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# The Threat at Court: Subversive Uses of Translation, Transcription, and Tradition in the Henrician Court

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The Threat at Court: Subversive Uses of Translation, Transcription, and Tradition in the  
Henrician Court

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in English

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## **Abstract**

This project aims to consider the use, at the Henrician court, of the strategies of translation, transcription, and tradition to cushion and to code the presentation of dangerous and radical ideas. Each of these strategies allows the authors deniability, while nonetheless allowing them to communicate clearly with their readers. These writers speak in a code that can be interpreted by anyone at court, but use that code to create just enough distance to avoid overt confrontation with the king. This is further complicated, though, by the king's own deeply influential role in the creation of that code. Each strategy also establishes each author's work within a larger continuity; this continuity serves to give verses greater context, greater interpretive potential, and greater authority for their contemporary readers. Further, those continuities could be accessed to support a range of goals—for the centralization of power, the preservation of aristocracy, or a push towards greater equality for those of lower birth—according to the goals of a particular poet. The impact of these varied and often conflicting modes and goals of subversive energies must be recovered in a complex negotiation of simultaneously separating and relating political, personal, and poetic strategies as understood and used by the Henrician court poet. A more thorough understanding of the energies that guided the production of these texts and of the outlets through which courtiers sought expression should enable a more thorough understanding of the relationships that constituted Henry's court. More importantly, though, understanding those relationships will create new avenues to understand the changes that came to all of England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, charting the negotiation between the increasing centralization of power and the increasing push for popularization of power.

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## I. Introduction

1536 was something of a landmark year for political scandal in England even considering the tumultuous history of the court of Henry VIII. One queen lost her head, another took her place, and Henry Fitzroy, the king's only acknowledged son, died suddenly, within months of setting up house with his new wife. This context was nearly fatal for Margaret Douglas, niece to Henry VIII, who chose a particularly ill-omened time to contract an unapproved marriage to another of the king's relatives, Thomas Howard.<sup>1</sup> Given the unstable state of the dynasty, Henry reacted viciously to his niece's transgression, imprisoning both Douglas and Howard. Howard fell under an act of attainder that simultaneously established as treason the act of which he was accused: marriage to a member of the king's family without the king's consent. Though contemporary observers suspected that the King intended clemency, his intentions were mooted by Howard's death in the Tower from ague.

Certainly, the outline of events has all the elements of a storybook tragedy: young lovers imprisoned by an embittered king who twists the law to suit his temper. What sets this tragedy apart, though, is the role these particular young lovers had in the production of poetry at court. Douglas and Howard were major contributors to, if not the creators of, the Devonshire Manuscript. Helen Baron and Elizabeth Heale are among the scholars who suggest that Howard was, in fact, the original owner and circulator of the manuscript, which perhaps passed to Douglas upon his death. In that Manuscript, a distinctive hand transcribes<sup>2</sup>, along with verse

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<sup>1</sup> Howard was youngest brother of the Duke of Norfolk, and so uncle to the recently executed Anne Boleyn. He was also uncle to Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and so to his sister, Mary, the wife of the recently-departed Henry Fitzroy and another contributor to the manuscript discussed here.

<sup>2</sup> Baron ascribes the hand to Howard, and Heale, among others, follows her in this analysis. However, Paul G. Remley makes a convincing case comparing the hand to Mary Shelton's in

epistles between the lovers, reconstructed versions of works both by Chaucer and misattributed to him by the 1532 Thynne edition of his works, as well as translations from Alain Chartier's *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. The placement of the verses and their content, as Baron, Heale, and Paul G. Remley all suggest, strongly reflect a connection to the verse epistles widely agreed upon as a product of the Douglas-Howard affair. Within this context, the changes made by the writer or writers, both in translation and transcription, become particularly striking. Through these verses, we can examine particularly clear examples of the uses Henry's courtiers made of transcription, translation, and tradition as systems for coding and preserving subversive energies.

At times, the changes made in the transcriptions are fairly isolated. In a selection from *The Remedy of Love*, a text attributed to Chaucer in the 1532 Thynne, the Devonshire Manuscript transcriber changes a single line that significantly alters the theme of the piece. In the Thynne edition, the speaker postulates that if the entire world were turned to writing materials, still "The cursydnesse yet and disceyte of women/ Coude not be shewed by the meane of penne" (qtd. in Irish 103). The transcription in the Devonshire, though, reads as follows:

If al the erthe were parchement scribable  
 Spedy for the hande /<sup>3</sup> and al maner wode  
 Were hewed and proporcioned to pennes able  
 Al water ynke / in damme or in flode  
 Euery man beyng a parfyte scribe & good  
 The *faythfulnes* yet and *prayse* of women  
 Coude not be shewed by the meane of penne (qtd. in Irish 103, emphasis mine)

As many critics have mentioned, including Heale, Remley, and Irish, the effect of the change of the penultimate line is striking—altering the complaint from a misogynist tradition to align instead

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other areas of the manuscript. Ultimately, as discussed in later chapters, I find Remley's analysis more compelling, though either possibility opens interesting interpretive possibilities.

