of empirical observations (or her mingling of providence into practical assessments of empirical knowledge production) is not unique.¹¹⁴ It places her appropriately among many emerging thinkers that create knowledge at the fringes of academic establishments. In the final section of this chapter, I look at how Austen, paying dreams their due attention, combines her knowledge of dreams with her fluency in verse composition to produce autodidactic poetry that informs her on the strategic management of secular concerns. Cross-referencing the widow's poetry with that of some of her more prominent predecessors and contemporaries, including Aemilia Lanyer, Anne Bradstreet, Katherine Phillips, and Aphra Behn, I contextualize the widow in a nascent history of dream poetry by seventeenth-century women. While what I present here is a preliminary sample of close-readings that in no way captures the intricate range of early modern women's attitudes toward the subject, I hope that it opens up the category of oneiric female poetry as a contributing genre to understanding seventeenth-century Englishwomen's practical knowledge.

Recent scholarship has paid increasing attention to the relationships that many

¹¹⁴ It is evident in many of Austen's writings about the reliability of God's words to validate empirical understanding (see especially Austen's admonitions on pages 64-65, including her concluding note to herself that "Some Dreames are not to be slided," 77) that the widow believes human knowledge to be collaboratively produced with the participation of the divine. For context of how early modern Englishpeople interpreted their universe through providence, see Walsham, 1999. Joanna Picciotto, on the other hand, works in reverse of the direction of Walsham's studies; Picciotto tracks the ideologies of public intellectuals of seventeenth-century England to trace a pattern of *imitatio Adami*, or a mirroring and reframing of the biblical Adam that justifies efforts in natural philosophy as a pious labor of innocence (36). These two lines of understanding about the interdisciplinarity of early modern natural philosophy converge to stress that no scholar is absolutely within or without the perimeters of the mainstream epistemology of their time. Finally, here as well as further elaborated in Chapter Three, examining the epistemic approaches and ideologies of Austen and Cavendish, along other female natural philosophers such as Elizabeth Grey and Alethea Talbot, who strive to develop methods of learning complementary to educational standards of the university, can help us expand and qualify that "fringe of academic establishments."

early modern women have with poetry--how they read poetry, how they write poetry, and how they circulate or otherwise make use of their poetic knowledge. Ross's most recent work on women's political poetry in manuscript demystifies the ideal image of a coherent female poetic tradition; it exposes for us women writers' individually distinct concerns and heightens for us an awareness of their actual agencies in civil engagement.¹¹⁵ Susan Wiseman, in focusing on the particular genre of the country house poem, demonstrates how the estate versified not only helps women poets negotiate authority through presentations of a microcosm-macrocosm dynamic, but, especially in the case of Austen poeticizing on the situation of Highbury, allows the widow to "reach outward to articulate...[her own] property to that of other poets" (233). Gillian Wright veers our fixation away from the emotional and responsive psyches of early modern women poets to prioritize an examination of more "material issues of construction, organization, and presentation" within the poems themselves, in order to highlight the "determination, persistence and skill" required to create verse (11). These are only a few samples of how some scholars have sophisticatedly unraveled, or reconciled, the thorny inconsistencies barring the woman writer and the supposedly most masculine of literary forms.

We have witnessed how Anna Trapnel, through her prophetic poetry, materializes divine knowledge to knowledge that is physically consumable. As Wiseman points out, in versifying property, Austen similarly sublimates Highbury above its brick-and-mortar entity (230). In her poetry, Austen declares ownership over otherwise intangible trappings (reputation, agency, status, etc). Going a step beyond Wiseman's point, understanding that Austen and several contemporary women wrote dream poetry -- poems

¹¹⁵ Ross, 2015.

that are simultaneously records of the women's dreams, poems that philosophize about dreams and acts of dreaming, poems that claim to have been inspired, even commanded, by dreams or by God via dreams -- sheds light on these women's poems as deserving study as a literary category of its own. Whether we approach this category as consequential to what Julie Crawford calls the *mediatrix*,¹¹⁶ or simply as "women writing of divinest things,"¹¹⁷ it seems difficult to extract a dreaming woman poet from a heavily intellectual, educational culture that fosters an affinity towards autodidacticism. Treating early modern women who versify their dreams as intellectuals circumscribes a counter culture against the masculine, rational institution by which forms of knowledge production have long been prescribed. Women's culture of self-learning has been considered by Lynette McGrath, who posits that the "oblique, manipulative methods of linguistic re-enactment" employed by early modern women poets, so opposite of the masculine register, create for themselves a "justified, precious enclosure conducive to the discovery of the intrinsic pleasures of learning" (114, 123, my paraphrase). In the following analysis, I aim to illuminate dream poetry written by women as products of women's knowledge about dreams and as epistemic commentary which detail seventeenth-century women's attitudes towards a variety of ways of knowing. In addition, these dream verses often function as prompts in the process of knowledge creation, engendering, by their composition, further intellectual activity.

¹¹⁶ Crawford uses the word "Mediatix" to denote "politically and culturally powerful [women], with an edge of oppositionism; at once a patron to be honored and a force to be reckoned with; a maker of texts and a maker of careers" (2). In this sense the dreaming female poet acts as the mediating translator of oneiric knowledge and also as the maker of particular texts that empower or subvert.

¹¹⁷ The phrase, "Women writing of divinest things" first appears as Aemilia Lanyer's dedication to the queen in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611). It also lends itself as the title of Lyn Bennett's book studying women's rhetoric and poetry (2004).

In the course of this project's attempt at beginning a study of literary traditions of early modern dreaming women, two possible dreaming traditions potentially emerge: one, the prophetic tradition, heavily influenced by the reform Protestant concept of election. Elizabeth Melville's "Ane Godlie Dreame" (1603), Rachel Speght's *Dream* (1621), and Milton's instilling Eve with the gift of prophetic dreams in Book V of *Paradise Lost* (1667) complement the following discussions about Lanyer and Trapnel; collectively, the idea that God has elected the dreamer to write certifies a female thinker's voice through oneiric poetry. Second, the practical tradition, of which Austen, Cavendish, and Behn's poetries take part. Subordinate to the function of their dreams' abilities to perform over any Calvinist sense of obligation to prophecy, these later thinkers extend what was to be a divine "dream thing knowledge" to apply to more worldly treatments.

While more detailed explorations of possible dream-verse traditions can be undertaken in future research, scholars such as Danielle Clarke and Kate Lilley have already articulated dream writing as a literary genre as well as their autodidactic significance to early modern women writers. Clarke, for instance, argues for the liberating potential of composing dream verses. "However conventional the dream poem turns out to be," she writes, "it frees the speaker from certain kinds of constraints, permitting her to range across a spectrum of ideas without any overwhelming requirement that they be logically connected" (148). Her understanding that dream verses express thinking unconstrained by logic broaches the epistemic potential of dreams to *feel* thoughts productively rather than merely to think with them. Kate Lilley, on the other hand, traces the parallel emergence of the publishing female poet and that of the dream-vision: "[dreams] offer a venue for the public self-examination and diagnosis of the ailments and

compulsions of the bookish woman as she struggles to negotiate the links between psyche and soma, reading and writing” (97). Her notion that a well-read woman grapples with epistemological concepts through dream writing in order to understand oneself (and especially in terms of “diagnosing ailments and compulsions”) not only sheds light on the therapeutic aspect of dream verses but also reveal how a woman-scholar still struggles to negotiate between her inclinations to produce knowledge and her physical and mental health.¹¹⁸ The following section briefly examines some dream verses by Aemilia Lanyer, Anne Bradstreet, Margaret Cavendish, and Aphra Behn to expose the complexities of dream writing as a potential literary tradition and epistemological method.

One of the more prominently studied early modern women’s dream poetry may be traced to those penned by Aemilia Lanyer (1569-1645). A possible inspiration for Anna Trapnel (if Trapnel’s familiarity with Lanyer could ever be positively confirmed), Lanyer’s relationships with the Jacobean court may have emboldened her to forwardly “define and defend her own role as prophetic poet” (Hodgson, 100). However, while Trapnel speaks from an unambiguous stance for the Fifth Monarchy, Lanyer’s own beliefs are less conclusive from her range of literary representations when writing spiritually. Daughter of a (possibly) Jewish musician of the court,¹¹⁹ Lanyer occupies an ambiguous social space as both an upward-gentry level woman intimate with the aristocracy and an outsider among Elizabeth’s Protestant consorts. Her take on what is divine has been connected to Miltonic, Protestant commitment to the Bible (McBride and Ulreich, 333)

¹¹⁸ See Chapter Three for relevant discussions.

¹¹⁹ There have been some debates about Aemilia Lanyer’s ethnicity. Although the editors of *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* asserts that Lanyer is “the daughter of Baptista Bassano, an Italian musician,” Susanne Woods and Leeds Barroll have both written on possibilities that the poet may or may not have been Jewish. See Woods, 5 and Barroll, 29.

and simultaneously to the contrasting Gnostic mysticism of occultists such as Cornelius Agrippa (Roberts, 25). Lanyer's remarkable ambitions to authorize herself as the pioneer prophet-poet of a newly public tradition of poetry by women cannot be ignored (Rogers, 435). Lanyer's diverse beliefs and ambiguous social standing sets her apart from the carefully Anglican Austen and situates the aspiring prophet-poet at a fruitful stance of comparison in this chapter, particularly in subsequence to previous relevant conversations about Trapnel's visionary poetry. Lanyer's magnum opus, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611) is an appropriate example of how private events such as a woman's dreams can, through versification (and prose), become public arguments for religious, political, social, even legal matters. *Salve Deus* contains more than a dozen poems, each dedicated to a "virtuous lady" worthy of her rhymes. Like Austen, Lanyer chooses to address aristocratic women. These would include Queen Anne, Lady Susan, the Countess Dowager of Kent, Mary Sidney, Anne Clifford and Lady Margaret her mother. While her selectivity doubtlessly results from the poet's desire for patronage from these women, it also allows for the volume to be read as a literary community of female elites, a community constructed from a sacred act of writing prompted by her dreams. Lanyer writes to her "Doubtful Readers" that the idea for composing the volume

was delivered unto me in sleepe many yeares before I had any intent to write in this maner, and was quite out of my memory, untill I had written the Passion of Christ, when immediately it came into my remembrance, what I had dreamed long before; and thinking it a significant token, that I was appointed to performe this Worke, I gave the very fame words I received in sleepe as the fittest Title I could devise for this Booke.

The poet-prophet positions herself as a passive and receptive vehicle for a higher consciousness to deliver messages through dreams. According to Lanyer, dreams are the nexus through which writing begets writing; they are the engendering force by which the

passively thinking/dreaming woman becomes the physically active/productive author. Lanyer claims to “have [no] intention to write in this manner, and was quite out of memory.” She replaces her own mental faculties and her agency as a rational being with the profound will and motivation of her dreams. Lanyer’s strategy of virtually disowning her dreams (waiving her prerogative that her dreams are in fact a function and a result of her own cerebral activities) stands in contrast to Austen’s managerial approach, which counts dreams as the widow’s personal prized possessions. Instead, Lanyer relinquishes her position as an authoritative dreamer; she establishes a nebulous relationship with her dreams, at once using them as empowerment and appearing to be used by them. Her eventual need to write rises from a virtuous necessity — she “was appointed to perform”— and her work takes shape (and its very name) in complete compliance with that higher oneiric volition (“I gave the very same words I received in sleep as the [title]”). Lanyer’s apology hearkens to numerous similar female defenses for writing and publishing contemporary to her era.¹²⁰ Like these contemporary apologies, which are oftentimes transparent, her allegation that she “had no intention to write” is punctured by her own slippage. Lanyer “had written the Passion of Christ,” a literary activity in which she purportedly engaged, which then triggers her memories of the dream. From this slippage Lanyer complicates her nebulous ownership with her dreams and her text. It is, after all, the poet’s writing which recalls and signifies the dreaming, and thenceforth the dreaming that begets the writing. Lanyer’s apologetic equivocation of ownership with her

¹²⁰ Female defenses – writing to apologize for writing, or negotiations between being feminine and being knowledgeable, and being expressive of that knowledge – are most compellingly explored by Elaine Hobby. Her *Virtue of Necessity: English Women’s Writing, 1649-88* (1989) closely examines an array of women’s writing ranging from religious poetry to advice books in order to draw out the many ways in which women, out of necessity to write, and then out of the necessity to be virtuous, defend their thoughts and actions literarily.

dreams, and the complicated relationship among her authority, dreaming, and writing, converge to expose knowledge (either knowledge in and of itself as an ethereal concept, or knowledge as products materialized in writing or objects) as a thorny property over which to claim possession for early modern women.

Apologies citing dreams that compel literary production fit into the ongoing *querelles des femmes* discourses in early modern England.¹²¹ Because women were depicted as more likely to dream (and especially to have dreams deemed inspirational in nature), they also bear certain burdens related to being identified as dreamers. Dreams may be a convenient justification for the reluctant woman writing — through dreams, her writing hand submits to the guidance of a superior, not-necessarily-feminine consciousness. However, the idea of dreams also takes on connotations of impracticality and idleness.¹²² Thus alongside the (cautiously) positive attitudes expressed by women like Austen and Lanyer, we also find poetry written by women figuring dreams in a negative light. Transatlantic writer Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672), for instance, denotes dreaming as a transgressive indulgence in her discursive verse, “The Flesh and the Spirit” (1650). Therein, the personified Flesh challenges the Spirit:

Can Speculation satisfy
Notion without Reality?
Dost dream of things beyond the Moon
and dost thou hope to dwell there soon?

¹²¹ See also the pathological treatment of women in the *querelles* in Chapter Three, p. 145.

¹²² Dreams’ connotations to idleness derived from secondary definitions of the word as provided by the OED, “dream, v.2”: “To indulge in fantasies or reveries; to daydream about something” (1400-2011), “to believe (something false). Later (now chiefly): to think or believe (something implausible or unlikely) to be true or impossible” (1425-2003), “to behave idly, apathetically, or listlessly; to procrastinate” (1548-2012).

The Flesh questions the validity of ideas formulated without concrete substantiation, a formulation that is ultimately essential to dream interpretation. The poet packs in the words, “Speculation,” “satisfy,” “Notion,” and “Reality” within short couplets, forcing her reader to encounter opposing notions of the abstract and the tangible, the cerebral and the gastric within tetrameters. The verb “satisfy” intensifies the encounter by whetting a common appetite for knowledge, a general desire to know which Trapnel’s rhetorics also underscore. Dreams flag an alternative space to the physical realm of the present and the heavenly realm longed for afterwards, an almost grotesque third destination of newfangled desire. The Flesh asks the Spirit, “Dost thou hope to dwell there soon?” The couplet moves readers from “dreaming” to “hoping,” and to potentially “dwelling,” highlighting the gradual power of dreams to cross over the abstract to inculcate thought, action, and transgression/dislocation. Bradstreet mentions “dwelling beyond the Moon,” perhaps gesturing tellingly to the fine line separating science and superstition, both in its reference to Galileo’s experiments with the telescope and to John Dee’s astrological divinations at the turn of the seventeenth century. As a transatlantic poet and thinker, Bradstreet’s spatialized contemplations must have also been influenced by her diasporic experience. “The Flesh and the Spirit” debates over ways of knowing not only through othering subjectivities of its personified discourse (the archetype of the Flesh distills empirical deductions from the theoretical reasoning of the Spirit), but also through the personal othering of displacing Bradstreet’s own epistemic conflicts.

More biting than Bradstreet’s critique of fallacious dreams is Katherine Philips’ admonition against the same in her poem titled, “The World” (1667). Philips uses the occasion of her poem to preach a morbid worldview showcasing the fatal follies of

humanity. Included among these follies is the impracticality of dreams. Philips writes directly to her readers:

We all live by mistake, delight in dreams,
Lost to ourselves, and dwelling in extremes;
Rejecting what we have, though ne'er so good,
And prizing what we never understood. (l.50-54)

Her accusation that people “delight in dreams” frames dreams as a kind of guilty pleasure which, if indulged, carries moral consequences. She carries this implication further in the following line, arguing that dreamers “lose [themselves]” and “dwell in extremes.” This emphasis on staying within acceptable boundaries of temperance is likewise expressed by Austen¹²³; dreamers lose touch with reality and so forget themselves. Attached to this accusation of obliviousness is further accusation of neglecting one’s obligations as a citizen (the dangers of which are vividly elaborated by Trapnel in her analogy of fire in the house, p.30). Phillips picks up the lines’ rhythmic pace from the abrupt pause of a semicolon to focus her denunciation on (presumably material) greed — “Rejecting what we have, though ne’er so good” — but ends the stanza on a purely intellectual note — “Prizing what we never understood.” Pitting what is “had” and what may be “understood,” her poetic advice dissuades readers to venture so far into the mysteriously intangible as to jeopardize what ready property was in hand. Philips’ poem ultimately

¹²³ The widow appears to subscribe to mediocrity as her guiding principle. She writes, “Surely Mediocrity is the happiest condition we can obtaine. And yet that is so disposed. As the Lazy man comes not near it. And the Active man staves not at it but climbs far beyond it: Til he paces all the degrees, for competency, to superfluities. And from thence Ambition tempts him with Titles, and emenecy” (94). By this account to remain in the innocuous state of middle-hood requires much finesse and patience indeed. Both Philips and Austen’s professed apprehensions against standing out too much qualify as another example of what Hobby has argued to be necessary virtues for early modern women.

silences the speech of dream things as posited by Daston. She exemplifies, in contrast to Austen's championship of her jewel, how (im)material objects can arbitrarily empower or suppress the beholder's thought.

Philips' caution against the fault of dreaming exposes herself candidly through the inclusive declaration that "we all live by mistake." Her willing admittance (which could be interpreted as a part of her persuasive strategy, much like Margaret Cavendish's "coming out" as melancholic, as explored in the next chapter), set against Bradstreet's relative disengagement, sheds light on how early modern women carefully work with conceptual boundaries to exercise the power of what they knew. For Bradstreet, disengagement was a way of reasoning on opposing aspects of her conflicted self; for Philips, inclusion stresses the universality of her observation and allows the poem to be read with the rousing vigor of an oration. As we have seen in Trapnel's divisive rhetoric and choice of small beer, and now in Austen's subtle constructions of conversations among choice knowers in *Book M*, these boundaries establish the women as belonging to certain kinds of knowing communities. From the standpoint of these specific knowing communities, early modern women occupy validated and empowered positions from which to examine, theorize, and thence to create new and practical knowledge. Philips' position of spokesperson for a misguided community that "delights in dreams" allows her to make assertions about her observations as an epistemic-epidemic problem. The assertion stems similarly from Bradstreet's faulting of those who "hoped to dwell beyond the Moon." Austen, in touch with such modes of rhetorical buffering conventional to women's textual narratives, echoes similar misgivings about dreams in *Book M*. "If the events of our Dreams doe answer in one instance," she cautions, "we becom

credulous in twenty, and so we discourse ourselves into folly and weak obseruation, and give the Devil power over us in those circumstances we can least resist him” (71).

In the later seventeenth century, the figure of dreams in literature appears to shift away from denotations of a deplorable unknown. Put in another way, in the later seventeenth century, dreaming women poets seem to engage more fearlessly with their oneiric subjects in writing of and about dreams.¹²⁴ Less invested in characterizing the dreamer as spiritually or morally lost, later writers flirt with dreams as an avenue through which new knowledge can be gained and to objectify dreams as a human faculty to be seriously studied.¹²⁵ Aphra Behn, one of the boldest and most prolific writers of this period, makes several uses of dreams in her poems and dramas. In 1684, Behn writes a song titled “The Dream” that offsets the solemnity of the century’s graver poetic treatment. Her Dream references Torquato Tasso’s play, *Aminta*, a pastoral romance between the titular lover and the nymph Sylvia. “The Dream” is a gender-bending fantasy

¹²⁴ In the course of this project’s attempt at beginning a study of literary traditions of early modern dreaming women, two possible dreaming traditions potentially emerge: one, the prophetic tradition, heavily influenced by the reform Protestant concept of election. Elizabeth Melville’s “Ane Godlie Dreame” (1603), Rachel Speght’s *Dream* (1621), and Milton’s instilling Eve with the gift of prophetic dreams in Book V of *Paradise Lost* (1667) complement this project’s discussions about Lanyer and Trapnel; collectively, the idea that God has elected the dreamer to write certifies a female thinker’s voice through oneiric poetry. Second, the practical tradition, of which Austen, Cavendish, and Behn’s poetries take part. Subordinate to the function of their dreams’ abilities to perform over any Calvinist sense of obligation to prophecy, these later thinkers extend what was to be a divine “dream thing knowledge” to apply to more worldly treatments. A more detailed exploration of these possible traditions can be undertaken in future research.

¹²⁵ I make the above assertion about the gradually experimental trend in figuring dreams in seventeenth-century women’s poetry from my own survey of poems in this period. There has not been a comprehensive study of women’s dream poetry as a genre to support my assertion, and this is an area in which I hope my research will contribute to opening up more conversation in the future. Later in this section, I have also reflected on several possible points on which my own analysis in this nascent project could improve.

in which Behn, speaking from the perspective of a male or possibly lesbian lover, describes a fantastical sexual affair. The poem delves into vivid details of the couple's intercourse, and concludes with these telling lines:

Now the last mystery of Love she knows,
 We sigh, and kiss: I waked, and all was done.
 'Twas but a dream, yet by my heart I knew,
 Which still was panting, part of it was true:
 Oh how I strove the rest to have believed;
 Ashamed and angry to be undeceived!

This final sestet turns Behn's sexual experience into one that is intellectual, even educational. "Now the last mystery of Love she knows," Behn declares, almost in triumph, "'Twas but a dream, yet by my heart I knew." It is an erotic conquest similar to those accomplished by Trapnel. Behn imparts knowledge not by books or studies but by "sighs and kisses." The reality of her lesson taught is internalized by her heart and symptomized physically by her "panting." In a manner of re-anatomization similar to that of Trapnel's subversive prophecies, whereby the heart dethrones the primacy of the brain, Behn's Dream turns Scaliger's description of pastoral poetry as "the mildest, the most naive, and the most inept" of poetic forms on its characteristic end (Young, 523). With explicit imagery Behn presents the dreaming woman as sexually active. Her depictions of the pastures as a setting for erotic instruction and experiment rather than a setting for idyllic innocence demystify ideal gendered behaviors and the ideal pastoral narrative. Put in another way, her representation neutralizes sexuality so that erotic behavior no longer contradicts pastoral innocence. Elizabeth Young stresses the practicality of Behn's sexual

liberation: “Behn recognizes that to free the mind of its socially-dictated restraints is to change the world... [she argues] that women's differences from men are largely created differences, not differences inherent in humans” (531).

From Lanyer’s stance of dreams as a means of empowerment and authorization to Bradstreet and Phillips’ designation of dream-space as one of transgression and idleness; from Austen’s cautious venture into dreams as a means of autodidacticism to Behn’s dauntless usage of dreams to upend sexual and gender dynamics, these cursory samples of early modern women’s poetry roughly hypothesize a pattern — that dreams were initially figured with suspicion and gradually embraced by proto-feminism — from which future scholarship may hopefully benefit. Just as these women poets delight in, distrust, take control, and defer control of their dreams, their poems reveal the same delight, anxiety, ownership, and subordination to the idea of dreams that directly influence their dissimilar approaches to voicing knowledge, and to making knowledge practical. It should finally be addressed here that not all dream poetry is created equal: there is a difference between Bradstreet and Phillips’ metaphorical use of dreams as symbolic figures and Lanyer and Austen’s presumably genuine defenses of having dreamed. Again, these approaches differ from Behn’s dreams, which are adaptations of mythological content. My exploration acknowledges, but has yet to work through each of these distinctions. Nevertheless, it does expose the unique quality of Austen’s dream poetry. It seems arguable now that Austen alone composes poetry not only with genuine seriousness about the legitimacy of her dreams but more importantly with an entrepreneurial attitude which intends to profit financially from these dreams. Finally,

(while not a unique approach on its own) Austen makes a trademark of her dream poetry among her female contemporaries in driving the composition of her dream verses with keen numerological awareness.

Customarily in iambic tetrameters, Austen writes poetry that reiterates and reflects on her biblical learnings¹²⁶ or her personal prayers,¹²⁷ on childloss and her own mortality.¹²⁸ There are poems of different lengths, but almost always in rhyming couplets. Austen's "On *the* Birds Singing in my Garden," for instance, is a thirty-line pentameter contemplating on Nature's order and its justifications for mortality as blissful consummation (53-54). "On the Death of my Niece Grace Ashe" is another example, which is composed of couplets of varying meters, perhaps in order to reflect on the unpredictability of death. Punctuated within these meditative verses is a distinctly utilitarian poem, titled, "Vpon Courtiers at *the* Committee of parliament striving for Highbury." Therein, Austen writes, "Such is this time now men of power/ Doe seeke our wellfaire to devoure/ Confederated in a League / By an unjust and Dire intrege" (105). Her sense of vulnerability in the face of an unjust league of powerful men is heightened specifically by her feeling of being outnumbered. This sense of vulnerability is an example of how Austen uses numerology affectively in her poetry. The compelling, visceral emotions provoked by how she subconsciously associates with numbers and quantitative concepts – including, as previously discussed, number-words such as "February," actual counting of objects, the act of calculation, and senses of isolation or

¹²⁶ Such as her reflections on *Ecclesiastes*, 85, and her echoes of Psalm 27, "of Supportation," 103.

¹²⁷ For instance, her "Meditation," 113-114.

¹²⁸ For examples see "Vpon Robin Austin's recovery of the smal pox," 89, and "Meditation on my death," 90.

amalgamation – allow Austen to create impressive and didactic verses that express and direct her lived experiences. These severe lines are placed in *Book M* right before Austen delves into a series of dream logs. The placement of “Vpon Courtiers” suggests that it may be such desperate “times” at parliament which ultimately made it a contingency for Austen to employ a numerology of dreams, reinforcing her conviction of the practicality of such methods.

Austen’s poem, “When I Dreamt I saw 4 Moons in a Clear Sky,” converges with contemporary debates about the relationship between appropriate boundaries of knowing and acceptable ranges of personal ambition (which designates, in turn, Austen’s convictions about the proper place of knowledgeable women). Like Lanyer before her, Austen titles her poem after her dream. The preposition of the title, “When I Dreamt I saw...,” makes explicit that it is the occasion of oneiric vision which prompts the widow’s contemplative and poetic activity. Consistent with many of her entries both in verse and prose, this poem traces Austen’s struggles in deducing practical information pertinent to facilitating her lawsuit for Highbury. Its lines testify to her working through fraught emotions and reason, reconciling earthly desires with devotional faith. It is finally a record of Austen’s internal conflicts as an intellectual. Austen cross-examines ways of knowing for a worldview that feels most honorable. We can apply an exegetical interpretation of this poem, as much of extant scholarship on Austen has done,¹²⁹ but there remains, heretofore overlooked, what I propose to be a numerological analysis thereof. Read

¹²⁹ See, for instance, Ross’s introduction, which relates Austen’s identification as divine sufferer with the sufferings of Job (26); Ross also points out Austen’s engagement with Hezekiah, Ecclesiastes, and the Psalms. Hammon’s analysis of Austen’s poem, “Vpon Courtiers,” on the other hand, highlights her participation in “the widespread practice of translating biblical passages into metrical verse” (123).

through a numerological lens, Austen's poem quickly transforms into the widow's proactive resolution to claim, through her (somewhat entitled) petitions to God, a destined path of either life or death most befitting of her situation.

A numerological reading would initially observe that Austen's poem consists of twenty-four lines and begins with her contemplation about four moons, which she takes to denote the passing of four months. Twenty-four divided by four is six, and as proceeding observations of Austen's number consciousness will sustain, the number six holds special importance to the widow's regard for her experienced tribulations. Later in the *Book*, Austen clarifies that "God in his providence sent me 6 yeares of trouble to prepaire and fit me for the bountiful and prosperous blessing God was makeing ready for me and for my son. An estate that might well be six and thurty yeares in waighting for. And six yeares in Learning how to receive and entertaine the blessing to enter into *the* land of Canan a rich soile flowing with milk and honey: siluer and Gold" (126). Her clarification articulates an understanding of her sufferings to last six years, at the end of which is guaranteed financial compensation. It is perhaps due to her conviction that we frequently discern figures of six and thirty-six in the widow's writing, perhaps as reminders to keep track of where she may be in that predetermined course, and perhaps as another symptom of her habit of accounting and of calculation.

A numerological reading would also point out close biblical connections between the number six and the concept of suffering: *Exodus* 31:15 commands man to labor for six days. Pertaining to Austen's legal woes, it can analogously be observed in the *Book of John* that Christ was tried by Pilate upon the sixth hour (19:14).¹³⁰ Austen understands

¹³⁰ While the chapter focuses on numerological significances extracted from biblical references only, it is intriguing to note that the number six is regarded by many modern practicing numerologists as the

her suffering to last six years, perhaps in observance that Jesus suffered on the cross for six hours (Mark 15: 33-37).¹³¹ The number six is likewise associated in the Bible with greater returns and respite: the fable of Manna and Quail speaks of the sixth day, during which bread gathered by the Israelites would be twice as much and not perish for the Sabbath (Exodus 16: 22-24). Perhaps Austen wrote in hopes that concluding a poem after six stanzas would similarly double the felicities for which she prays. Finally, the number six connotes the consummation of God's creation on Earth, for it was on the sixth day that man was created (Genesis 1:26-28). Responsive to this connotation of creation, Austen's writing in keeping with the signification of the number six gestures to her emphasis on practicality and productivity. In sum, from a single numerological observation of the presence of the number six in the poem, we can adduce that Austen tries not only to phrase her lived experiences in accordance to the bible (in an attempt to sanctify her experiences) but also that she, likely familiar with the pattern of the figures of six in scripture, may have attempted to mirror her experiences accordingly so as to initiate change of events, leading possibly to desirable results.

A cursory exploration of numerological applications to reading Austen's poems as

"motherhood number." The six of pentacles, a relevant card in a Tarot deck, is frequently interpreted by many readers as bespeaking frustrations resulting from seeing or overseeing a large sum of money yet having no or little access to it. Due to the lack of actual academic publications supporting this convention, I am crediting the numerous Pagan practitioners of South Florida for this statement. Of course, it would be a stretch to say that Austen held similar beliefs in composing her poem. I include this note therefore only to highlight that there are accidental synchronicities in unexpected places that would enrich our reading of intuitive writing such as that produced by the widow.

¹³¹ Ross's introduction to *Book M* also elaborates on Austen's preoccupation with the number six (and seven), and particularly on how these numerological references enable the widow to model her own sufferings with biblical figures like Hezekiah and Job (16). On a more technical level, the number six has been taken up by both Ross and Todd in their understanding of Austen's widowhood as prescribed by the will of her late husband, Thomas. Todd claims, among other reasonable explanations, that "provisions for her children in her husband's will made it financially prohibitive for her to marry during the first seven years of her widowhood" (41); Ross disagrees, believing that no such proviso exists (15).

proffered above demonstrates that there may be a yet under-explored method of reading poetry that can be fruitful. Before delving into further such analyses, it is worth establishing that numerological considerations are not counter-intuitive to the exegetical interpretive frameworks that are already popularly employed by literary scholarship today. John MacQueen concedes that although numerology is built upon scientific and classical theories, it nevertheless remained predominantly Biblical in nature (100). Examining the poetry of Robert Henryson, Edmund Spenser, William Drummond, and John Milton, MacQueen argues that during the Renaissance era many devotional poets applied their knowledge of medieval numerology to compose poetry that either reinforced their faith or meta-textually interpreted the Bible. As the poet labors under the liberating confinements of rhyme and meter, so does the numerologist labor under the extraction of significances through different numbers. The two disciplines have long been wedded, as Kate Gartner Frost understands, in Augustinian and Platonic traditions of thought:

For the modern reader, an appreciation of number symbolism can open whole new vistas of understanding and delight. It may, however, be a delight hard won against ingrained prejudice, for the practice belonged to what Bacon calls “parabolic” poetry, which translates (most often perjoratively) as “mystical” or “irrational.” But in a rationally, (that is, mathematically) ordered universe, the very structure of the soul corresponded to the order of the universe, and the creation of mathematically ordered poetry was the natural movement of that soul in imitation of its maker. Hence, in English poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we find the use of number symbolism in the work of Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Chapman, Jonson, Fletcher, Wither, Milton, Cowley, Marvell, and, as we shall see, John Donne. (97)

Frost considers the (currently rejected) idea that reciprocal imitations between art and nature allow, for at least certain English poets in the early modern era, the possible power to mystically reinforce or interrupt the conditions of which they versify. In other words,

writing poetry *in proportion to* the way things are can subliminally maintain status quo, while deliberately writing against that divine proportion can subliminally disrupt status quo. These proportions dictate the kinds of numbers and ratios that the poet may choose to emphasize, either through the structure of the poem (for example, the number of lines, stanzas, and meters) or through its content (by counting objects or by using number-sensitive vocabulary). I venture from Frost's daring premise to observe that in literary representations (as well as in cultural studies and the history of religion) spells and incantations overwhelmingly rhyme and frequently count and calculate. I would suggest that by this premise and observation, a literary tradition of spells — insofar as we entertain the idea of studying spi(ritual) writing as narrative art— and the literary tradition of poetry are in many ways symbiotic. This sort of study would not aim to legitimize the efficacies of spells so much as it would offer an additional interpretation of poetry, and of writing poetry as a practical activity by which the poet achieves practical results.

Scholars who still write like Frost, MacQueen, Rotman and Fisher are few and far in between. But the very phenomenon of the demonization of number mysticism in writing and thinking about poetry is a phenomenon most worthy of investigation, especially for scholars of early modern England. Francis Bacon's casting out of parabolic poetry is only one of many "demystifying" or rationalizing movements overtly propelled by natural philosophers and by the Royal Society. Such movements, referred to as rhetoric reform of the scientific revolution by certain historians, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three as we look at the works of Margaret Cavendish against the exclusionary boundaries set by the Royal Society. For now, it is useful to begin entertaining the language of rationality (or scientific language, or plain style) as we know it (set against

the “parabolic,” to use Bacon’s term) as a contrived mode of representing knowledge -
 - signifiers preferred by those with power that are no more faithful to truth than their
 mystical counterparts, which have been tabooed as a result of a political movement.
 Reading Austen with this newly levelled premise allows us to doff the stigma attached to
 the widow’s unorthodox methodologies and to begin to appreciate the rationality of
 Austen’s mysticism.

Austen’s poem, “When I Dreamt I saw 4 Moons in a Clear Sky,” contains in
 total twenty-four lines. With the exception of the eighth line, which consists of nine
 syllables, each line is eight syllables long (these exceptions will be developed in the next
 section). Its title concentrates on two numbers, four and one (“Four moons,” and “a clear
 sky”). If we attempt to channel Austen’s numerological awareness in reading this poem,
 it may be revealed that the poet takes her readers from the number four (“four moons,”
l.1), to the number two (in the two dualities of hope and despair, and life and death, *l.2-*
3), to the number one (in the singularity of “which state is fittest,” *l.5*), to an uncountable
 multiple (“more glory,” *l.10*), back to the number one (in her self-referential “this frail
 life,” *l.11*), to another uncountable measure (“the mean time,” *l.13*), to a fraction (“that
 chiefest part,” *l.18*), to the number two again, leading seamlessly back to the number one
 (“life or death,” “each one,” “entitle me thy one”). That is to say, the movement of the
 poem undergoes eight shifts in numerological figures, transitioning initially from
 figuring the number four, through nine variations punctuated by and ultimately ending in,
 the doubly emphasized number one in its penultimate couplet. It seems irresponsible to
 find such an intense packing of imageries that invoke quantitatively within these lines and
 to leave their subtextual eloquence untested. I suggest that this series of broaching,
 reducing, magnifying, and ultimately unifying of number figures tracked throughout the

lines of the poem work as a parallel articulation of the widow-poet's "calculations to know." In the same way that Austen routinely accounts for her investments and balances owed,¹³² here too we see her versifying dream things and profoundly *acting epistemically onto* them. Thus the impression of four moons comes to couple off semantically in Austen's mind into pairs (hope, despair; life, death), fragmented via her vulnerable emotions to resemble her "frail life" and sundry "parts," but always occasionally returning, with optimistic faith, to the consummate ideal, "one."

Austen's dream numerology complies with her overt Anglican orthodoxy. Starting her poem with four (and, as a later analysis will show, concluding emphatically with one itself) is significant. The number four in the Bible has much to do with Nature (as a symptom and order of the divine) and with creation: there are, of course, four seasons, four phases of the moon, and four primary elements (earth, air, fire, and water). According to the Bible, the four cardinal directions -- North, South, East, and West -- are presided by four angels, backed by the four winds of the Earth (Revelation 7:1). Four beasts surround the heavenly throne (Revelation 4:6). The River of Eden diverges into four streams to water the garden (Genesis 2:10), etc. To begin her poem -- which Austen believes firmly was induced intentionally by God and meant to inspire some sort of practical knowledge pertaining to her life ("My God I doe submit and know. /More glory vnto me will shew") -- with the number four is to honor the natural order of the universe and its prelapsarian perfection by mimicking it. "When I Dreamt I saw 4 Moons in a Clear Sky" itself thus materializes the temporary state of grace experienced by Austen

¹³² Most particularly on p. 164, where Austen tallies the worth of her properties in parallel to that of her reputation; where she accounts for her taxes and fines, and lists her Cousin William and Sister Austen as among those "troublesome" people hazarding her fortunes.

while she dreamt, and serves as a validating record of that experience. The poem's rhetorical validations are practical: numerical transformations traced in the poem are ultimately applied to also transform the poet in the final couplet, wherein Austen calls for God to "convert" her.

Austen's versified "Meditations" is a part of her archive of sanctioned esotericism. It voices a meditation, reflection, and hopeful consolation concerning her experiences during the six years after the death her husband:

Six bitter Gusts, blew for six Yeares.
 A Heavenly hand bore through those teares,
 The Clouds of sorrow and griefes storme,
 By Heaven's support receive'd noe harme:
 Rebukes are Bracelets doe enchaine,
 Vs fast to Iesus, and obtaine
 His saveing pity, then when grieffe
 Dus represent us smal relieffe,
 We come into his shelter most,
 When strong oppresive repine boast,
 God is not deaf, will surely pay,
 Revenge, who innocents betwray
 O Lord incline to save that dust
 Who builds on thee, our (stay and)^(onely)^trust. / (117)

This is structured as a simple fourteen-line poem. The exception occurs twice, in lines 2 and 4, in which the word "Heaven" is mentioned; these lines have an additional syllable. Austen's poem of her four moons dream holds the same exception ("Heavens providence more beauty have," l.8, nine syllables). A potential explanation for this correlation to the number nine with the idea of Heaven can be derived by using a common method in numerology, computation using factors of the number nine. Being that nine is three times three, this extension in syllable carries biblical weight associated with the holy Trinity and divine perfection. This significance of the number nine and the trinity circles back to Austen's close associations with the number six. Because the number six is the

sum of the factors of nine (three plus three), returning depictions of Austen's sufferings in her poetry back to the nine-syllable lines that feature the word Heaven symbolically submits these experiences back to divine will. Tracing such numerical connections, "Meditations" conjures the number six (in "Six bitter Gusts" and "Six Yeares," l.1) and the number one ("A Heavenly hand"). The poem proceeds in subsequent lines to illustrate Austen's helplessness; these lines draw forth a myriad of images connoting uncountable multiples — "those teares," "Clouds of sorrow," "griefes storme," "Rebukes are Bracelets"¹³³ — and sets them against punctuations of notions connoting isolation, paucity, and the number zero ("No harm," "small relief," "that dust"). This juxtaposition of clashing images, invoking in turns overwhelming multiplicity and outnumbered-ness, reinforce the dread which Austen in prose had plainly conveyed about being a lone defender against a league of powerful men. Numbers provoke the senses. At the same time, precisely for its quantifiability, numbers also secure Austen's besieged emotions by fitting them within a rationalist framework. Austen's "Meditation" is summed up perfectly by the numbers zero and one, which bracket her final couplet: "*O* Lord incline to save that dust / Who builds on thee our (stay and) *onely* trust" (my emphases). The exclamation, "O," which begins the final couplet, is visually and aurally reminiscent of the number zero. Austen chooses to complete this final couplet with the number one, as she does with her poem of four moons, perhaps for its connotation of consummation, unity, and monotheistic worship. The first scriptural profession of faith occurs in

¹³³ Hammons sees jewelry exchanged as gifts as socially symbolic in denoting relationships between the giver and the receiver: "Circular adornments, such as hair bracelets and rings, were particularly likely to represent the yoking together of lovers because of their physical similarity to other objects used for binding" (2010, 16). Whether the round shape of circular ornaments also subliminally reinforce ideas associated with the void and nothingness, with the letter O and the number zero, is an intriguing consideration that may add to reading Austen's writings numerologically.