<sup>3</sup> The slashes midline are Irish's own typographical interpretation for a similar mark in the original manuscript, as used in his transcriptions from the manuscript. I adopt this practice in my own transcriptions in later chapters.



with the medieval tradition of the defense of women. Further, as Irish goes on to discuss, “the line shows [Howard] clearly read with enough active interest to imagine the radical altering of textual meaning” (103). I argue, though, that the larger consideration is that this kind of change is important precisely because it is not remarkable. The strategies this reader/ writer uses reflect how Henry’s courtiers, as a group, read and write: with an eye towards the adaptability of texts and voices to accommodate new ideas and to memorialize new situations. Indeed, I will argue that the exact situation of this poem, like others in the manuscript, renders the question of the precise writer less important. Whether the writer is, as Heale would suggest, Howard himself, or, as Remley argues, Mary Shelton—another active contributor to the manuscript, and one whose work with the text lasted several years longer than Howard’s—the defense of women gains poignancy from its situation near the epistle verses exchanged between Howard and Douglas. In either case, the writer chooses to place this transcription alongside those prison exchanges, orienting the reader to understand the context of the defense of women as also a defense of the woman involved in those verses, whether as writer, transcriber, or subject.

The transcription of translated lines from *La Bella Dame sans Merci* which directly follows the above transcription may then seem to depart suddenly in an entirely other direction, but again the context of the lines becomes key to a useful interpretation. The lines open with an apparent condemnation of a disdainful lover:

O marble herte / and yet more harde perde  
 wyth mercy may not perce for no labor  
 more stronge to bowe than ys a myghty tree  
 what awayleth yow to shewe so great rygor  
 pleasyth it yow more to see me dye thys hour  
 before yowr eyen for yowr dysporte and play  
 than for to shewe some comforte and socour  
 to respyte death / wych chaseth me alway (qtd. in Irish, 104)

In their original context, these lines seem a more appropriate match for the unaltered version of *The Remedy*. However, given their placement in the Manuscript and the apparent date of transcription, Irish suggests the applicability of these verses to Henry VIII, rather than as a sudden departure in tone from defense of women to marked misogyny. Though Irish does not make the connection explicit, I suggest that his analysis is entirely logical in the context of a court system that often understood such love lyrics as political critiques. Further, the piece's divorce from its original title emphasizes the applicability of the appeal to the cruel mistress as instead an appeal to a despotic tyrant. In this approach, the "death" which chases the speaker, and the "comforte and socour" for which he pleads, lose their metaphorical sense. Instead, the speaker addresses a figure who holds his life at pleasure as well as, in this case, his heart—the King controls the outcome of Howard's love match, encompassing the metaphor of the original love lyric, and controls his life, making the hyperbole of the translated poem instead immediate and literal. This sense of the address is emphasized by the context within which the translation placed; taken together and analyzed within their historical contexts, the *Remedy* and the translation from *La Belle Dame* each take on new interpretative possibilities.

These selections highlight the importance of the basic parameters within which I aim to interpret the poetry of Henry's court. First, though nearly acting as a translation, the lines from Chartier nonetheless update *La Belle Dame sans Merci* within a markedly different framework. Second, the placement of each transcription suggests the contextual importance that contemporary writers ascribed to verse, as well as the interpretive freedoms with which they felt comfortable. As each of these short transcriptions suggest, poetry could be more easily re-contextualized than prose, offering a greater—or at least a more easily accessed—range of flexibility. Poetry makes simpler hybrids than prose, and the particular cultural position of poetry

makes it more useful and usable in this sense. Finally, the work as a whole functions with the traditions of courtly love and of medieval defenses of women. These traditions then further suggest the traditional misogyny of the court and the ways in which poetry was often understood as political critique. The poems reference and take part in the systems they critique, and they depend on their audience's understanding of those systems to create meaning. Taken together, these three lenses reveal the layers of subversive and resistant energy present in Henrician poetry, while emphasizing the importance of coding, through such strategies, to the survival of the writers and their works. If the Manuscript was indeed in Howard's possession during his time in the Tower, its survival may well have depended upon these verses appearing innocuous enough to avoid drawing the king's wrath. Afterward, the Manuscript's position as a woman's possession may well have further protected its content, drawing on a social expectation of the unimportance of women's writings and exchanges. The court society may understand that this power exists, but official power cannot acknowledge its existence without validating it. The later reception of that content, though, also highlights a danger of such coding: the erasure of the identities actually involved in composition. Verses from the work were often misattributed to Wyatt or Surrey, despite the latter's limited involvement with the texts and the difficult of tracing any definite or direct connection with the former at all. Only by re-inscribing the full range of identities of courtly poets and of interpretive possibilities can we regain the original perspectives of the text, and so begin to access more fully the potential purposes and strategies of courtier poets.