Deuteronomy, where it is made explicit that “[Hear, O Israel]: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (6:4). Mathematically, the primacy of the number one lies in its indivisibility. Concluding her poem with zero and one symbolically encloses nothingness and all, encompassing the void and perfection. Emotionally, and epistemically, working through the numbers six and three to reach this state of absoluteness that is zero-and-one allows Austen to seek literal closure to her six years of professed tribulations.

In striving to “understand rightly” Austen’s writings do show her actually “put[ing] in her helping hand” to facilitate that kind of subliminal assistance. Highlighting the numerological patterns within Austen’s dream poetry in the way I have outlined here simply reveals that there indeed, as the likes of Frost, MacQueen, and Rotman have long contended, exists a mathematical dimension to poetry that has heretofore been dismissed. It shows that crafting these verses that can be numerologically supported, if anything, helped the widow work through what seemed to be a trying period of her life -- Todd believes that Austen’s shouldering of husbandry responsibilities while rejecting the prospects of remarriage contributed to “anxiety expressed ... as impatience, self-righteousness, even hardness, in her outward style” (184). These observations suggest that the widow’s tribulations had a lasting impact on how Austen regarded her (un)fortunate life and her identity as a sufferer. Austen may even sympathize with Cavendish as a melancholic knower: she wonders in a verse prayer, “What makes me mellancholy,” describing such “black cloud / [which] Dus intercept my peace, dus me inshroud”; “I am now inveloped in feare,” Austen confesses, “And former ravishments forget to heare” (135). Her “Meditations” and poem of four moons are lyric expressions

of the widow's suffering as much as they are her assertions of entitlement. They project the widow's attitude of entitlement which arises from the conviction that her suffering is divinely ordained.¹³⁴

Austen's life, and her writing which so shaped that life, are heavily influenced by if not directly consequential to her obsession with deciphering possible messages hidden in numbers. The widow admonishes herself to

Consider how to spend my time, Not trifling away, but with method,
vsefully, and comfortably, And to waigh the howeres of the day, to divide
them in several studies. imployments. In Devotion, in Sobernes. In
educating my children. In History, in a portion for retirement: *In seeeking
knowledg.* (99, my emphasis)

Austen's mathematical attitude in managing her life's events and activities manifests with the verbs, "to spend," "to waigh," and "to divide." Her reminder to herself to live "with method," "usefully," and in the seeking of knowledge reinforces the emphases on

¹³⁴ The concept of divine suffering gestures to the idea that human suffering, either as a consequence of original sin or as observed in life as is inscribed under the faith in a divine wisdom and plan. It gestures likewise to the Passion of Christ, and how the Englishpeople's trials and tribulations in life mirror that biblical act of atonement. Divine suffering also relates in contrast to the impassivity and immutability of God, and, finally, to the string of interpretations that suggest God's essential humanity. Joseph Hallman, in surveying these many provocations of the phenomenon, remarks that an understanding of divine suffering almost invariably strives to reconcile God's ability to change and to suffer while remaining perfect. Consequently, "Christians need not ascend to the divine because God has already descended to the human" (xiv); Jennifer A. Herdt, in contextualizing the idea of divine suffering, points specifically to the late sixteenth- to early eighteenth centuries as the period during which Christian doctrines saw sympathy, or the "sharing in the sufferings of others...as ethically valuable rather than ethically irrelevant or morally weak" (369). These are to say that Austen may be inclined to regard her present misfortunes as divine suffering in order to internalize that Christ-like mindset of perseverance without compromising nobility in the process, and in order to accept and embrace her possible flaws. Austen's composition of the "Meditations" establishes her lived experiences in the six years after the death of her husband as an execution of a sacred commandment that she alone is privileged to overcome. She writes of this ambivalent nature of divine suffering, which afflicts as much as ennoble her:

The most remarkable points I have observed out of all the workes of Docter Dun. I doe refer to two points. Which are prosperity. and Aduarsity. & Not withstanding that great aduarsity and Crosses attend us in this world. we are not to slaken our duty of industry and vsefulness in the course of our race. Afflictions have a most excellent virtue. (141)

In the following chapter, we find that Cavendish holds a similar attitude towards her affliction, which she calls melancholia. The Duchess of Newcastle sees melancholia as a debilitating force which haunts her mentally and physically, but uses her symptoms to justify her place among prominent natural philosophers. (For related ideas concerning Austen, see Ross, 15-17).

“devotion” and “soberness” echoed by Oliver Cromwell in his admonitions to the Fifth Monarchists. As we have seen throughout *Book M*, Austen repeatedly justifies this numerological consciousness as functioning in perfect alignment with commandments for good Christians. One could surmise that the widow believed her ingenuous knowledge to be an attribute to her blessed condition. Though admittedly unorthodox, it is the singularity and occult characteristics of such knowledge that may have convinced the widow that the length and nature of her sufferings were all a part of God’s plan, and that it is her surety and duty to endure them. Austen’s conviction of divine suffering is again expressed in numerological terms. The idea that number symbolism thematizes Austen’s life is detectable throughout her writing. From the beginning of the *Book* Austen declares, “My *Husband* was born Sunday *the* 11 August 1622 / He died 31 *October* 1658 being 36 yeares 2 mo[n]ths 21 *daies*” (51). The record also states the deaths of Austen’s maternal grandmother, brother, and servant. The widow keeps such diligent track of remarkable dates and days lived of her significant others, doubtlessly in the faith that these numbers deliver important information about those people and their destinies, and most critically, about herself.

Chapter Three

“So round the braine fantastick fancies grow”:
Assembling Melancholia in Margaret Cavendish’s Imaginative Philosophies

*I was content in Antwerp for to stay;
And in the Circle of my Brain to raise
The Figures of my Friends crowned with Praise:
These Figures plac'd in company together,
All setting by a Fire in cold weather;
The Fire was of Fancy.*

--- Margaret Cavendish,
Preface to Nature’s Pictures
1656/1671.

We have seen subversive powers at work through Trapnel’s re-allocation of epistemic agency to the laymen in Chapter One. In Chapter Two, Austen demonstrates a similar penetration into new territories of knowledge by consulting her dreams to maneuver through the thorny proceedings in a court of law. Margaret Cavendish’s philosophical writings are complicated by her ambivalent position both inside the circle of the elite (as an aristocrat herself) and outside of it (as a woman in exile). Her marital status and concomitant privileges give her a definite freedom to think outside the constraints that would otherwise have stigmatized her. In an instance such as the epigraph above, Cavendish divulges much about her self-knowledge as a victim of circumstances and about her simultaneous understanding of how to use these circumstances to her own advantage. The opening lines highlight a cautious prioritizing of personal well-being. Like Austen, who intentionally fits her good fortunes within the confines of honor, Cavendish seeks essential pleasures of her mind within acceptable boundaries. “I was *content* ... to *stay*,” she begins. Her assertion wrangles her natural propensity to act with presumed mandates

against desirable action.¹³⁵ Cavendish pointedly marks the source of her contentment as having “risen from the circle of her brain”¹³⁶; she grounds her proceeding fantasies upon a physical site, with what resembles scientific language.¹³⁷ Such resemblance associates Cavendish with her contemporary natural philosophers, who are endorsed by the Royal Society after its establishment in 1663 – Gilbert, Evelyn, Bacon, Henshaw, etc. – but also lays down that standard from which her own writings deviate and distort. Cavendish demonstrates at least a basic understanding of the properties of the human brain. She applies this knowledge beyond formal studies (carrying it into the realms of fiction and poetry, for example) to illustrate how its capacities ultimately serve her needs. These particular needs, furthermore, go beyond Cavendish’s emotional longing for company but, as will be explored, stem from what she strives to present to her readers as a physically and

¹³⁵ Derived from the OED, “content, adj. 2 and n.4”: “Having one’s desires bounded by what one has (though that may be less than once could have wished); not disturbed by the desire of anything more, or of anything different” (1400-1864); “Satisfied (in the sphere of action), confining one’s action, assertion, etc., to the thing spoken of. Usually with negative” (1563-1872); “Satisfied, contented, not unwilling to do (something unworthy)” (1576-1884). The contentious undertone of this line warrants attention as we continue to examine the duchess’ other writings. Cavendish’s narratives frequently negotiate between action and passivity, between solemn retirement and jovial companionship, between explorative descriptions of abstract and tangible properties, and, finally, between her conceptions of reality and fantasy. These negotiations make traceable her maneuvering through otherwise unsatisfactory conditions in order to achieve a sense of comfort; they also maintain a provocative tone that underlies many of her apparent concessions.

¹³⁶ In the context of the affective, intuitive, performative, and even mystical applications of knowledge that this dissertation underscores, Cavendish’s “raising” of therapeutic images – “the figures of my friends”-- “from the circle” is very significant. Not only does the image of the circle play up the theatricality of her mental workings – the theater as an *O* – the idea that Cavendish raises specifically images of animated people to accompany her is reminiscent of a kind of spiritual summoning.

¹³⁷ The resemblances of scientific language here chiefly refer to an attention to empirical observations and mathematical proportions (measurements, for instance, and arithmetic). I devote a section in this chapter to exploring the Royal Society’s take on expressing knowledge (see pages 173-175); Edith Sylla and William Newman’s edited *Evidence and Interpretation in Studies on Early Science and Medicine* (2009, and in particular, Chapters One and Two, which unpack the arguments in Aristotle’s *Mechanical Problems*) offers more detailed studies on the variety of strategies employed in conveying scientific knowledge; Geoffrey Gorham’s edited *The Language of Nature* (2016), on the other hand, specifically illustrates how mathematics and natural philosophy collaborate in scientific writings of the time.

psychologically debilitating disease -- melancholia, an early modern concept of a condition known in our modern day as clinical depression.¹³⁸ In so presenting her internal state, Cavendish argues for legitimizing the important practicality of fancy, a seemingly unrealistic (and therefore deemed ineffective and sometimes dangerous) mental faculty—neutralizing it, consequently, into just another proper function of the brain.¹³⁹

According to the OED, seventeenth-century usage of the word fancy denoted “a spectral apparition; an illusion of the senses” (1609-1656) or “delusive imagination and hallucination” (1597-1856). These definitions characterize fancy as befuddlement at its most innocuous and, at its worst, mendacity and heresy. They collectively implicate a person (and, specific to the context of this project, a woman) who exhibits fanciful ideas, speech, and behavior, as someone whose epistemic capacities should be questioned and whose participation in society, political stances, and faith should be closely monitored. The range of fancy’s implications that are particular to seventeenth-century England, and the

¹³⁸ Renaissance knowledge about melancholy was multifaceted: Bridget Lyons explains that “melancholy was classified as a disease, condemned as a vice, or exalted as the condition and symptom of genius” (1). The multiplicity of connotations evoked by the term meant that declaring oneself as melancholic held great potential for personal exaltation but also leaves one vulnerable to more sinister accusations. Martin Middeke, for instance, traces the privilege-affliction back to “350 BC, [during which] melancholia is understood as an epiphenomenon of, or even as a prerequisite for, outstanding cultural and political achievements and deep philosophical insight” (1). Mary Ann Lund, in closely examining Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), notes that early modern humorologists believed melancholy, produced by an excess of black bile, “can arise from a wide variety of causes. Bad diet, one’s parents, education, too much sex or not enough, witchcraft: all can trigger the varied condition encompassed by the term ‘melancholy’” (168). This chapter draws from these scholars’ understanding of early modern melancholy as a context for Cavendish’s melancholic figurations.

¹³⁹ Throughout this chapter, I use the words “fancy,” “fantasy,” and “imagination” interchangeably for the sake of readability. These occasions of lexical switching do not interfere with the precision of my arguments, as their choice usages will adhere to the nuanced distinctions and overall synonymy explicated by the OED. See ref. “fancy., n. and adj.”: “In early use synonymous with imagination, n. (see fantasy, n.4); the process, and the faculty, of forming mental representations of things not present to the senses; chiefly applied to the so-called creative or productive imagination, which frames images of objects, events, or conditions that have not occurred in actual experience. In later use the words *fancy* and *imagination* (esp. as denoting attributes manifested in poetical or literary composition) are commonly distinguished: *fancy* being used to express aptitude for the invention of illustrative or decorative imagery, while *imagination* is the power of giving to ideal creations the inner consistency of realities. Often *personified*” (1581-1861).

ways in which Cavendish, as an aristocratic woman, utilizes them to subvert and empower, are undercurrents that drive this chapter's analyses. Contrary to her contemporaries' disparagements, Cavendish exalts fancy by hailing it as that "fire in cold weather" around which her crowned friends would sit. The image she conjures here emphasizes the absolute necessity of fancy, as vital and pragmatic as a person's need to stay warm. In "crowning her friends with praises," the exiled duchess creates a separate reality for herself that parallels the influential lifestyle she desires.¹⁴⁰ As later sections of this chapter explore, Cavendish's apostrophes to her honorable friends not only assemble a protective coterie for her and her exiled family, but ideologically inscribe her intellectual oeuvre of works within a community of women scholars working and thinking innovatively outside the exclusive parameters of established institutions.¹⁴¹ This alternative community of intellectual women, which includes Queen Henrietta Maria, along with prominent aristocrats like Elizabeth Grey, Alethea Talbot, Brilliana Harley, and Joan Barrington, has been outlined by scholars such as Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton.¹⁴² Together, these

¹⁴⁰ Cavendish's vicarious indulgence can be gleaned through these lines, but is represented fully in her novel, *The Blazing World* (1666/1668). Therein, Cavendish imagines a maiden kidnapped and sent to a parallel universe, a utopia called the Blazing World. The maiden is quickly enthroned as Empress of this world and introduced to its diverse societies.

¹⁴¹ Historians observe that the development of natural philosophy and affiliated academic institutions such as the Royal Society operated as prescribed spaces of exclusionary epistemological performance. Sarah Hutton, Susan Hekman, and Evelyn Fox Keller are some of such scholars who have considered the question of whether science has always been a fundamentally masculine enterprise, and the ramifications thereof. (For a detailed instance of this debate, see Hutton, 8-9.)

¹⁴² According to Hunter, prominent science-minded women such as listed above approached scholarship differently by turning their pursuits into a leisurely and social activity within their own communities. These women contributed to a movement of natural philosophy as a hobby and, in some cases, as religious and communal service (90, 128). The fruits of these women's leisurely endeavors -- publications such as Grey's *A Choice Manual of Rare Conceits* (1653), Talbot's *Natura Exenterata* (1655), and Henrietta Maria's *The Queen's Closet Opened* (1655) -- broke the thirty-year literary hiatus of any new books on pharmacy, household science and medicine for women, by women (178). Hunter continues to suggest that these aristocratic women created particular rhetorics and methodologies to handle various kinds of scientific knowledge separate from the male tradition and the Royal Society, and that, being aristocratic, these particular scientific practices served as indications of the status of noblewomen (123, 129).

“mothers and sisters of the Royal Society” illustrate the multifaceted ways of knowledge-making that flourished as alternative complements to mainstream methods championed by rational, masculine narratives. This chapter situates Margaret Cavendish’s fanciful philosophical writings within that epistemic category of the feminine alternative. Paying particular attention to moments where the imagination, science, and pathology intersect in her works, I seek to argue that Cavendish imagines herself a melancholic figure in order to produce a growing emotional self-knowledge that purportedly heals. Regarding the selected texts in my analysis as examples of practical literary art, and again as written declarations of what a thinking/feeling woman knows, this chapter illustrates how the duchess’s imaginative philosophies enable her to adapt to life in exile, and to insert her own erudite voice into those of formal academic conversations.

Shortly following to the Preface quoted in the above epigraph, Cavendish counters her ostensible acquiescence to stay in these latter couplets, elaborating, by the content of her poetry as well as by the very act of versification, her *de facto* and purposeful occupation. Set against the epigraph, these latter lines expound upon the full potential of Fancy not only to entertain but also to educate. Cavendish writes:

But afterwards perceiving I could make
 As many Figures as my Thoughts could take.
 Then I invited all the Learned men,
 And best of Poets the Age had then:
 The poorest Guests, though they no birth inherit,
 To entertain according to their merit.
 Thus was my Mind as busie as a Bee,
 To entertain this Noble Company.
 Then my Imaginations a large room built,
 Furnish’d most curiously, and richly gilt:
 I hired all the Arts for to provide
 Choice of Provisions, and Pastime beside.

Contented passivity gives way to busy action as the duchess cues her logical transformation with the conjunction “but afterwards.” She stresses that what follows – which is an impressive series of advancements, each concretely built upon the foundation of a successful experience – is a sensible testimony to her capable productivity (“perceiving I could make”).¹⁴³ Invigorated by what she has conjured with fancy’s fire, Cavendish grows ever more ambitious in the scale of her mental productions. These latter couplets evoke a wholesome sense of wonder¹⁴⁴: she elevates her conjuring of a company of friends now to a company of “all Learned men.” The duchess specifically summons the best of the (male) literary minds to her domain, exerting wishful authority over them as their host and patron. Later in this chapter, we will explore how, by way of epistolary fiction and through parodic essays, Cavendish will proceed directly to challenge prominent scholars on relevant subjects.

Cavendish’s epistemic (and obliquely political) challenges testify to her struggles to change the status quo of how her society confers power upon those whose knowledge is recognized and credited. She insists on entertaining the “poorest Guests, though they no birth inherit...according to their merit.” Her ostensible progressivism may hearken to her

¹⁴³ From the OED, “make, v.1.”: “To produce (a material thing) by combination of parts, or by giving a certain form to a portion of matter, to manufacture; to construct, assemble, frame, fashion” (1160-1987). Cavendish’s ability to “make” consumable literature and ethereal “figures” characterizes her as a productive author. At the same time, a similar sense of productivity also characterizes the duchess as fertile in her production. While the young second wife of William remained childless throughout her life, she occasionally compensates for her childlessness by speaking of her writing in the language of motherhood. The most explicit example of this rhetorical compensation can be found in “An excuse for so much writ upon my Verses,” in which Cavendish equates her Book (*Poems and Fancies*, 1653) to her “Strengthlesse Childe,” over which she needs to elaborately defend; another example can be found in her ambitious dedication of the *Grounds of Natural Philosophy* (1668) to “all the Universities of Europe,” wherein she compares her book once again as her child, “wanting art” yet “fraught with sense and reason” (A2). Although the trope of one’s writing as a child was commonplace for male and female authors alike, it takes on an extra resonance of meaning for the childless Margaret Cavendish.

¹⁴⁴ See discussion on the propriety of wonder in Chapter One, p.53.

own apropos origins -- the beginning of her autobiography, *The True Relation of my Birth, Breeding, and Life* (1656) opens directly, “My father was a gentleman, which title is grounded and given by merit, not by princes” (155) -- it may also allude to her heartfelt reflections upon the power that intellectual merit affords in the knower’s ability to penetrate supposedly prohibited territories. Being both outwardly melancholic and busily imaginative – as she has endeavored to present herself – potentially suggests being mad. According to Amy Froide, unpropertied, never-married singlewomen constituted a particularly suspicious social class regarded as potential disruptions to the public peace and order.¹⁴⁵ A singlewoman with much melancholy and an active imagination is feared all the more. But these same attributes for a married woman become exploitable assets. Being married to the doting William,¹⁴⁶ Cavendish – or, as her detractors would call her, “Mad Madge”¹⁴⁷ -- encountered relatively few obstacles in writing about fancy in a revealingly personal way.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, she practically flaunts her indulgences in fancy as well as in material desires. Her fancies construct “a large room... Furnish’d most curiously, and richly guilt”¹⁴⁹; she hires the Arts, not to enrich her soul with holy virtues (as Trapnel to

¹⁴⁵ See Chapter Two, “Marital Status as a Category of Difference” in Froide, 2005.

¹⁴⁶ William, much older in age than Margaret, pampered his new marchioness with cavalier love poetry, luxuries even in the poverties of their exile, and enthusiastic support of all her literary endeavors. The extent of William’s affections to Margaret in the course of their marriage is most described in detail in Chapter Six of Whitaker, 2002.

¹⁴⁷ Whitaker, 354.

¹⁴⁸ See, in particular, Chapter Six of Whitaker, 2002; Appendix B of Battigelli, 1998.

¹⁴⁹ Descriptions of her imagined room as “curious” and “rich” are remarkable in this line: it underscores Cavendish’s intentional display of provocative imagery that would potentially defame her. We have previously discussed the connotations of transgression associated with curiosity in Chapter One, and in Chapter Two, we witnessed how the concept of being wealthy can be a delicate condition that marks the rich as blessed as well as immorally materialistic. In this chapter, Cavendish’s flaunting of her eccentricity and extravagance is intimated by this line and more fully developed in examinations of other writings that follow.

her spiritual ornament of the heart would entreat, or Austen, from her inspiring jewel would glean) but for “choice of Provisions, and Pastime beside.” Cavendish’s obsession with such excess can be construed as an aspect of melancholic behavior – that physically and psychologically debilitating condition to which her many self-portrayals refer. It also hearkens to a kind of hedonistic intellectualism promoted by Jonson’s “To Penshurst” – “*Give me what I call / and let me eat.*” Both, as later sections of this chapter will endeavor to show, are learned behaviors that in turn govern the duchess’ auto-didacticism.

Unlike the ambitious but reserved Austen, who allegedly wrote her handful of *Books* only for personal use, Cavendish is known for countless publications under her name, which she gratuitously circulated. Between 1653 and 1668 alone, Cavendish had printed more than thirty works of literature, spanning fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, essays, and translations. Besides the previously mentioned autobiography, *True Relations*, Cavendish’s titles include *Philosophical Fancies*, *Sociable Letters*, *Grounds of Natural Philosophy*, and *The Blazing World*, among numerous others. Loosely heeding prominent scientific publications such as Francis Bacon’s essays and John Locke’s treatises, Cavendish embellishes her philosophies with folklore and mysticism while checking her fantasies with reason and spiritual rectitude. Her apparent efforts to self-police may be reminiscent of Katherine Austen’s tendency to do the same in *Book M*, but what drives Cavendish to curb her enthusiasm is not so much deference to convention; her whimsical writing style exposes how a healthy dose of tampering with conventions can be intellectually productive. Her contentions that intellectual exercise can be physically

salutary punctuate those lines in the epigraph which elaborate on her (dis)contentment and entertainment. They drive home the duchess's belief that knowledge, happiness, and physical health wax and wane in direct proportions to each other.

This chapter contextualizes her self-fashioning of a melancholic persona within seventeenth-century understandings of melancholia generally as both a mental disorder and a privileged affliction. It should therefore be noted here that, in many of these selected close readings, Cavendish expresses her opinions through alternating personas or subjectivities. We already witness a kind of rhetorical disembodiment in the Preface above: Cavendish writes suggestively, "...perceiving that I could make / As many figures as my thoughts could take." She creates a moment of metaphysical recognition in which her perceiving self, her perceived self, her conjured figures, and her receptive thoughts collaborate in an inter-relationship hinged upon her agency ("could"). It is a moment of self-distancing not unlike Austen's cautionary reminder that she "is not a scholar." Conversely initiating herself as "my lord's scholar,"¹⁵⁰ Cavendish nevertheless distances her identity, personal responsibility, and even what she knows from her writing voice. Whether it is by rhetorically distancing herself from her thoughts, by articulating her thoughts through a series of constructed dialogues, or by choice genres and forms, these non-verbal acts of disembodiment caption Cavendish's verbal (and verbose) articulations of the complexities of her fancies as well as her melancholic condition.

Cavendish's childhood experiences with an absentee father, and the financial instability accompanying it, could have heightened her sensitivity towards discrepancies

¹⁵⁰ From "To the Reader" in *Philosophical and Physical Opinions* (1655).

among various states of well-being.¹⁵¹ Born in 1623, Margaret Lucas was the youngest daughter in a royalist family. Her father, Sir Thomas Lucas, was exiled by King James I, leaving her mother to raise her and her seven elder siblings alone. By her own account in *True Relation*, Cavendish had a plentiful childhood thanks to the conscientiousness of her mother, one which inclined towards “not only for necessity, conveniency, and decency, but for delight and pleasure to a superfluity” (277). Her distinction between necessity and superfluity, and moreover to the pointed need for excess, construct for Cavendish a formative rubric by which she gauges and pursues her happiness. Her opinions about what makes a happy life, subsequently, construct and describe her professed melancholic conditions. Cavendish’s appetite for excess is naturally visible in the famously eccentric manners of her dress. Despite a lack of depiction of what she actually wore (besides an account from the duchess of Lorraine, which mentions a strange arrangement of ribbons around Cavendish’s wrist and arms), Katie Whitaker pieces together contemporary narratives which suggest that her styles of dress had been known to be “strange, wild, fantastic, excessive, [and] beyond the bounds of normal propriety” (155). In the 1660s, renowned diarist Samuel Pepys admittedly followed the duchess about town, commenting on her extravagant wardrobe, eager to see more.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Lisa Walters details particularly the Lucas family’s financial and social relations in her introduction, 2014, 15-16.

¹⁵² Pepys writes: “Met my Lady Newcastle going with her coaches and footmen all in velvet; herself (whom I never saw before), as I have heard her often described (for all the town talk is now-a-days of her extravagancies), with her velvet-cap, her hair about her ears; many black patches, because of pimples about her mouth; naked-necked, without any thing about it, and a black just-au-corps. She seemed to me a very comely woman; but I hope to see more of her on May-day” (206-207).

The eccentricity of Cavendish's attire and her professed indulgences in what she insists is a harmless hedonism are profound reflections of the kind of education that she received at home. Cavendish recounts her mother's style of pedagogy:

As for tutors, although we had for all sorts of virtues, as singing, dancing, playing on music, reading, writing, working, and the like, yet we were not kept strictly thereto, they were rather for formality than benefit; for my mother cared not so much for our dancing and fiddling, singing and prating of several languages, as that we should be bred virtuously, modestly, civilly, honourably, and on honest principles. (157-158)

The duchess' recollections of her upbringing resonate with those dismissals of mainstream education previously expressed by Austen and Trapnel. Cavendish echoes Austen's description of the university as "a clownish place"¹⁵³ in clarifying that her own conventional learning experiences were "rather for formality than benefit." Her disdain for "the prating of several languages" is reminiscent of Trapnel's contempt for university "head-piece languages." This resonance is ever more remarkable in that all three women object to formal education on the basis that it is not, by their standards, *useful*. Cavendish therefore contrasts "formality" against that crucial word, "benefit," pitting the superficial against the substantial; she emphasizes the words, "virtue" and "virtuous," seeking to redefine it.¹⁵⁴ Upon her first iteration, "virtue" broaches a string of activities popularly deemed desirable in (well-born) women -- "singing, dancing, playing on music, reading, writing, working, and the like"; in her second iteration, however, virtue attaches itself to

¹⁵³ See Chapter Two, page 103.

¹⁵⁴ The *OED* defines "virtue" generally as "a moral quality regarded (esp. in religious contexts) as good or desirable in a person, such as patience, kindness, etc; a particular form of moral excellence" (1225-2007)" and "conformity to moral law or accepted moral standards, the possession of morally good qualities" (1230-2010). Jessica Murphy articulates the "familiar triad of female virtues" according to early modern polemicists to be obedience, chastity, and silence. In the course of this chapter, I elaborate on how Cavendish addresses each of these three virtues and redefines them to suit her needs.

the acting person as an adverb, “virtuously,” and is affiliated with such qualities as “modestly, civilly, honourably, and honest[ly].” This transformation sublimates virtue from a subject to be studied and mastered, to a *way of doing* which accompanies and defines the actor. Cavendish out-virtues those proponents of virtues of the former sort by stressing, through a string of connotations of a praiseworthy life, that her embodiment of those commendable qualities is ever present and practical.

It is this triumph which emboldens Cavendish in many apologies throughout her writing to characterize herself as “unschooled.” But Cavendish was by no definition unschooled. The duchess was privileged with access to libraries that even the most aristocratic women would be envious to obtain; at her abode in exile, prominent thinkers such as René Descartes, Pierre Gassendi, Thomas Hobbes and Sir Kenelm Digby gathered and dined¹⁵⁵; in 1667, Cavendish, albeit not without controversy, was granted a visit to a meeting of the Royal Society. These enviable resources that make themselves available to Cavendish also tantalizingly flaunt their degrees of inaccessibility to her. Cavendish’s understandable frustrations toward this ambivalence can be discerned in her many rhetorical negotiations with the “bindings” that regulate her intellectual development.¹⁵⁶ These peculiar circumstances foster her singular regard for the sciences and the arts.

Cavendish, taking a different stance from Trapnel’s view on “brain-studies,” frequently quips about her taste for the Arts. “Surely those that delight not in poetry or music,” she once postulates, “have no divine souls or harmonious thoughts” (270). Her

¹⁵⁵ See details in Whitaker, 2002, 91-92.

¹⁵⁶ Here referring to Emma’s Rees’ characterization of Cavendish. Rees, having identified the legislative, political, and gendered constraints that Cavendish may have endured, interprets the duchess’ many plays on genre and conventions as a way of resistance against a “triple bondage” (23).

declaration that a person lacking affinity for aesthetic delights can never be spiritually graced or attain peace of mind reiterates her belief that wellness of the body, mind, and spirit are interdependent; mental, material, and physical happiness are above all learned behaviors. Cavendish echoes Austen's conviction that an educated man without manners can never truly be noble. Both women subvert general consensus about what is truly important in fulfilling a person's life. Cavendish goes a step beyond Austen -- and Trapnel, for that matter -- to bring such need for fulfillment into conversation with physical health. Her many writings come together to comment on the relationship between one's perceivable living conditions, spiritual and moral righteousness, and physical and mental health: an intricate conceptual network within which interactions conduce what the author hopes to be a real and absolute state of happiness.

The above observations testify to Cavendish and her mother's conscious fostering of a habit of pursuing and maintaining a healthy level of contentment. This is done always with careful consideration of the consequences their efforts, of which the imagination plays an integral role. This is because seventeenth-century understanding of one's imaginative faculties hardly compliments. Early modern people held three main attitudes towards the imagination: that it is tabooed and subversive, that it is linked to original sin, and yet, that it is also a natural component of empirical science and of natural philosophy. Lodi Nauta and Detlev Pätzold note that although "the concept of imagination had always faced suspicion from philosophers and scientists, who associated it with illusions, dreams, hallucinations and fiction," it was also acknowledged as the "mediator between the sense and reason" in philosophical and psychological-medical theories of the time" (iv). Peter Mack, on the other hand, refers to Quintilian, Sidney, and Bacon to argue that the

imagination was key to emotional manipulation in classical rhetorical traditions (60). These remarks collectively underscore the imagination as a powerful constituent of early modern knowledge production whose agency was generally accepted as a prerogative wielded by the elite. It is this prerogative of the elite and their potentials to sway opinions or to validate truths which prompted thinkers like Bacon and Hobbes to find fantasy as both a faculty to be mastered and a dangerous taboo with which to be reckoned (16).¹⁵⁷ Such fears about the taboo of fancies can be felt from Cromwell's disquietude towards the Fifth Monarchists' "mistaken notions."¹⁵⁸ They can be garnered from instances of self-policing in Austen's *Book M*, when probes into the widow's dreams are abruptly curbed. For Margaret Cavendish, the imagination marks a territory past which respectable scholarship will not deign to foray; it is also a territory that the duchess craves to conquer.

Cavendish writes fantastically as a strategy to contest contemporary stigmas against an imaginative way of understanding the world. These stigmas often target women knowers by insinuating madness, vanity, and idleness – themes typically found in *querelles des femmes* narratives. Like an epidemic, these insinuations about women are often talked about in matter-of-fact conjunction with women's bodily functions and maladies such as fevers, pregnancy, and menstruation.¹⁵⁹ Cavendish's reassurances that she is busy, steady,

¹⁵⁷ In fact, it would seem that the overall attitude of the Royal Society towards fantasy and fanciful writing is one of misgiving and contempt. Tina Skouen and Ryan J. Stark, for instance, understand the formation of the Society itself as a fundamentally linguistic overhaul. "Any discussion of rhetoric and the Royal Society should start with recognition that the Society has at times 'eschewed rhetoric,'" they contend:

Spurred on by Francis Bacon's (1561-1626) dream of linguistic transparency, the early Royal Society was obsessed with how to read the Book of Nature correctly. The Society's motto, *nullius in verba* (take nobody's word for it), reflected the experimentalists' conviction that the search for knowledge should be conducted not through textual studies but rather through the direct, plain observation of the natural world. (2)

¹⁵⁸ See Chapter One, page 65.

¹⁵⁹ Medical texts that conflate physical conditions of women with their perceived moral or behavioral correctness flourished in seventeenth-century England. They constitute a peculiar branch of narratives within

and sane work against those who may use her melancholia against her. Although, like Austen, Cavendish's exercises are purportedly written for personal benefit and concern none but herself, her opinions make statements about early modern Englishwomen's conduct, health, and their range of affective experiences. And of course, in stark contrast to Austen, Cavendish actively sought to print her works for mass dissemination.

Despite prioritizing her pursuit of happiness, or perhaps causative to this pursuit, Cavendish confesses to a deeply rooted "addict[ion] ... to contemplation rather than conversation, to solitariness rather than mirth, to write with the pen than to work with a needle" (172). Her choice of the word "addiction"¹⁶⁰ to describe her idiosyncrasies

the greater category scholars call *querelles des femmes*. The Anonymous *Compleat Doctress: or, A Choice Treatise of all Diseases Insident to Women* (1656), for instance, lists several diseases such as "cancer, and an ulcer in the Matrix" to exhibit symptoms of "corrupt humour, a gentle Fever, idle talking, and sounding Fits" (117). Another example can be found in John Oliver's *Scripture-directions* for pregnant women (see footnote 42). Recently, scholars have begun to scrutinize the intersection between medical texts and the *querelles*. Gianna Pomata asks explicitly, "Was there a *Querelle des Femmes* in early modern medicine"? and, after a focused exploration of medical writings on women's diseases (Galen's translation of *On the Diseases and Cures of women* (1525), and the *Gynaeciorum libri* (1597), for instance) concludes positively. Monica Bolufer, on the other hand, looks at medical texts' cultural – and sometimes legal -- involvement in the *querelles* in early modern Spain. Bolufer notes that "medical arguments were generally used in the controversy to support misogynist attitudes about the inferiority and even perniciousness of women, but they were also sometimes employed in the context of the basically courtly tradition" (88). These textual evidences and research suggest that a fruitful investigation of early modern Englishwomen writers such as Cavendish can contribute to the medical aspect of the *querelle* narratives. This is so particularly because early modern women approach medical writing from an intuitive and affective avenue, which differs greatly from the empirical perspective of most extant medical scholarship of their time.

¹⁶⁰ According to the OED, "addiction, n.": "The state or condition of being dedicated or devoted to a thing, esp. an activity or occupation; adherence or attachment, esp. of an immoderate or compulsive kind" (1532-1995); "the binding of a person to another as a servant, adherent, or disciple, the state of being so bound" (1611-1789). These contemporaneous definitions of the word suggest that when Cavendish alludes to her idiosyncratic penchants as an addiction, she may tap into the imagery of piety that can characterize her studiousness. At the same time, however, by using this word she also takes on those social stigmas such as immodesty and lack of self-discipline that come with it, let alone the other side of that imagery of devotion as potentially heretical. Within the century, the word "addiction" evolves to mean "immoderate or compulsive consumption of a drug or other substance; spec. a condition characterized by regular or poorly controlled use of a psychoactive substance despite adverse physical, psychological, or social consequences" (1716-2001). Although this later definition post-dates Cavendish's own usage, it can be argued that her writings, especially with the heavily pathological tones embedded within, shed profound light as a precursor to the popularizing of "addiction" as the medical term to which we are accustomed today. Cavendish may have been accidentally prescient; but her understanding of how her very strong preferences can be behavioral as well as symptomatic shows the extent and efficacies of her knowledge as practical.

highlights her intention to participate in conversations more serious and consequential than anecdotal chatter. By casting a pathological light onto her confession, Cavendish invites readers to see her reclusiveness, solemnity, pensiveness, and writing not simply as personal preferences but as symptoms of illness. It also bespeaks her interest in exploring the human body and psyche – how, perhaps unwittingly prescient, she intuited that what is now explained as how certain chemical reactions may intervene with proper bodily functions, regardless of whether the experiences were first-hand or relayed. Speculations exist that Cavendish depended on opium to treat her melancholia -- letters exchanged between the physician Theodore Mayerne and William Cavendish make mention of this prescription.¹⁶¹ Cavendish frequently toys with perceptions of reality as influenced by an altered state of mind. In her story, “The Travelling Spirit,” for example, the witch derives her magical powers from opium (102); in *Love’s Adventures*, Cavendish stages a traumatized Lady Bashful whose anxieties about “the disturbances of noise and company” are so overwhelming that she longs for death by taking opium (33); in one of her personal correspondences with William Cavendish during their courtship, Cavendish writes of her rejection of the external world: “I look upon this world as on a death’s head for mortification,” she states, “for I see all things subject to alteration and change, and our hopes as if they had taken opium [opium]” (124). These allusions to opium and its alterations to the brain’s registry of reality take literally the language of disease, conversion, and cure that fueled such ideological quarrels as have been discussed in Trapnel’s world.¹⁶² By weaving opium-infused similes with an affective worldview, Cavendish does not simply

¹⁶¹ In Smith, 2014, 23.

¹⁶² See Chapter One, page 57.

speak *as if* her words could mystically enlighten and heal--she identifies actual malaises and prescribes actual ways by which her metaphors, through a dose or two, could practically intervene.¹⁶³

Cavendish's open invitations to diagnose herself while simultaneously emphasizing her disengagement present a tantalizing effect on her readers. Her ambivalence is central to what Drew Daniel has observed as the "melancholy assemblage." In his reflection on Douglas Trevor's work on melancholy in early modern England, Daniel notes that "melancholics greet those who know them with a curious combination of solicitude and resistance; the melancholic always seems to both require and exceed explanation, at once to need no introduction and to never be able to stop introducing himself" (6). Daniel's analyses of literary representations of melancholia operate under the idea that melancholics express their negative emotions with suggestions of excess rather than bereavement. He describes the melancholy assemblage as a "problem of discursive surplus" and a "manic overproduction of meaning" (5). Cavendish engages in auto-didacticism as she experiments with diverse approaches to treating her so-called disease, revealing in concert the complexities of her assemblage. The eighth letter from Cavendish's *Sociable Letters*

¹⁶³ Bridget Lyons first delineates a connection between exile and melancholia when she wrote that "the melancholy syndrome as it was described in numerous books about the humours was adaptable to a larger related issue: the situation, and particularly the manner of expression, adopted (rightly or wrongly) by the men who felt socially or philosophically alienated from the world" (xiv). She, along with many other scholars including Timothy Reiss, Jennifer Church, Todd Butler, David McNnis, and Allison Kavey, have in their individual undertakings arrived at a conjunction enjoining imagination with knowledge and with melancholia to enable the study of a category of literature that effects change in early modern England. Lyons, 1975; Reiss parses out the distinction and relationships among language, rationality, and the imagination; Church argues that clinical depression occurs in the human brain when it ceases to fulfil its imaginative functions; Butler underscores the active role that the imagination plays (through court masques, envisionings of the body politic, and semiotics of scientific language) in intervening Caroline politics and the Interregnum; McNnis looks at the phenomenology of mind travelling as it influences travel writing; and, finally, Kavey compares a plethora of worldviews as assembled by the works of philosophers, playwrights, historians, and poets between 1500 and 1700.

(1664), a series of imaginary epistles between fictional women, offers an instance exemplifying Cavendish's melancholic self-fashioning. Although set apart from those autobiographic, first-person narratives typical of her other nonfiction, the *Sociable Letters* reveals her intimate understanding of her interiorities and how to unravel them strategically. Precisely through its framework as private correspondences between two women, these letters construct a feminine safe zone for candid disclosure of private sufferings.

The eighth letter presents Cavendish's lengthy refusal of an invitation to a ball. To preserve her elaborate style of writing, I have endeavored as much as possible to excerpt the refusal in full. Cavendish begins her refusal with a comparison of her melancholy thoughts to "bodies that are starved, and almost dying for hunger, so weak as they cannot feed, at least that want strength to nourish or digest, having not life enough to re-ignite the vital fire, which want of food hath neer put out." This initial comparison materializes the abstract emotions and thoughts that she feels and thinks by giving them "bodies." Cavendish applies a similar rhetoric to that of Trapnel's prophecies: she encourages those who may not identify as melancholic to relate to her vulnerabilities by way of hunger, a universal preoccupation. Melancholy is an affliction, akin to starvation, whose consequent sense of loss is fulfilled not by food but by a surplus of words. Cavendish proceeds in length to account for her

grieved heart, weeping eyes, sad countenance, and black mourning garments, not suitable with dancing legs; In truth, my leaden Spirits have soder'd up my Joynts so stiff that they will not move so agilly, as is requir'd in Dancing; I am fitter to sit upon a Grave, than to tread measures on a Carpet; and there is such an Antipathy in my mind to light Aires, that they would sooner stop my Ears as Discord, than enter into my Hearing as

harmony; indeed my Senses are as closed or shut from the world, and my Mind is benighted in Sorrow, insomuch as I have not one lighted thought, they are all put out with the memory of my Loss. (18)

Cavendish's refusal is presented primarily through her contemplations about bodily dysfunction. Each faculty overrides the proper operation of the other. Thus her "leaden Spirits have soder'd up [her] joints"; her "Antipathy" has "stop[ped her] Ears; and her "Senses" have undergone a complete shut-down from the world. Collectively, Cavendish's sensorial dysfunctions contest popular faith in the credibility of understanding based solely upon empirical evidences. It introduces the notion that something as profoundly intangible as sadness can cause such concrete faculties as hearing and mobility to fail.

If interpreted as an epistemological statement, Cavendish's challenge to an empirical way of understanding works directly against the well-established scientific method proposed by Francis Bacon. The Baconian method, which is the essential practice of natural philosophers of the Royal Society, takes "an inductive approach" to moving from fact to theory based on "logical reasoning" (Gribbin, 77); it is broadly speaking a linear trajectory towards knowledge creation. In lieu of such a linear approach, Cavendish accounts for senses and phenomena as moving, oftentimes whimsically, between the general and the particular. She writes of cosmic ideas (such as mortality and melancholy) and tangible data (birds, for instance, or thunder, as in her essays from *The World's Olio*, 1655) as being only knowable through inter-discourse, through thinking and feeling undertaken together, rather than from a one-way scaffolding process and with logical reasoning alone. Her challenge to the basic working principle of the scientific method and to the materiality (or immateriality) of the Society's applicable subjects of study ultimately impact the very language by which Cavendish's knowledge is conveyed.

The eighth letter's refusal to a ball complements previous readings of Trapnel's synesthesia in Chapter One. Rather than achieving understanding through an overwhelming of the senses, here understanding is accomplished by acknowledging that one's senses have shut down. Cavendish practically assesses her (dys)functions by the fitness of her affected faculties to their suitable ends. She deems her stiffened legs as unfit to meet the "require[ments for] dancing," and concludes that she is "fitter" to sit upon a Grave. These assessments hearken to similar attitudes about and usages of fitness by Austen in Chapter Two.¹⁶⁴ They comment on Cavendish's positioning of herself within the larger, functioning structure of her society. They help characterize the duchess, if not as a conventionally productive member (in the maternal and domestic sense), as an actively productive member in other senses of the word with suitable positions that she voluntarily occupies. Thus Cavendish righteously stresses her occupation (as in contrast to the negative connotations of idleness) – reflected initially in the epigraph, "*my mind is as busy as a bee*" – within an alternative order. In emphasizing the futility of her senses – "*my Senses are as closed or shut from the world*" – Cavendish mentally exiles herself even as she is physically and geographically placed, by external forces, in exile.¹⁶⁵ She figures her many manners of exile with commensurate movements between rhetorical passivity and action. "My Mind is benighted in Sorrow," Cavendish claims, "[my] thoughts are all put out with the memory

¹⁶⁴ See page 76.

¹⁶⁵ Cavendish's experience of exile exceeds the geopolitical and transcends apparent victimhood. According to Anna Battigelli, it is significantly and voluntarily an exile of the mind. Battigelli points out that Cavendish's "self-created role as an isolated exile became useful to her...as a thinking self-consciously and willfully detached from a chaotic and at times frightening external world. Her sense of herself as an exile of the external world has a place in the emerging philosophy of mind" (9). The many aspects of Cavendish's exile sheds light on rhetorical spatializations in the duchess' narratives, as further developed in this chapter.

of my Loss.” These lines unyieldingly insist upon her passive victimization. By the same token, she breaks free from her (self-fashioned) victimhood in actively creating, as demonstrated above, a fitness of her own.

The eighth letter is finally significant in that it illustrates Daniel’s remark about the melancholic assemblage, that the melancholic “needs no introduction and is never able to stop introducing herself,” because it repeatedly flirts with subject-and-object dichotomies. Cavendish excessively directs her narrative to herself as she continues contrarily to objectify her melancholic symptoms as separate from her person. She itemizes these symptoms in alternating pronouns: “*my* spirits, *my* joints, *my* mind” pitted against “*they* will not move, *they* would stop, *they* are put out.” These vacillating self-references indeed flirt, as we have seen, since Cavendish, in her various wordplays, never truly commits herself to one particular identification. She seems, by extensive detailing of her melancholia -- the “grieved heart,” “weeping eyes,” “leaden Spirits,” “stiffed Joynts,” vexed “ears,” and “benighted Mind” -- to be indulging self-amorously in a spiraling rhetoric of the *blason*.¹⁶⁶ A common trope in love lyrics popularized by Petrarch that was sometimes emulated and other times mocked, the blason dissects poetry’s beloved object (usually an archetypally fair maiden) to exalt the loved one in parts. Although set for the purpose of exaltation, the blason’s objectifying, dissecting rhetoric often veers toward verbal violence towards the beloved; this tendency leads Elizabeth Scott-Baumann to note

¹⁶⁶ For an analysis of the blason in English literary tradition, see Enterline, 2000. Scholars such as Deborah Uman and Sara Morrison’s observations allow further understanding of the form to carry epistemic significance. Uman and Morrison contend that “writers employed this device to achieve a variety of ends, including attempts to master the blazoned subject, to investigate bodily interiority, and to explore the relationship between the whole body and its constitutive parts” (2). The blason, then, is a multi-purpose vehicle capable of wooing the beloved as well as it aggressively delineates the assaulted body. Both gentle and violent approaches highlight the agency of the blason as a poetic trope that negotiates power among reader, writer, and text, and between speaker and poetic object.

a “cannibalistic and self-recreating power” of Cavendish’s particular employment of the form (101). Because Cavendish blasons herself, she performs a double assault on her own body. She itemizes each of her afflicted parts. As an expression of her melancholia, these itemizations amount to Cavendish’s feverish over-introductions symptomatic of her disease. At the same time, these violent over-introductions create meaning that adds to the significances of her afflicted condition. The violence implicit in these verbal assaults functions similarly to Trapnel’s martyrological displays and Austen’s professed divine sufferings – in all three cases, the thinking/feeling woman strategically makes her afflictions known in order to elicit a knowing sympathy.¹⁶⁷

From her assaults and pursuits of a melancholic self, to her contradictory excess in describing loss, to her plays on subjectivities and sensorial dysfunctions, Cavendish’s elaborate refusal unveils itself as truly an assemblage, the result of a collaboration amongst her various expressive form of self-fashioning; it is also truly an *assemblance*, a performative and deliberate display.¹⁶⁸ Cavendish hints at how melancholia, as much as it is an involuntary and debilitating condition of the body, is still very much an appearance

¹⁶⁷ The kind of knowing sympathy that Trapnel and Cavendish elicit is later flagged by Romantic thinkers as “sympathetic curiosity,” particularly by Joanna Baillie. In her “Introductory Discourse” to the *Plays on the Passions* (1798), Baillie refers to the emergence of a moral knowledge which encourages senses of justice, mercy, and compassion at the moment of spectatorship of a person’s afflictions (4). She contends that the desire to spectate, and the involuntary faculty to feel for those spectated, is a universal propensity that can be used for the greater good, specifically in her context of the French Revolution. I hint at Baillie’s concept here to highlight early modern women’s strategic display of their afflictions as a vehicle to knowledge production by an affective method; my anachronistic usage also serves as preamble for the continuum that I wish to stress in this project’s afterword.

¹⁶⁸ From the OED, “assemblance”: “Semblance, appearance, show” (1485-1600). Although the usage is considered obsolete, I have opted to include this definition along with similar keywords such as “Assemblage, n.” due to the lack of updated information currently available in the Dictionary -- according to the OED, the entry, “assemblage, n.” excludes any records published prior to 1690, which leaves the crucial century within which Cavendish wrote unaccounted for.

that the melancholic continuously and deliberately performs. These performances are delivered not only through her volumes of dramatic writing, in which her female characters explicitly speak of their sorrows, but also through the theatricality of her relevant verses. That an assemblage, or assemblance, compelling as it seems and keenly as it may be felt, can never fully denote the speaker truly dominates the duchess's epistemology. Her writings bespeak her painstaking efforts to grasp at truths just as she frequently plays upon truth's ultimate unobtainability. These quests for an unobtainable truth also punctuate Cavendish's melancholia on occasions when she attempts to frame her afflictions as an intellectual discontent; in her poetry, they give license to the many personified characters that the poet-philosopher employs to play out her process of knowledge creation.

In her *Poems, and Fancies* (1653), Cavendish composes several poems defining, evaluating the use of, and justifying the concept of melancholia. "A Dialogue between Melancholy and Mirth" is one such composition. Cavendish compares her mind to a nation state stuck between two allegorized competitors, Mirth and Melancholy, vying to rule it. The narrative strategy of archetypal dialogue, through which the poet is oftentimes figured as a subject being seduced or coaxed, is a common formula evident in texts such as Robert Herrick's apostrophes to Sack and Anne Bradstreet's contending Flesh and the Spirit.¹⁶⁹ More than Herrick and Bradstreet, Cavendish delves into detailed illustrations of the appearances of her personified interlocutors. According to the poem, Mirth is "all in *Colours, fresh, and gay,*" with "fat white *Armes*" and constantly laughing, while Melancholy "was all in *black Array,*" with a "fad, *fober Face,*" and a pale complexion, who spoke softly, modestly, and with "a *comely grace.*" Cavendish's dressing up of Mirth

¹⁶⁹ See Chapter One, page 19, and Chapter Two, page 112, respectively.

and Melancholy brings these archetypal characters to life with her signature flair for fashion. While these vivid details of appearances do stimulate her readers' imagination in envisioning Melancholy and Mirth, those same sensorial faculties are taken away from the characters themselves. The poem therefore offers two disabled interlocutors who perform their imperfections for examination by a readership who are, in contrast, heightened in their senses. Cavendish's playacting presents an opportunity for self-reflection and personal reformation.¹⁷⁰ Mirth complains of Melancholy:

Her *Eares* are flopt with *Thoughts*, her *Eyes* purblind,
 For all *shee* heares, or *fees*, is in the *Mind*.
 But in her *Mind*, *luxurioufly* *fhee* lives,
Imagination feverall pleafures gives.
 Then leave *her* to *hir felfe*, alone to dwell,
 Let you and *I* in *Mirth* and pleafure fwell:
 And drink long lufty *Draughts* from *Bacchus' Bottle*,
 Untill our *Braines* on *vaporous Waves* do roule.

Cavendish presents a system of sensual malfunction reminiscent of her refusal in the eighth letter: the ears cannot hear and the eyes cannot see when burdened by melancholic thoughts. However, she offers a scenario here in which seemingly counteracting senses could in fact be beneficial to a person. "In her mind, luxuriously she lives," writes Cavendish. The adverb, *luxuriously*, is pivotal: it provokes those images of sensuality, of the bounties of life, and of unrestrained enjoyment so glaringly in contrast to the solemn, stoic, even morbid connotations generally attached to the idea of Melancholia.¹⁷¹ Mirth's

¹⁷⁰ Jessica Murphy surveys a range of early modern conduct literatures to observe that their displays of feminine virtues come together as a didactic network of influence. While Cavendish's "Dialogue" is not explicitly conduct literature, it functions similarly in that the poet defines, champions, and applies her notions of virtuous behavior for the reader's benefit. Far from strictly subjecting women to a stance of inactive passivity, Murphy suggests that the prescriptions not only grant women the agency as performers and teachers of feminine virtues (silence, obedience, chastity, patience, etc.), but also, through the fostering of an educational environment, stimulate female readers to actively participate in virtuous instruction and self-reflection.

¹⁷¹ From the *OED*, "luxuriously, adv.": "lasciviously, lustfully" (1550-1616); "In the enjoyment of luxury

incisive remark about Melancholy's luxuriousness also carries the accusation that she is lustful and degenerate. Her accusation shatters any dichotomized preconceptions about the distinctions separating Melancholy from Mirth. Cavendish highlights uncanny resemblances between the two sentiments, exposing the irony in both their dialectical criticisms. It is such irony of merely apparent differences between various epistemic modes which ties together Cavendish's main criticism about methods of science.

Cavendish makes empirical and affective approaches equal in their contributions to knowledge creation. This act of equalizing becomes the basis of her self-promotion and introspective interrogations. Situating herself at the center of this dialogue (as the moderator and key audience to it), Cavendish submits herself – vulnerably, but also strategically – to the equal merits and liabilities entailed. She places responsibility for Melancholy's controversial luxuries on the “several pleasures” that her imagination gives. The nature of these pleasures has already been explored at the beginning of this chapter, which encompasses both entertainment and sustenance. In respect to this particular stanza, variable ideas concerning pleasure are actively parsed out from distinctions that emerge in its deliberate repetition. Specifically, Mirth recommends that the poet forsake imagination's pleasures, and instead “in Mirth and pleasure swell.” Her uncanny swapping of one pleasure for another may insinuate differences among several pleasures. Yet the following lines quickly dissolve those tacit distinctions. Mirth urges leaving Melancholy's luxurious pleasures for the pleasures that come from Bacchus's “lusty draughts.” She effectively pushes Cavendish (and her readers) from one vice to another. The two pleasures are under this description equally seductive. Cavendish exposes the futility of

and pleasure, plentifully, sumptuously, voluptuously” (1605-1900).

discriminating between particular manners of enjoyment found in established discourses and conduct books.¹⁷² These published admonitions reveal a consistent apprehension in early modern England of inadvertently straying from a virtuous life. Cavendish too fills her narratives with such efforts – from her defenses of fancy down to that of her writing, she takes pains to assure her readers of the virtuousness of what might seem like her vices, even going so far as to extol them as signs of privilege¹⁷³ – but her critique of those who insist on disparaging the several pleasures here outshines that preoccupation. Cavendish aims much more to subvert popular conceptions of wrongdoing, and to expose the dangers of popular virtues, than to showcase her own conformity.

That pleasure is said to cause “swelling” in Mirth’s recommendation is provocative. Cavendish suggests that pleasure, an intangible feeling, can result in the physical

¹⁷² Take, for instance, the popular translation of Juan Luis Vives’ *Instruction of a Christian Woman* (1524), wherein he admonishes:

Now *soberness* keepeth countenance, like as drunkenness and excess drive it out. Every man wotteth what follow surfeit. And unto soberness is jointed measurable and slender diet, which things be in householding the woman’s party, as Plato and Aristotle say full well. The man getteth, the woman saveth and keepeth. Therefore he hath stomach given him to gather lustily, and she hath it taken from her that she may warily keep. And of this soberness of body cometh soberness of mind: nor the fantasies of the mind shall, as they were drunken, trouble and disease the quietness of virtue, but that she may both think well and do well. (Aughterson, 71)

¹⁷³ Most notably in “The Preface to the Ensuing Treatise” of *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, Cavendish subverts the idea of vice and disease by correlating them to privilege and honor. Regarding her prolific writing, the duchess preemptively retorts:

It is probable, some will say, that my much writing is a disease; but what disease they will judge it to be, I cannot tell; I do verily believe they will take it to be a disease of the brain; but surely they cannot call it an apoplectical or lethargical disease: Perhaps they will say, it is an extravagant, or at least a fantastical disease; but I hope they will rather call it a disease of wit. Let them give it what name they please; yet of this I am sure, that if much writing be a disease, then the best philosophers, both moral and natural, as also the best divines, lawyers, physicians, poets, historians, orators, mathematicians, chemists, and many more have been grievously sick...Now, to be infected with the same disease, which the devoutest, wisest, wittiest, subtlest, most learned and eloquent men have been troubled withal, is no disgrace; but the greatest honour that can happen to the most ambitious person in the world: and next to the honour of being thus infected, it is also a great delight and pleasure to me. (7)

enlargement of the body or an increased intensity of sensations.¹⁷⁴ In another sense, the poet points out the effect of drunkenness with quasi-medical language as much as she metaphorically speaks of the waxing of one's hubris through drink. Cavendish's deliberate word choice resonates with such notes in contemporary manuals as may be found in Alexander Read's *Manuall of the Anatomy of the Body of Man* (1634) or the more general recipe book, *The Queens Closet Opened* (1655).¹⁷⁵ It showcases her familiarity with the works of Ovid and Petrarch, and more pragmatically, with those of practitioners and medical writers.¹⁷⁶ Contemporary psychologist Robert Burton and his magnum opus, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), is one such precedent from which Cavendish must have drawn much of her inspiration. Burton's focus on self-knowledge, on the biological consequences of thought, and his insistence on idleness being the cause of many common malaises all find reiteration in the duchess's writings.¹⁷⁷ Employing a vocabulary that

¹⁷⁴ From the OED, "swell, v.": "To become larger in bulk, increase in size (by pressure from within, as by absorption of moisture, or of material in the process of growth, by inflation with air or gas, etc.); to become distended or filled out; esp. to undergo abnormal or morbid increase of size, be affected with tumour as the result of infection or injury" (1000-1898); "Of a person, the heart, etc.: To be affected with such an emotion; to have a mental sensation as of enlargement or expansion; to be puffed up, become elated or arrogant. (esp. with pride, indignation, etc.)" (1405-1868).

¹⁷⁵ The kinds of medical books (and more generally, recipe books) circulated in six- and seventeenth-century England are studied in detail by scholars such as Mary Fissell and Paul Slack. See "Popular Medical Writing" in Joad Raymond's edited *Oxford History of Popular Print Culture* and "Mirrors of Health and Treasures of Poor Men" in *Health, Medicine, and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century*, respectively. Elizabeth Lane Furdell also provides a comprehensive account of the practices, knowledges, and literatures that deal with medical conditions and medical treatments of this time; her fifth chapter deals specifically with medical practices and print culture among women.

¹⁷⁶ It is reasonable that Cavendish should take pains to display her medical knowledge. Besides demonstrating her erudition, Elaine Leong points out that having some fluency with physics and medicine is valued as a female virtue in seventeenth-century England. Citing the writings of Gervase Markham and Richard Brathwaite, Leong justifies that women's roles as healthcare providers in the household necessitated "a physical kind of knowledge" as a desirable trait for women (556). Accounting for this preference, Cavendish's interjection to popular medical discourses becomes an intentional demonstration of another aspect of her virtuousness.

¹⁷⁷ Burton writes (as pseudonym Democritus) to the reader in defense of his writing most tellingly in three instances. The first, his confession: "I write of melancholy, by being busy to avoid melancholy" (35). Then, he ostensibly emulates Marius in Sallust's motto, "That which others hear or read of, I felt and practiced myself; they get their knowledge by books, I mine by melancholising" (36). And, finally, Burton hopes that

connotes disciplines of both the arts and sciences (“addiction,” “swelling,” etc., and expanding therefrom to include bodies of poetry such as Cavendish’s atomic poems) finally situates her writings in an alternative category of neither-nor, a position of ambiguity that allows her to create knowledge outside of the constraints of convention.

Mirth’s invitation to swell with pleasure from drink, even to the point of compromising rationality -- “Untill our *Braines* on *vaporous Waves* do roule” – highlights inebriation as a voluntarily induced chemical reaction that compromises cerebral faculty. Cavendish emphasizes that Mirth proposes to drink “until” inebriation occurs, and specifically, until the brain is tangibly affected. Her metaphor of the brain as a nation vied over comes to the forefront in this line: according to the OED, the (archaic) spelling variant “roule” may equally gesture to both verbs “to roll” and “to rule”; as such, the line can mean “until our brains, drunken, sway with vaporous waves” or “until our brains govern over vaporous waves” (presumably, as opposed to governing concrete matters). Each of these interpretations uses what initially sound like scientific observations to divulge Cavendish’s personal political sentiments. Mirth either encourages willfully excessive drinking to shake up the brain physically or to divert the brain’s proper governance. Her encouragement works figuratively to unseat the primacy of brain-power. It also works symbolically upon the body politic to unseat political power.¹⁷⁸ That ultimately these acts of subversion are

his book “would help others out of a fellow-feeling” (*Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco* – “Taught by that Power that pities me, I learn to pity them”, 37.) These are points that, throughout my examination of Cavendish, emerge in echoes.

¹⁷⁸ Lisa Walters addresses extant interpretations of Cavendish as a royalist, arguing that the duchess’s writings, (*The Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* in particular) defend tyrannicide and limitations on monarchical power (196).

“vaporous” once again underscores Cavendish’s consistent argument that the immaterial tangibly affects materiality. Her characterization of Mirth, in sum, is an epistemologically as well as politically threatening figure.

Offsetting Mirth’s ultimately self-incriminating accusations, Melancholy retorts with lines aimed at exposing Mirth’s uselessness. “*I do not spend my time like idle Mirth,*” Melancholy begins. She sets herself apart from Mirth via the dichotomy of leisure versus preoccupation:

*I do not spend my time like idle Mirth,
Which onely happy is juft at her Birth.
Which feldome lives for to be old,
But, if fhe doth, can no affections hold.
For in fhort time fhee troublesome will grow,
Though at the firft shee makes a pretty fhew.
But yet fhee makes a noiſe, and keeps a rout,
And with dislike moft commonly goes out.
Mirth good for nothing is, like Weeds do grow,
Such Plants caufe madneſſe, Reaſon doth not know. (76)*

Melancholy hearkens to Cavendish’s own disposition, which according to her preface in the opening section of this chapter, is “as busie as a bee.” The importance of keeping busy addresses several points of attacks on “idle women” popularized by such notorious pamphlets as Joseph Swetnam’s *Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women* (1615).¹⁷⁹ Being idle renders one unproductive, which in turn pathologically

¹⁷⁹ Besides Swetnam, and more contemporary to Cavendish’s time, there is Jacques Olivier’s translated work, *A Discourse of Women, Shewing their Imperfections Alphabetically* (1662), which accuses women of keeping “a whole Arsenal of aspects, gestures, actions, and idle looks; of gaudiness, ceremonies, full of confidence, readiness, fears, grief, doubt, vexation, the better to get the spoil of what they enterprise” (91). The following year, non-conformist preacher John Oliver publishes *A Present for Teeming Women, or, Scripture-directions for women with child*, which urges pregnant women to “abhor the reading of idle Romances and obscene poets” (37). The implication that idleness is at once innate in women and harmful to the health of women (and, if pregnant, their children) is an aspect of early modern knowledge about women’s health that could be further explored from this chapter. (See potential dialogue with footnote 45).

implicates one's defects in physical or mental faculties. Melancholy therefore connects her busyness with happiness, constancy, and even longevity in order to equate occupation variously with health. Melancholy also associates this particular sign of health with an attack commonly launched against women – the charge of vanity.¹⁸⁰ She emphatically points out that Mirth “makes a pretty show,” an appearance that “can no affections hold.” Her attention to the transience and unreliability of Mirth's performance supplements what has been highlighted in this chapter as a melancholic symptom. Cavendish's worldview that truth is continuously filtered and ultimately unobtainable projects through her Melancholy's critique of Mirth's show. She ambivalently speaks to the inability of the mind to respond keenly to information and its inability to create pleasure from experience.¹⁸¹ These counter-intuitive associations with mirth, like Cavendish's oxymoronic arguments for melancholy's pleasures, tread elusively between testifying to the duchess's own convoluted sense of perception and her ingenious epistemology. They at once identify Cavendish as a legitimate sufferer of her afflictions and an extraordinary philosopher.

Melancholy concludes her assessment with, “*Mirth* good for nothing is, like *Weeds*

¹⁸⁰ From the *OED*, “vain, adj. and n.”: “Devoid of real value, worth, or significance; idle, unprofitable, useless, worthless; of no effect, force, or power; fruitless, futile, unavailing” (1300-1872); “Of persons devoid of sense or wisdom; foolish, silly, thoughtless; of an idle or futile nature or disposition” (1390-1817); and “Given to or indulging in personal vanity; having an excessively high opinion of one's own appearance, attainments, qualities, possessions, etc.; delighting in or desirous of attracting the admiration of others; conceited” (1692-1782). Vanity is the vice most often associated with women. From the ornament of women's dress to the perjorative usage of the word “painting” to describe women's makeup, the regard that women are essentially vain because they bear “the sensual, worldly, and thus ultimately sinful aspects of human existence” remained prevalent from the time of Jerome to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (see Salomon, 71).

¹⁸¹ From the *OED*, “affection, n.1”: “The action or result of affecting the mind in some way; a mental state brought about by any influence; an emotion, feeling” (1225-1998); “favourable or kindly disposition towards a person or thing; fondness, tenderness; goodwill, warmth of attachment” (1384-2000); “the state of the mind as regards to some specific object; disposition towards something; inclination, bent, penchant” (1390-1877).

do grow, / Such *Plants* caufe *madnesse*, *Reafon* doth not know” (76). Here, Cavendish makes a statement about knowing with a nod towards a very specific field of knowledge — herbalism. She demonstrates, if not necessarily a direct familiarity with botany and medicine, her fluency with the efficacies of the language of plants to influence literary character and reader interpretation. Melancholy likens Mirth to a weed, and further implicates her kind of uselessness (as associated in these lines with vanity and inconstancy) with madness beyond Reason’s comprehension. There can be traced an uncanny analogy here, between weed and plant, and between reason and madness, that perhaps serves to support implicitly Cavendish’s contentions against formal education and the knowledge held by medical institutions. Seventeenth-century English medical knowledge and practice was divided between the Parliament and the College of Physicians on the one side, and what Keith Thomas categorizes as those “empiric, herbalist, wise woman, or other members of that ‘great multitude of ignorant persons’” on the other (unnumbered). Expectations for women to be domestic healthcare providers (see footnote 41), and the increasing availability of self-help books such as Nicholas Culpeper’s *Complete Herbal* (1653),¹⁸² allowed for the poor or independently inclined to administer therapy to themselves and each other outside licensed practice. Competition between these “cunning folks” and licensed physicians became fierce enough to warrant legal intervention and to mold public opinions (Furdell, 192). Cavendish’s lines can be seen as indirectly commenting on this competition by transforming it into an issue of epistemic import — Melancholy’s knowledge that Mirth’s weeds cause madness outside of reason’s understanding exalts her as a superior knower of useful and important information. Her use

¹⁸² See Woolley, 2004, page 341.

of the language of herbalism is significant not only in that Cavendish allows Melancholy to align with those knowers against the College and Parliament, but moreover because of the gendered baggage attached to the fringe discipline when the speaker is a woman. Leah Knight, in reading John Gerard's *Generall Historie of Plantes* (1636), believes that seventeenth-century "women are clearly conceived of as an equally distinct botanical community, speaking a separate language; yet ... are not recognized as 'authors' but as anonymous contributors" (86). Female herbalists, or "herbwives," therefore, routinely have their practical knowledge as essential caregivers formally dismissed; their voices in writing about their knowledge, conventionally unauthorized. The Duchess of Newcastle, however, advertises her name and impressive network in advertising her own "unschooled herbal writings": she ceremoniously gives aristocratic patronage to women who write about herbs even if the voices published are her own.

Through her *Dialogue between Melancholy and Mirth*, the duchess exposes hypocrisies of common advice and criticisms directed particularly at women. This gender specificity is inculcated profoundly by the lines' targeted repetition, "*her ears*," "*her eyes*," "*she hears*," "*she sees*," "*she lives*"; "*Shee troublesome will grow*," "*she makes a pretty show*," "*she makes a noise*." Repetitions of the feminine pronoun amount to a chain of characterizations critiquing how women look and behave. They speak not only to Cavendish privately as self-reflective admonitions but also collectively as her own reformation of vain, inconstant women. As we have seen with her treatment of opium in other works, and as befitting of the practical mysticism that is thematic of this project's thinking-feeling knowers, Cavendish's intentional emphasis on "she," finally, prescribes therapeutic transformations.

Cavendish is a practical thinker because her writings aim actively to remediate her professed melancholic conditions and what she believes are popular misconceptions. As her writing strives to reset epistemic and moral standards, so too do these new levels of consciousness guide her verses. “An Epistle to a Troubled Fancy” and “Reason, and the Thoughts,” both collected in *Philosophicall Fancies* (1653), illustrate this mutually constructive interaction between poetry and knowledge creation. Cavendish uses the rhyme and rhythms of her couplets, as well as her flair for storytelling, to help her towards working definitions for fancy, thought, and reason – the crucial elements that make up her singular philosophies. In presenting her arguments about such cerebral matters in a way that resembles character creation and the telling of romantic¹⁸³ adventures, Cavendish collapses distinctions between the serious and the comic. The resulting effect -- that serious discourse and theatrical play become almost inextricable – fulfills the poet-philosopher’s objective of breaking down scholastic barriers. In the “Epistle,” Cavendish determines that:

Fancies in sleep are Visions, Dreames we call,
 Rais’d in the Braine to sport themselves withall.
 Sometimes they take delight to fright the Minde,
 Taking strange Shapes, not like to Natures kinde.
 After the Soule they hunt, and run about,
 As from the Body they would thrust it out.
 But if they are in humour kind, and good,
 In pleasing Shapes before the Minde they stood.

Her working description of fancies links Cavendish’s philosophies to the equally rigorous mental exercises of Trapnel’s visions and Austen’s dreams, insomuch as fancies, visions,

¹⁸³ Specifically, romantic in describing a literary style relating the legendary or extraordinary adventures of some hero of chivalry, or such fictitious narrative in which the settings or the events depicted are remote from everyday life, or in which sensational or exciting events form a central theme (see *OED*, “romance, n. and adj. 1”)

and dreams are presented here as functionally synonymous. “*Fancies* in sleep are *Visions*, *Dreames we call*” -- this connection among fancy, visions, and dreams is made, arbitrarily, by the poet’s own pronouncement. It is as if Cavendish taps into a collective consciousness when she, speaking for an unspecified plural, “calls” upon these ethereal notions. This collective calling subjects Fancies to human understanding semantically (to be manifest and signified through verse) as well as biologically (as understood, through this verse, as active products of the brain). Cavendish interprets fancies as a stimulus, not unlike an aphrodisiac or adrenaline, “rais’d in the Braine to sport.”¹⁸⁴ She makes the phenomenon ambiguous as either an involuntary infringement upon the brain or a by-product of the brain’s proper functions. Both interpretations allow for fancy, like her melancholia, to be classified as a useful affliction. Finally, in a move resembling the political re-anatomization discussed in Chapter One, these lines dethrone the infallibility of rationality of the mind and that of the soul in consideration for the susceptibility of the body. Cavendish notes that fancies “fright the mind” and “hunt the soul.” She describes them as a storyteller would such mischief makers as the big bad wolves of fairy tales. In the next breath, however, Cavendish allows for fancies to be harmless sprites, not ousted by the body but entertained as a source for delight. “If they are in humour kind, and good,” she acquiesces, “in pleasing shapes before the mind they stood.” In opening up the conversation for more innocuous interpretations of fancy, and in seamlessly allowing for recognition that fancy and known functions of the brain work naturally in concert, Cavendish gradually extracts fancy from the strictly stigmatized confines of extant

¹⁸⁴ From the *OED*, “sport, v.”: “To amuse, divert, or entertain oneself; to take one’s pleasure, have a pleasant or leisurely time” (1425-2013); “To engage in amorous behavior or sexual activity” (1577-1971). “To remove or waste idly or recklessly; to squander” (1622-1967).

discourses. In couching her subtle extraction in extended poetic conceits, interspersing her descriptions of fancy with noncommittal ruminations, “sometimes they... but if they...,” Cavendish captivates her readers in a safely distanced and hypothesized scenario in which a presupposed taboo may be reconsidered.

That ethereal notions, like fancy, can travel and act tangibly upon physical bodies suggests that Cavendish regards knowledge as mobile, the result of acts of creation and transgression of spaces. Spatiality therefore demarcates the knower from the ignorant in conceptual as well as geopolitical ways. Cavendish’s attention to spatialization (and violations thereof) is played out in a banter staged as “Reason, and the Thoughts.” Echoing Trapnel’s analogy of the fire out of its hearth, Cavendish frames the archetypal, personified character, Thoughts, as struck by a reprehensible wanderlust. In this poem, a reproachful Reason counsels Thoughts to

Run not in such strange phantastick waies,
take such paines to get a Vulgar Praise.
The World will scorne, and say, you are all Fooles,
Because you are not taught in common Schooles.
The World will think you mad, because you run
Not the same Track, that former times have done.
Turn foolish Thoughts, walke in a Beaten Path,
Or else the World ridiculously will laugh.

The rhetorical reining in of Thoughts’ propensity to stray here is flagged by Reason’s pointed description of Thoughts’ “running”; Reason bids Thoughts to “turn” and to slow her run to a “walk.” These verbal cues that direct Thoughts’ mobility also gesture to Cavendish’s own discomfort with her position in exile (we recall her provocative contentment to stay in the epigraph). They record the kinds of warnings directed towards the exiled against veering away from designated posts geographically as well as figuratively, as trains of thought. Reason’s reasoning for keeping Thoughts on the beaten

path centers on the crucial line that explains what the world will think: “You are all Fooles/ Because you are not taught in common Schooles.” Her caution makes explicit that the difference between knowing and ignorance lies in the arbitrary consensus of public opinion about and participation in approved institutions. Examined in juxtaposition to previous considerations of Trapnel and Austen in this dissertation, Cavendish’s ventriloquism of this popular opinion is complicated even further through her echoing usage of key adjectives, “foolish” and “common”¹⁸⁵ — thoughts are foolish for not being commonly schooled. Cavendish underscores the expediency in choosing conventional forms of schooling over actual merit for many scholars. Her criticism about the political considerations over truth in scholarship is made even more apparent in her prose, which will be examined later in this chapter. Echoing Austen’s play on her anxieties of being outnumbered, Cavendish writes of her envisioned opposition in repetitions: “the World will scorne,” “the World will think,” and “the World will laugh.” By invoking an anonymous multitude, Reason illustrates how perceptions of one’s folly and the consequent restraint of one’s heuristic reach, more than the results of an arbitrary consensus, are ultimately internalized and self-imposed.

Cavendish frames the effects of the World’s ridicule as both a disturbance and a disease. Through Thoughts’ retort, she accuses Reason of “molesting”¹⁸⁶ their studies.

¹⁸⁵ In Chapter One, Trapnel describes university men doating on the arts and sciences to draw out the foolishness of their brain studies (page 17); in Chapter Two, Austen chastises her son of learning the ill habits of fellow commoners at the university (page 103).

¹⁸⁶ From the OED, “molest, v.”: “To cause trouble, grief, or vexation to; to disturb, annoy, inconvenience” (1425-1974) and “of a disease: to afflict or affect” (1559-1823).

Honing in on Reason's references to mobility and spatiality, Cavendish defers her right to travel to the greater authority of Nature and to humans' innate drive towards pleasure.

Thoughts respond:

Reason forbear, our Study not molest,
 For wee do goe those waies that please us best.
 Nature doth give us liberty to run,
 a Check, more swift far then the Sun.
 But if we jar, and sometimes disagree,
 By thy Disputes, we run unevenly.
 But prethee Reason trouble us no more,
 For if you prate, wee'l thrust you out of doore.

Nature's sanction to give Cavendish's thoughts the "liberty to run" in "ways that please us best" reclaims agency of mobility and authorial power for the wanderer. Cavendish recalibrates the standard of judgement for her actions from the standard of public consensus to her individual principles of pleasure. As a standard of validation of opinions, Cavendish allows for conflict: "If we jar, and sometimes disagree, / By thy Disputes, we run unevenly." Her laissez-faire concession counters Reason's intolerant warning, which summons the world's scorns to browbeat Thoughts into conformity. She places the burden of conflict decidedly upon Reason. Cavendish points out that is it "by reason's dispute" that Thoughts should unevenly run. She insinuates that straying from convention is a reasonable result of free thinking.

By deferring reasonable conflict to the sanctions of nature – "a check ... *far than the sun*" -- Cavendish moves her poetic-dramatic debate, which is a theoretical mental exercise about the conventions of logical thought, into the realm of critical conversations about scientific inquiry. She exposes multiple connotations that the idea of nature holds –

connotations of being essentially yet also beyond human, and of the sensual, physical, sexual impulses pertaining to an individual or as a synecdoche of the world in whole ¹⁸⁷ -- and creates dimension to the scale of her argument by figuring it through mathematical or astronomical perspectives. Through this network of associations, Cavendish sheds light on the moralizing power of observational science; at the same time, she reminds readers of the limitations by which natural philosophy binds itself in simply being reasonable. Silvia Bowerbank understands Cavendish's invocations of nature to be more than commentary on science and nature. Reading the duchess's responses to the deforestations of Sherwood around 1661 "as strategies of compensation and renewal," Bowerbank argues that Cavendish's writings intentionally give voice to nature, the muted subject on ecological matters (53). Here, a similar act of compensation can be discerned: between steering her readers to think morally and to think through specific disciplines, to impersonate both conventional reason and whimsical thoughts in their engagements with conceptualizing scholarship, Cavendish gives voice to complementary elements that may have been lost where knowledge creation is treated as a singular, strait binary.

"An Epistle to a Troubled Fancy" and "Reason, and the Thoughts," which showcase Cavendish's versified ruminations about melancholia and her working theories about how fantasy, thoughts, and rationality interact to influence knowledge and expression, practically demonstrate her epistemological and political intervention. As previously mentioned, her compositions imaginatively transgress the Royal Society's exclusionary boundaries as much as they literally – as physical books – penetrate said boundaries by being delivered to formal institutions. The salient playfulness of these poems

¹⁸⁷ Summarized from list of definitions provided by the *OED*, "nature, n."

(in terms of theatrical *playing* and play as in frivolous entertainment) intentionally argues – even if implicitly -- against the austere, unadorned bearings of formal scholars. Like Trapnel’s endearing endorsement of small beer, Cavendish’s open acknowledgement about her “ridiculously laughable” fancies makes her a relatable mouthpiece for those who may see themselves at a disadvantage for their unorthodox preferences. Her evident attempts to participate in formal scholarship through these verses, moreover, resemble what has been shown from Austen’s numerological poems to be an esoteric intervention. Dorothy Stimson, in her study of the history of the Royal Society, notes one common motivation driving the endeavors of many prominent natural philosophers – the sense of wonder she calls “mathematical magick” (35). Stimson defines “mathematical magick” as that “feeling...about the ‘marvel’ [that] even one man by the aid of a series of wheels, ropes, and pulleys properly arranged with his breath alone could uproot the largest tree” (36). It elaborates on the empowering sentiment of many thinkers of early modern enlightenment that knowledge may lift man up to accomplishments previously inconceivable. Cavendish exerts this humanist agency in a manner parallel to her natural philosopher peers: rather than acting upon the sense of marvel in areas of machinery, she acts upon fanciful conjurations. A part of that conjuration manifests through poetic conceits and theatrical play.

Cavendish’s mathematical magick finds execution in a kind of exorcism by poetry.¹⁸⁸ Thoughts’ response to Reason above is an example of this poetic exorcism.

¹⁸⁸ This argument is made in reference to Bryan Adams Hampton’s precedent remarks on the purging and exorcising effects of *Macbeth*. His article elaborately sets the play up as a continuous competition between the fair and the foul, with the bodies of its main characters, the castle as a physical space, and the body of Scotland, by extension, energetic fields to be cleansed. Hampton concludes: “If exorcism is meant to restore the former state of mental being and spiritual health, however, one might envision *Macbeth* as a failed exorcism in five acts. Instead of being purified and restored, the host is destroyed—evoking the

Cavendish lays out the obnoxiousness of Reason, which “molests” Thoughts’ studies. She empowers her Thoughts by writing for them the threatening closing couplet, “But prethee Reason trouble us no more, / For if you prate, wee’l thrust you out of doore.” The rhetorical “thrusting out” of Reason by Thoughts re-inscribes a sanctioned space by Cavendish in which her brand of fanciful knowledge can be freely created. Like Austen’s designation of acceptable boundaries within the bedroom of her dreams, Cavendish’s Thoughts articulate their line of defense against Reason, which necessarily designates Reason’s misbehaviors not as contributions to knowing but as forms of ignorance. In the constructed space of this poem, an energetic shift takes place at the moment of Thoughts’ ultimatum. Reason’s ontological value is revoked just as it is, like unwanted matter, flushed out of the knower’s body. While Austen’s numerology exemplifies mathematical magick at work, Cavendish’s more subtle execution of it reveals poetry writing as a technical, scientific skill capable of achieving an equally profound end. This is because while Austen focuses on devout poetry, Cavendish’s more scientific poems actively converse — and compete— with those published works concerning the cutting-edge advancements of their time. The marvel of knowledge’s power is amplified as a result of Cavendish’s instilling it with her imagination.

Cavendish’s emphatic usage of her imagination also champions her argument that the imagination should be respected as a practical skill. Seventeenth-century attitudes about the human imagination were generally disparaging. The boundary that divided select

opening action of Macbeth’s efficient gutting of the ‘diseased’ rebel Macdonwald” (342). I find Hampton’s exorcism analogy especially useful in application to the women writers’ mathematical magick in these chapters. Taking into consideration Cavendish’s lines in “Reason, and the Thoughts,” where Thoughts proclaims to “thrust” Reason “out of doore,” there undoubtedly exists a similar kind of practical cleansing effect upon the knower’s body that Cavendish’s poem aims to achieve. It is even more prominently practical when we consider Cavendish’s writing as a therapeutic process, where the body is not only symbolically vexed but allegedly plagued by known diseases.

“virtuosi” from “amateurs”¹⁸⁹ based on the knower’s imagination can be both abstract and concrete. The abstract, as analyses of Cavendish’s poems have shown, is maintained by mainstream codes of conduct; the concrete, more specifically, is iconized by the patronized existence of the Royal Society, which, through publication and propagation, actively pushed for an avoidance of the fanciful. Cavendish conquers both forms in advocating her fantastic philosophy. Geographically exiled and ideologically removed from the Society’s coteries, she nevertheless succeeds in penetrating its exclusionary boundaries. Cavendish calls into question some of the Royal Society’s most valued modes of scholarship, engaging, as she does so, her contemporary scholars in a re-examination of their fundamental practicing principles. As this chapter comes to conclusion, it also becomes apparent that Cavendish’s push for fanciful knowing is far from consistent (and her stance in opposition to those “learned and studious men,” as we soon discover, seems compromised with it). My final analysis takes into account that the sheer volume and diversity of Cavendish’s written ideas necessarily mean that a coherent and consistent epistemology may not be extracted without academic cherry-picking; nor do I believe such coherent yet filtered presentation would trace her whimsical knowledge-making well. It is the sometimes contradictory and other times self-refuting expressions of coming-into-knowing that most authentically represent Cavendish’s epistemic journey. Her prosaic contemplations about knowledge are ventriloquisms of her scholastic counterparts. By parsing out nuanced contradictions present in both proclamations made by scholars of the Royal Society, and also by Cavendish in her relevant comments, we find a shared and genuine struggle to convey human knowledge through literature. Cavendish’s ultimate

¹⁸⁹ From Stimson, 5.

triumph over her contemporary scholars lies ironically in her open acceptance of her inabilities to know. In acknowledging this struggle – which is a struggle to come to terms with the ultimate unobtainability of truth, and with ignorance as an inherent aspect of being human -- Cavendish dampens the Society's confident validation of humanist knowledge, superseding it with the greater idea of Nature's sentience.

The capabilities of human knowledge, contrasted against Nature's forces, are exalted and undermined by literary expression. Bacon's criticism of "parabolic poetry," as previously mentioned in Chapter Two, dismisses the form as reducing intellectual understanding to sensual understanding. Ancient writers wrapped truth with excessive poesy, according to Bacon, "because men in those times wanted both variety of examples and subtlety of conceit...because reason cannot be so sensible nor examples so fit."¹⁹⁰ His justification is ambivalent: Bacon claims at once that the lived experiences of ancient man are simple and that they exceed the rhetorical grasp of sensible reason. Contextualized within the Royal Society's plain style mandate – pushing towards a new, more succinct rhetorical tradition -- this preferred "manner of discourse," to quote Sprat's representative iteration,¹⁹¹ calls for the complete discontinuing of "the luxury and redundance of *speech*."¹⁹² Sprat warns of

¹⁹⁰ From *The Advancement of Learning*, 1605. Tom van Malssen offers a more detailed explication of the passage on parabolic poetry, from which I paraphrase above.

¹⁹¹ I choose to quote Sprat's arguments for plain style, as outlined in his *History of the Royal Society*, as representative of the Society's relevant stance because it is the most widely studied and cited work in extant scholarship. Sprat's words are thus "representative" in the respect of its recognition and academic credence. However, this is not to say that the opinions outlined by Sprat were undoubtedly representative of the attitudes of the founders and other members of the institution. Margery Purver, for instance, proffers contemporary accounts and epistolary evidence to support her claim that the *History* may be expressions of Sprat or John Wilkins's private opinions (for details, see Purver, Chapter One, 9-19).

¹⁹² The Royal Society's push for pithy prose over flowery poetry, and particularly as it concerns Cavendish's style of writing in response to it, have been debated by literary scholars. Ryan Stark observes that Cavendish creates, through her fanciful style, a "strategic form of philosophical dissent"(265); Richard

the ill effects of this superfluity of talking, [that] have already overwhelm'd most other *Arts* and *Professions*; insomuch, that when I consider the means of *happy living*, and the causes of their corruption, I can hardly forbear recanting what I said before; and concluding, that *eloquence* ought to be banish'd out of all *civil societies*, as a thing fatal to Peace and good Manners. (111)

He exhibits a remarkably similar pursuit and maintenance of well-being that has been noted in much of Cavendish's writings. Sprat declares that eloquence has "corrupted" his means of "happy living" and should be "banished"; his call to arms identical to the casting out of Reason by Cavendish's protesting Thoughts. Both, as we can now argue, perform semiotic or imaginative exorcisms that profoundly transform the conceptual spaces created by their respective writings. There is also a sense of inevitable hypocrisy underlying the banishment itself. For all his calling for unadorned taciturnity, Sprat issues his warning in an utterly affective manner. He admits that the notion of his happiness corrupted unfetters his diatribe against eloquence: "I can hardly forbear recanting what I said before." That a man's happiness, and the obstruction thereof, could so directly impact his words legitimizes the power of emotional compulsions as self-evident. Perhaps it is also owing to this self-evidence of man's susceptibility to his passions that compels rational man continuously to defend the objectivity of their science. Sprat's aversion to superfluous, eloquent language as a means of epistemic expression defines his Society's qualifications of human understanding (and in short qualifies man as rational) in very specific ways; this is so much so that Abraham Cowley, in his ode *To the Royal Society*, affixed before Sprat's *History*

Nate, on the other hand, suggests that Cavendish sought belonging among her academic peers, and even more wanted to compensate for her feminine gender in this heavily masculine discipline, by outwardly emphasizing her adherence to the plain style program(408); and finally, Denise Tillery takes the middle road in arguing that, while Cavendish does push for a plain style, she does so with concern for the readers' appropriate understanding of her writing (270). I understand Cavendish's writing style to align most with Tillery's argument. However, rather than focusing on Cavendish's attention to reader response, my study explores how Cavendish writes with the goal of authorizing the female speaker/writer.

proper, emphasizes philosophy as an exclusively “male virtue” antithetical to the imagination. Cowley writes of one’s proper display of knowledge – “the Mind’s right Object” -- ironically with drawn out artistry. Indeed, his rigid qualifications are nevertheless put forth via the rhyming couplets that seem counter-intuitive to the prose style the Society allegedly approves.¹⁹³ Cowley admonishes,

Who to the life an exact Piece would make,
Must not from others Work a Copy take;
No, not from Rubens or Vandike;
Much Less content himself to make it like
Th’ Ideas and the Images which ly
In his own Fancy, or his Memory.
No, he before his fight muft place
The Natural and Living Face;
The real Object must command
Each Judgment of his Eye, and Motion of his Hand.

Cowley’s lines besmirch Cavendish’s “pencil’d pictures,” which she extols as perfectly capable of revelation through likeness.¹⁹⁴ He discredits accomplished baroque painters Peter Paul Rubens (who, incidentally, accommodated the Cavendishes in Antwerp while they were in exile) and Anthony van Dyke in order to point out inefficacies of the artists’ portrayals through fancy and memory. He insists that “the real Object,” that which would be signified, “must command” the signs. Cowley’s proposal takes away not only the agency of the knower who narrates but more importantly, confers authority instead to the object

¹⁹³ Whether or not members of the Royal Society, and thus presumably supporters of the plain style, would actually disapprove of poetry is an open debate. Tina Skouen acknowledges scholarly inconclusiveness and proposes that in the case of the writings of several members of the Royal Society, a two-fold strategy is often adopted in which prose and poetry are balanced in narrative to present the Royal Society’s *History* as a continuation rather than rejection of ancient rhetorical tradition (25).

¹⁹⁴ In her “Discourse on Melancholy,” Cavendish writes of the “Perfect Likeness” presented by the “converting qualities” of melancholic verses (107). She extols the power of poetry written under the influence of melancholia as a superior form of representation not only in that melancholic lines are, in her own words, more “majestic” in their imageries but more “perfect,” or faithful to the essence of what the poems seek to portray.

being narrated. He emphasizes that the real object must command “judgment of [the scholar’s] Eye, and Motion of his Hand.” He figures the knower’s relationship with his knowledge through a model of passivity – knowledge is discerned rather than created by the knower. This involuntary and directorial aspect of knowledge is echoed by Cavendish in *True Relations*, when she divulges that her melancholy thoughts “overpower or smother the conception in the brain,” as to force her “many times to express [...] with the tongue before [she could] write them with the pen” (306). Cowley refers to the object to be known as that “natural and living face.” He concedes that the signified is always an ever-evolving (“living”) phenomenon. The real object, beyond all human and semiotic ornamentation, is a pre-existing agent of nature.

That the object is ever-changing, that human faculties are susceptible to external influences, and that the agency of the changing object can be known through the susceptibility of human faculties to external influences, are all conventional principles of natural philosophy established by the works of such ancient (and specifically, Greek) commentators, most notably Aristotle, that were particularly popular in the revival of studies in universities during the Renaissance.¹⁹⁵ Cowley’s and Cavendish’s arguments borrow from this shared Aristotelian origin. Their subsequent moments of divergence weave an intricate indirect discourse through which the very definition of scholarship and

¹⁹⁵ Some of these relevant points are brought forth by Aristotle in *Physics* (350 B.C.E). Examples include Book One, Part Four, “(1) The infinite qua infinite is unknowable, so that what is infinite in multitude or size unknowable in quantity, and what is infinite in variety of kind is unknowable in quality” (see further elaboration later in this chapter, page 179); Part Five, “Our first supposition must be that in nature nothing acts on, or is acted on by, any other thing at random, nor may anything come from anything else, unless we mean that it does so in virtue of a concomitant attribute”; Part Seven, “Everything comes to be from both subject and form,” and, finally, Part Eight, “We do not subvert the principle that everything either is or is not.” The last set of close readings in this chapter reveal that Cavendish writes with keen awareness of these premises and rhetoric of Aristotle, and that she specifically challenges these above points in her own counterarguments to further her agenda.

that of a true scholar is disputed. These tangents between Cowley's and Cavendish's arguments illuminate the incongruities of attitudes which early modern natural philosophers held in respect to the nature they philosophize. Cavendish likewise references nature on several occasions. Her collection of fables, from which her defense of fancy is excerpted, tellingly bears the title *Nature's Picture drawn by Fancies Pencil to the Life*.¹⁹⁶ Her previously examined "Epistle to a Troubled Fancy" de-familiarizes the "strange shapes" of fancy against the normalcy of "Nature's kind." Examining what Cowley and Cavendish have respectively presented in their notions concerning nature, it is undeniable that she heeds and frequently mirrors the Society's modus as a standard.

Cavendish attacks the Society's ideas, practices, and methods, which purport to "benefit humane life, by the Advancement of *Real Knowledge*" (*History*, 2). She subverts those qualifications that her contemporary philosophers take to validate what is "real," and, in establishing an alternative kind of "real knowledge," credits a different group of people as legitimate scholars. She writes of the vanity of formal scholars in her preface to *The Philosophical and Physical Opinions*. She cites the many "Learned and Studious men" in her accusation, sounding off on those "Learned men / and best of Poets" that she conjures

¹⁹⁶ *Nature's Pictures* contains thinly veiled "feigned stories" such as "A Tripartite Government of Nature, Education, and Experience," which, like *The Blazing World*, comment concretely on the realities of life and of England as Cavendish perceives them (271). The work also includes some of William Cavendish's rather whimsical concerns, such as an entry titled, "His Grace the Duke of Newcastle's Opinion, Whether a Cat feeth in the Night, or no?" (568). That Cavendish titles her brand of imaginative philosophies as "Nature's Pictures" highlight her opinion that what is perceived as objective natural phenomenon is already, like an artist's painting, at some distance from "the right object" by the rendition of Nature's interpretive and illustrative hand. These pictures are then again "drawn by Fancies Pencil to the Life," underscoring art (as defined as a person's skill, particularly in visual representation, see *OED*, "art, n.1") as a necessary rather than hindering step to bringing the object into being. The phrase, "to the Life," is telling when taken into account Cowley's depiction of the object's "natural and living face." While Cowley uses the phrase to argue that natural phenomena are always already present, evolving to the beholder's eyes as it is, Cavendish seems to insist that natural phenomena reveal themselves only after the beholder represents them, and evolve with each act of representation.

by fancy's fire in the Preface. Cavendish opines that these scholars "have had very Improbable, and I may say (without Dis-respect to their Wisdome) very Extravagant Opinions and Phantasms in Natural Philosophy"; conflating her own notorious desires to be famous¹⁹⁷ with her critique of these scholars' misguided approaches, Cavendish asserts that their "Odd Fantastical Opinions, may get Fame sooner than meet with Truth"; and, finally, to justify her accusation, Cavendish locates truth, or "at least the Probability of Truth, [to] Liveth in Sense and Reason, not in Irregular Phancies." Her criticism launches those same attacks about fancy she so frequently suffers back at the university men, taking on instead for herself their platitudes about the truthfulness of logic and empiricism.

Cavendish flips the standard by which scholars are considered "learned" on its end by calling their scholarship "improbable" and "extravagant."¹⁹⁸ She points out that the kinds of knowledge these scholars create not only stray from the truth but are "irregular," beyond conformity, and potentially troublesome. Her rendition breaks the conceptual barrier which dictates that formal scholars authorize reliable knowledge and unconventional wisdoms obfuscate knowing. It opens a window for doubt, and from that doubt Cavendish unfetters the potential knower to learn "in ways that please best." Incidentally, her misgivings about contemporary scholarly approaches also extend to question the efficacies of scientific tools. The duchess describes such equipment as

¹⁹⁷ Cavendish's pursuit of fame is most unapologetically declared in her "Epistle to Mistress Toppe," wherein the duchess writes, "the *Worlds dispraises* cannot make me a *mourning garment*: my mind's too big, and I had rather venture an *indiscretion*, then loose the *hopes* for a *Fame*" (*Poems, and Fancies*, A4).

¹⁹⁸ From the *OED*, "improbable, adj.": "Not probable; not likely to be true; not easy to believe; unlikely" (1598-1860). Also from the *OED*, "extravagant, adj. and n.": "Wandering out of bounds; straying, roaming, vagrant" (1604-1841); "Widely divergent or discrepant; remote from, irrelevant or foreign to a purpose or subject" (1601-1665); "Varying widely from what is usual or proper; unusual, abnormal, strange; unbecoming, unsuitable" (1650-1701).

telescopes, loadstones, guns, print, and microscopes as “fallacies rather than discoveries of truth” (9). Like Trapnel, who saw that the urgent purgation of the ailing soul requires a complete epistemological overhaul, it is arguable here that Cavendish believes the only way to produce real knowledge is through a revamping of natural philosophy, along with its range of essential tools.

To compensate for extant academic fallacies, Cavendish proffers a new system: a more useful kind of philosophy that reasonably embraces both sense and reason, and that (perhaps hearkening to her republican royalism, see footnote 181) allows for order as well as compassion. In her “Preface to the Second Part of Philosophical and Physical Opinions,” Cavendish clarifies the overarching premise of her philosophy. At the heart of her agenda is the readjustment of natural philosophers’ self-awareness vis-à-vis their pursuit of knowledge. Unseating what she holds to be a misguided sense of superiority, Cavendish returns mankind to its rightful place in the realm of Nature. She begins by emphatically proclaiming her subject, “That Animal, named Man”; she proceeds to characterize man with these sobering statements:

In truth, this Creature Man thinks and believes it self to be the supreme Creature of all Creatures in Infinite Matter; In truth, it believes it self to be above Infinite Matter: but what is above Infinite Matter is above a Finite Opinion, neither belongs it to Natural Philosophy, for Natural Philosophers go and study not beyond Sense and Reason; and according to the proportion of that Sense and Reason that I have, I shall declare my Philosophical Opinions.

Cavendish’s declaration of her Philosophical Opinions marks her virtuous necessity—she is compelled to write, on behalf of a compromised academic discipline, to restore natural order. Cavendish insists upon her convictions by rhythmically broaching her observations about man with repetitions of “in truth.” She follows her emphatic truths with man’s

ascertaining faculties, creating the scenarios, “in truth man thinks...” and “in truth man believes...” Through these repetitions, she makes up for her equal conviction, mentioned previously, that truth may ultimately be unobtainable. Cavendish creates a triangular relationship here among truth, thought, and belief. She allows her carefully framed truths to place in relief the superficiality of anything that man may think or believe. Her adaptation of Aristotle in the subsequent contemplation about an infinite opinion and its intrusion into natural philosophy¹⁹⁹ argues for the containment of man’s ego by way of reminding her readers of natural philosophy in its original principle. It establishes Cavendish’s approach to knowledge not as a venture into new (read: unauthorized) territories but rather as a quest to re-discover what has been lost.

Cavendish’s conservative approach to re-discover truth with her sensible philosophy ultimately purports to heal. In Letter XXVII of her *Philosophical Letters* (1664), she furthers her contemplation on the principle of finite matters in order to broaden the scope of extant topics covered in her contemporary studies. Regarding the legitimacy of various diseases, Cavendish extensively protests:

Your author is pleased to say, that he doth not behold a disease as an abstracted Quality, and that Apoplexy, Leprosie, Dropsie, and Madness, as they are Qualities in the abstract, are not diseases. I am of this mind, that a disease is a real and corporeal being, ... for Nature knows of no abstraction of qualities from substances, and I doubt Man can do no more then Nature doth: ... for no Immaterial quality will do any hurt, if it be no substance; wherefore Apoplexy, Leprosie, Dropsie, and Madness, are Corporeal beings, as well as the rest of Diseases, and not abstracted Qualities; and I am sure, Persons that are affected with those diseases will tell the same. (350-351)²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Elaborated in footnote 192; this adaptation is specific to Book One, Part Four of *Physics*.

²⁰⁰ It should be noted here that, because *The Philosophical Letters* is written in the form of epistolaries between two women, Cavendish’s ideas about real and material diseases are expressed through the filter of the voice of her as a private interlocuter. As discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, the duchess’s

Her protest against the unnamed male author's dismissal of a string of diseases as "abstract" rests upon her confidence in the man's imperfect knowledge. "I doubt Man can do no more then Nature doth," she asserts. Cavendish invalidates this man's abstraction of substance by accusing him of overreaching his capabilities. She reinforces – indeed, *restores* – the legitimacy of the diseases that have been dismissed by re-announcing them in full: "Apoplexy, Leprosie, Dropsie, and Madness" are individually mentioned twice and reinstated as "Corporeal beings," through what reads like personification. In lieu of the man's presumptuous opinion, which is theoretical knowledge, Cavendish extols felt knowledge, authorizing not the scholar but the sufferer of these diseases to speak on their conditions. "I am sure," Cavendish states, "Persons that are affected with those diseases will tell the same." Merging her own authorial voice with the voice of those affected, Cavendish transforms the relationship between the objective examiner and the objectified patient. She transforms production of knowledge about these tabooed illnesses into a sympathetic dialogue, one in which the diseased are treated with proper respect rather than through which the language of stigma finds a target for social oppression.

ever-changing narrative perspectives relate to her theatrical playing of ideas as well as to her playing with subjectivities. Read here alongside her declaration of her own philosophy as a reforming influence in the discipline, however, it becomes significant in voicing Cavendish's conviction that an epistemic restoration, and one that especially addresses pathology and healing, should be undertaken through the collaboration among actively communicating women.

Afterword

“Ah! How impotent is *mere* reasoning against reiterated feeling”!
Preluding a Romantic Epistemology

As *Prophecy, Dreams, and Fantasy* is coming into being between 2015 and 2017, we are witnessing exciting work also being done on affective practical knowledge-making in English Romanticism. Sophie Laniel-Musitelli and Thomas Constantinesco have just begun rediscovering how Romantic literature was used in its time as a major object for speculative thinking. Romantic writing, they claim, “strove to sublimate the inner contradictions of philosophical systems but also to offer thought experiments of its own in an effort to fashion the ‘philosophical poem’” (2); Miranda Burgess, in drawing the psychopathological link between England’s collective anxieties in the face of increasing globality, argue that it is such helpless subjectivities which gave birth to the “science of feeling” thematic of Shelley’s gothic *Frankenstein* (1818).²⁰¹ Like the thinking-feeling women discussed in this dissertation, Romantic writers not only utilized feeling to stimulate understanding, but as their understanding grew, so did they innovate forms and genres appropriate for its expression. Like Trapnel, Austen, and Cavendish, Romantic writers were also evidently conscious of the intricate links among mental and physical well-being, happiness or blessedness, and the knower’s agency vis-à-vis their worlds. These observations made by Laniel-Musitelli, Constantinesco, and Burgess, which resonate with those about early modern Englishwomen, encourage us to regard women’s epistemic articulations in the seventeenth-century and the centuries that follow as a continuum of practical knowledge-making.

²⁰¹ Burgess, 2015.

While the early modern concept of practicality, as explored in the Introduction, frequently applied to characterize the knower,²⁰² the consumable prophecies, divining poetry, and therapeutic philosophies examined in the above chapters have also shown that the types of writing produced by an affective knower are themselves instilled with agency and thus practical. Julie Carr and Jeffrey Robinson introduce the term “active Romanticism,” a conscious poetics that “strikes at the core of a social situation perceived as unacceptable” with the imagination (4).²⁰³ Dan Beachy-Quick, reading within this framework of active Romanticism, characterizes Romantic epistemology as the defamiliarizing “theory of language...that can strip the language so the eyes...overleap existence by assuming the reality of what is ‘real’” (39). By internalizing reality with seeing rather than verbal interpretation, Beachy-Quick underscores how Romantic literature draws its readers away from the (learned) habit of understanding through reading – through the filtered truth of Trapnel’s “head-piece language” – and towards a much more visceral, inherent embodiment of the real. This more direct transmission of felt knowledge via Romantic texts penetrates the aloofness of a reader-spectator to enable a sense of urgency which stirs action responsive to the French Revolution.

The Romantic era, by the above scholarly consensus, is therefore a starting point at which “emotion and desires enjoyed a new ideological prominence” (Henderson, 199), and at which “the relation of affect to figuration and knowing, emotions and the discipline of knowledge” are stressed academically as “central” to the period’s literature (Faflak and

²⁰² See page 7.

²⁰³ Carr and Robinson provide more detailed definition and applications of Active Romanticism, and especially an understanding thereof set against institutional Romanticism, one pages 4-5.

Sha). Nevertheless, as published voices that profess to know practically in the seventeenth century had been overwhelmingly male,²⁰⁴ so too it seems that female knowing in eighteenth- and nineteenth- century England has yet to acquire an academic room of its own, or to step out of the confinement of the masculine narratives that frame them. Stuart Curran specifically points to class and morality as lines of division which bind Restoration and early eighteenth-century women writers. “A writer for the theatre, like Aphra Behn... was understood to be compromised by the notorious moral laxity of the stage,” Curran observes, “Yet, the aristocratic woman, if at least relatively free to pursue her own interests, was in general an adjunct to the larger masculine circle in which her spouse figured” (170-171). This double-binding by social status and morality restricts the voice of women writers regardless of their background and extends its influence to affect literary forms and genres deemed feminine. Isobel Armstrong tackles this seemingly universal confinement by arguing that Romantic women took supposedly “feminine” forms – or the *gush* -- such as affect and intuition, turning them into “analytical accounts to *think* with,” and “challenged and remade those male philosophical traditions that led to a demeaning discourse of the feminine experience” (15-16). Her argument empowers feminine narratives to authorize feminine experience, legitimizing women’s writing as practical knowledge according to Dupré’s working definition.²⁰⁵ Active Romanticism’s circumscription or penetration of female confinement, either by focusing on concepts of centrality and domesticity, or by broaching a gushing kind of rationality, or even by the sheer agreement in academic discourses upon a definite starting point, concur with what has repeatedly surfaced in my

²⁰⁴ See Introduction, page 8.

²⁰⁵ See page 4.

research on early modern women -- that knowledge is most usefully produced when regarded as an inclusive continuum.²⁰⁶

Three thinking-feeling women writing in the eighteenth century stand salient within this inclusive continuum. Mary Hays, Mary Robinson, and Joanna Baillie's affective epistemologies speak incisively to the relevant discussions proffered by their early modern counterparts. Not only do they prioritize the epistemic importance of intuition and emotions, their writings, which encompass genres of prose, poetry, and plays, demonstrate how expressions of their affective knowledges practically impact their lives. In some cases, these alternative ways of knowing complement other established fields of study, such as medicine, and evince their equal worth. Realizing the practical contributions of felt knowledge empowers the feeling knower. In a letter written to William Godwin on October 13, 1795, Mary Hays recounts her own experiences in learning. She exclaims in the midst of this recounting, "Ah! How impotent is *mere* reasoning against reiterated feeling"! Her involuntary gush represents both an irrational epiphany²⁰⁷ and a statement made after careful deliberation. It balances feeling and thinking to demonstrate the production of Hays' value judgment about what it means to know. Hays takes control over both reasoning and feeling by putting each faculty in its place. Her gushing deliberation negotiates power between the two, taking power away from one ("how *impotent* is *mere*") to exalt the other. This balancing of agencies between reasoning and feeling subsequently thematizes Hays' more notable literary works.

In *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796), Hays describes Emma's coming into

²⁰⁶ This idea of Romantic epistemology and activism as continuum is also quoted by Carr and Robinson, from Breton, page 2.

²⁰⁷ As opposed to a logically deduced conclusion; see analogous example of Sprat's diatribe against eloquence and my explications, which underscores the compulsion of emotion to dictate speech. Page 174.

learning through a recollection that both reminisces upon a former process of organic knowing and laments the tainted method of knowledge production that the process eventually became. Emma speaks of being inspired to read from listening to her aunt's storytelling: "I listened with ever new delight," she writes, "the more they excited vivid emotions, the more wonderful they were, the greater was my transport" (14). Her emphasis on a transporting delight and wonder echoes Cavendish's pleasure-driven ideology. Emma acts upon the kind of heart-piece sense which Trapnel promotes in her prophecies; her vivid emotions compelled her to learn. Her method of learning is (and simultaneously is not) brain-study. She "learned to recite verses, to modulate [her] tones of voice," physically embodying the knowledge that she pursues while acquiring the instructions for her emulation through the reading of books. Emma "learned to read quickly and with facility," but as Austen cautions in her letter to Thomas, the rewards of such scholarly endeavors "fostered vanity." As a result, Emma "began to think [her]self a wonderful scholar." Emma's pointed "thinking" herself a scholar, when in fact she merely imitates bookish examples, exposes precisely the impotence of reasoning that Hays observes. That thinking oneself a scholar and (what is here implicitly stated) actually being a scholar are realistically different bids reconsideration of Hays' delicate relationship with the moniker. Namely, Emma's recognition of the disconnect between thinking and being encourages us to move beyond this project's discussions about Trapnel's revolution, Austen's disclaimer, and Cavendish's feigned unschooledness to inquire whether their collective protest -- "*I am not a scholar*" -- ought to be interpreted not as cautious self-censorship, but as a rhetorical jettisoning of the label for an identity that is more powerful.

Mary Robinson denounces the inaccessibility of books to women, a condition

which she sees as contributing to a general suppression of women by men who claim to be well-read. In her *Thoughts on the Condition of Women* (1799), she tackles this “injustice of mental subordination” by mapping out book-learning (in particular, the culturing of theological or political opinions), domestic knowledges (“to brew, to bake, and to spin” – those “indispensably necessary qualifications” for women), and knowledge of the supernatural (denounced as “the reign of credulity,” those “idle tales of ghosts and goblins”) to expose the unnaturalness of such mandated compartmentalization of different knowledges (57-58). This division of knowledges, Robinson argues, restrict what women can and should know to trivialities while authorizing what men may know to reinforce in turn those same discriminatory restrictions. The concomitant powers to read and write, moreover, dictate practices that further act upon restriction through physical discipline. “We do not read in history of any act of cruelty practised towards a *male bewitcher*²⁰⁸,” Robinson retorts, “though we have authentic records to prove, that many a weak and defenceless woman has been tortured, and even murdered by a people professing Christianity, merely because a pampered priest, or a superstitious idiot, fancied such oppression” (58). Robinson boldly conflates women’s “presumptuous” desire to read books with the potentially scandalous esoteric knowledges that are frequently assumed to be in women’s possession. She juxtaposes the absence of (read) historical accounts of the “male bewitcher” against the authentic proofs of Christianity’s oppression; she demystifies the

²⁰⁸ According to the OED, “bewitch, v.”: “to affect (generally injuriously) by witchcraft or magic” (1275-1864); “to influence in a way similar to witchcraft; to fascinate, charm, enchant. Formerly often in a bad sense; but now generally said of pleasing influences” (1526-1876). In this context, Robinson touches upon the persecution of witches just as much as she taps into the sense of wonder that knowing inspires. The male bewitcher holds the power to oppress with the knowledge he possesses; he also, being able to “bewitch,” holds the relative power to alter –or, more precisely, to confound – other people’s ability to know.

immaterial harms that women's knowledge is accused of doing in light of the actual harms that men, with their claims to certain forms of superior knowledge, sanction themselves to do. Her counter-accusation of the male witch ultimately subverts socio-political power by pushing for an epistemic re-ordering.

Robinson's diatribes never implicated her in an actual witch trial, as Trapnel's prophecies did. But her language figuring supernatural elements is indisputably more blatant and confrontational than the biblical exegeses of the prophet-poet. Robinson's poetry frequently flaunts the speaker or poet as a woman who knows.²⁰⁹ Her *Stanzas, Written After Successive Nights of Melancholy Dreams* (1791), delineates her own melancholic experiences in a way that echoes Cavendish's verses. Melancholia is likened to "desolating miseries," a haunting of "scenes of mental pain" caused by "airy phantoms...[who] with spells invade... round the fibres of [her] brain." The same poetic materialization of abstract suffering occurs in these lines, which take into account both imaginative expressions of physical experience as well as (neuro)scientific understandings thereof. Robinson, like Cavendish, allegedly combined psychotropic substance and literary activity to treat her ailment.²¹⁰ Her writing seeks to improve her personal well-being by performing a kind of mathematical magick of her own.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Her *Ode to Melancholy* (1791), for example, begins with a provocative plea to a "sor'ress of the cave"; Robinson invokes images of "Aery Spirits," "Haunted Tow'rs," and "the witching Yew," in culmination of the melancholic environment that she welcomes, one that fosters her fancy and produces the poetry she writes therapeutically (80).

²¹⁰ Paula Byrne records in her biography of Robinson: "One night after bathing, on a day when she had suffered even greater pain than usual, Mary swallowed nearly eighty drops of laudanum. She fell into a deep sleep but then awoke in a kind of reverie and called for her daughter to take up a pen and write down what she would dictate" (267). Byrne argues in conclusion that Robinson may have been the pioneer writer who inspired the English Romantic tradition of opium-inspired writing (272).

²¹¹ Robinson's *Ode to the Della Crusca* (1791), for instance, addresses the sentimental poet society with her command to "chaunt...matchless numbers o'er and o'er" and to "court the sullen ear of night...to where

Robinson and Hays' usage of affective knowledge to treat themselves, engage civilly, and autodidact help not only to create functionally and stylistically personal literature but also to produce, as creative members of an information marketplace,²¹² pedagogical texts for public consumption. Andrea Henderson concurringly notes that in the late eighteenth century, many writers framed their variety of emotional experiences as exchangeable goods. "Passions and desires," Henderson argues, "emerged alongside [the marketplace], and they bear the marks of its influence." (199). Similar to Trapnel's delivering of ballads, the selling and buying of emotional tokens – commodities iconizing human emotions – instruct the consumer on how to process and embody how they feel. Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* (1798) is, by her own profession, "an attempt to delineate the stronger passions of the mind." Naturalizing Trapnel's dichotomy of head-piece languages versus the heart-piece sense, the subtitle of Baillie's *Plays* indicates that the passions, like thought, logic, and the imagination, are products of cerebral activity. Baillie's attempt to "delineate" these proper functions of the mind to *feel* emphasizes that abstract qualities (to borrow from Cavendish's argument) can be verbalized and, through verbalization, be understood.

The Introduction to Baillie's *Plays* proffers the notion of "Sympathetick curiosity,"

encircled by the sacred Nine...awakes the never-dying song" (56). As established in Chapter Two, numbers empower narratives to act practically by exerting influence on the proportions and dimensions of the status quo. In this particular context, Robinson exalts the Della Cruscans' "matchless numbers," as in their sublime poetry (see OED, "numbers, n.": "Musical periods; groups of notes; melodies, musical strains" (1595-1945)). At the same time, her specific attention to the "circle" and the "sacred Nine" unmistakably signifies a link to ideas about the universe and the holy trinity. Like Cavendish, who, "from the circle of her brain," raised figures of her friends, Robinson also addresses with her number-conscious chants the members of the Della Cruscans in a sort of conjuring (see OED, "numbers, n.": "The full count of a collection or company of persons"(1350-1859)). These observations justify further research on Robinson's practical mysticism, as the reason and aim of her compositions in this regard are yet unknown.

²¹² Extending from Campell's concept of the economy of dream thing knowledge (p.87), I treat Romantic women's writing as functional tools, commodities with quantifiable value that may be circulated and consumed.

that desire for knowledge motivated by one's natural disposition to sympathize with one another (28). The trilogy which make up the *Plays* – *Count Basil*, *The Tryal*, and *De Monfort* – explores remorse, jealousy, and revenge, putting a mirror up to these passions to encourage understanding and, as theatrical productions, for economic consumption. Baillie carves a unifying understanding of man as an intelligent being through De Monfort's vexed hatred of Rezenvelt. In a private confession to his friend Freberg, De Monfort acknowledges the inability of one's consciousness to truly "know nature's man" (II.i. 91). De Monfort characterizes man as one superficially knows it -- one who, "in smooth studied works/ Of polish'd sages, shines deceitfully / In all the splendid foppery of virtue" (l. 92-94). His portrayal of a well-learned man echoes Austen's understanding of a person's title, which, as ornament, "dazzles common eyes" (92). Like Trapnel's critique of the clergymen's garments and Cavendish's reiteration of the virtues, here De Monfort suggests that the more studied, polish'd, and dressed in virtues one strives to be the further one veers from his or her true self. The "secret soul" of nature's man, he insists, treasures "dark thoughts, / Foul fantasies, / vain musings, / and wild dreams" and is perpetually occulted (l. 95-97). De Monfort enumerates these qualities – "dark thoughts, foul fantasies, vain musings, and wild dreams" – those impractical, immaterial influences conventionally thought of as fatal flaws, and reinstates them as inextricable constituents of the soul. His acknowledgement resonates with Cavendish's similar validation of mental illnesses.²¹³ It legitimizes negative feelings as an essential part of being human. De Monfort therefore confronts the existential significance of this disconnect between the knowable, presented

²¹³ "Wherefore Apoplexy, Leprosie, Dropsie, and Madness, are Corporeal beings, as well as the rest of Diseases, and not abstracted Qualities," p.180.

man and his/her unknowable, natural self. He argues that a man who fails to confront his vexed soul “was never born” (1.95). His introspective revelation compels action. De Monfort commands, as if compelled by a gushing urgency, “Away! it is delusion all” (1.99). His command performs a practical imperative, exorcising, so to speak, the false knowledges of man and the deceptive world that sustains them. It is arguably also a poetic exorcism of his known inauthentic self.

De Monfort’s separation of the known man from the unknown soul and his poetic exorcism, like Cavendish’s blason, exert violence upon the concept of man and his sense of self. As a theatrical display, instances as such demonstrate a similar efficacy to Trapnel’s public performance of self-harm. Sean Carney notes such exertions of violence to study Baillie not simply as playwright but as a “martyr” (227).²¹⁴ Martyrological displays, either in Carney’s psychoanalytical expositions, in Trapnel’s self-harm, in Austen’s divine suffering, in Cavendish’s blasons, or in Baillie’s plays on tragic passions, all emphasize knowledge production as requiring the collaboration of passions free from reason. Knowing emerges more prominently through visual and visceral reactions, vocal “cries” and heartfelt internalizations. Baillie, with her affective knowledge, contributes practically as an able partner to her physician brother’s pathological lectures, the “Anatomy and Physiology of the Nervous System (1794)” (Burwick, 48).

Joanna Baillie’s practical contributions to her brother’s medical lectures, which are

²¹⁴ Employing Adam Smith and Jacques Lacan’s theories, Carney argues that the passions staged by Baillie are in fact figures of “antisocial desire, even as unconscious drive” which, through continuous resistance against rational knowledge, unravel the ego” (227). Carney saw Baillie’s writings in much the same way that Daniel regards Cavendish’s discursive surpluses and Battigelli’s notion of the mind’s exile: the writer, he argues, acts psychically through writing upon society and the body with violence and effects profound change. This sense of violence done as a projection of and influence onto oneself operates similarly to Trapnel’s prophetic displays and characterizes, in Carney’s view, Baillie as martyr.

capitalized by her attention to the power of human emotions, demonstrate her value of sympathetic curiosity not only for the well-being of the knower but also for the advancement of objective scholarly endeavors. Romantic thinkers acknowledged this efficacy as they created and fueled a movement that “marked a general change of minds” (Rosenthal, 37); early modern Englishwomen, as this dissertation strives to present, fully embraced it as they developed a practical consciousness. In the academy of twenty-first century America, the efficacies of the heart-piece sense fit awkwardly with brain-studied knowledge. The theories of Frost, MacQueen, Rotman, Fisher,²¹⁵ the philosophies of Agrippa and Dee, and the general knowledges of the wise women and the cunning folks, have faded into the margins as whimsical side notes to more legitimate scholarships. But what is established as legitimate scholarship also leaves certain aspects of human knowledge lying dormant. Lisa Sarasohn, in her understanding of Cavendish’s counter-arguments against rationality, notes a transaction of power that takes place when knowledge is filtered and validated. “Nature--and women and animals--escape the confining categories of natural philosophers,” Sarasohn writes (12). There is embedded in the fabric of knowledge creation legitimized as science (or natural philosophy, science’s predecessor) a limitation on the scholar from knowing – an *insufficiency* in grasping – truths about Nature, which lie just beyond the reach of human rationality. If, by daring to transcend reason through reiterated feelings, we open a path to a new level of knowing, what miracles there could be.

²¹⁵ On the numerological exploration of literature, pages 123.

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