This project aims to consider the use, at the Henrician court, of these strategies of translation, transcription, and tradition to cushion and to code the presentation of dangerous and radical ideas. This strategy is not limited to use by those outside of the central ring of power—

subversion, in this context, need not come from the bottom. In fact, Henry VIII himself was one of the most sophisticated practitioners of this kind of manipulation. However, as he grew increasingly concerned with centralizing power and protecting his ego, courtiers deployed his own methods against him. Royal energies are frequently at odds with the more established subversive efforts of disgruntled courtiers like Skelton, Wyatt, and Surrey, but they also provide fuel for those energies. This context, of royal strategy and courtier strategy, will present these poets' efforts in a new, more comprehensive context. Each of these strategies allows the authors deniability, while nonetheless allowing them to communicate clearly with their readers. These writers speak in a code that can be interpreted by anyone at court, but use that code to create just enough distance to avoid overt confrontation with the king. This is further complicated, though, by the king's own deeply influential role in the creation of that code. Each strategy also establishes each author's work within a larger continuity; this continuity serves to give verses greater context, greater interpretive potential, and greater authority for their contemporary readers. Further, those continuities could be accessed to support a range of goals—for the centralization of power, the preservation of aristocracy, or a push towards greater equality for those of lower birth—according to the goals of a particular poet. While Wyatt and Surrey may have been the most talented users of translation in the service of subversive expression, they are not alone or original in their effort to use translation as an expression of resistance, nor were the two men always agreed upon what they were resisting or espousing.

The impact of these varied and often conflicting modes and goals of subversive energies must be recovered in a complex negotiation of simultaneously separating and relating political, personal, and poetic strategies as understood and used by the Henrician court poet. The conditions of repression imposed by the patron system and by royal authority create the

conditions necessary for the artist to imagine a privileging of his or her work. As Bakhtinian and Foucauldian theories both emphasize, this creation of a privileged creative space is designed to create a protectiveness of that space in the otherwise oppositional subject: the court poet's position is also necessarily entwined with the social structure he or she critiques. Thus, the Early Modern court poet tends to emphasize a desire for a "purer" social order, rather than one entirely new, and to portray his or her desires for a different order not as subversive, but as restorative—there is, in the poet's understanding, a natural order, and the work calls for a return to that order. The thought is revolutionary, then, in the original rather than the modern sense—a turning that brings the culture back to the ideal beginning, rather than to a new order entirely.

However, such a perspective does not lessen the subversive drive of the work; the poet claims that the divisions or circumstances that exist around the court are not "natural," and the push for a return to the natural order necessarily calls to destabilize the artificial order which has taken its place. In Bakhtin's thought, the Carnavalesque energy cannot be wholly contained, and loses its energy when official outlets attempt to co-opt it in order to control it; in Foucault's model, authority fails to acknowledge fully that discipline of unauthorized voices creates solidarity among the repressed rather than respect for the oppressor (63). In either case, the space that Henrician authority tried to leave as an outlet for criticism works only so long as Henry VIII himself can be trusted to respect that outlet—and, even then, likely never as fully as Henry desires. As the king becomes more repressive, though, interpreting the Humanist ideals of his education in ways that privilege his own power to greater degrees while undermining traditional aristocratic powers, these energies begin to solidify against him and to seek, by necessity, more subversive outlets.

Poetic subversion in Henrician England is cultural subversion, partially because of the inherent link between poetry and the established social structure; this is subversion, then, of both a highly particular and of several broad types. Specifically, this cultural subversion exists within and because of a structure that necessarily mixes the personal, cultural, and political: the court poet's home and primary household is often also the seat of cultural and political power. Generally, though, the complications of this social-structural position for the poet create very diverse responses, determined by each poet's goals, but then filtered through his or her strategies, social position, and audience. This range of goals and techniques means that a narrower approach is necessary to address the subversive techniques of the Early Modern English poet in any depth. An open king invites open criticism; a tyrant necessitates a different approach from those voices discontent with the order he has imposed. Translation, transcription, and poetic tradition then emerge as distancing devices which not only help the poet distance himself or herself from the content, but also even explicitly alert the audience to particularly controversial content. After all, the sophisticated audience for court poetry already understood the separation between poem and poet; if, then, poets sometimes felt the need to emphasize or widen that separation, they alerted the audience to some difference in the content of such poems.

These various strategies then reinforce the range of goals traceable in Henrician poetry, and they are always shaped by the structure of court culture. The poet who aims for personal advancement, revenge, or recognition necessarily uses larger political themes, because the persons from and through whom he must seek these aims are all invested in the larger political and social questions. The poet who genuinely desires social change—whether a return to an older order as he understands it or the creation of a new as he envisions it—may approach his subject through highly personal lyrics, for the milieu who must be convinced of the need for change are

also, to some degree, his intimate acquaintances. Even the poet who occupies the most archetypal subversive position, a poet of a less privileged position for whom personal and political are inextricably entwined because personal advancement is not possible without social change, must delineate her goals in terms that can survive the extant system and, in the best tradition of subversion, use its expectations for her ends. Thus, the Early Modern period in England produces highly culturally subversive and even overtly politically critical lyrics whose poet has essentially no aims to overthrow the existing system, alongside highly traditional poems whose only real use of subversion is in the technique, not the content, yet whose author likely had the most pointed critique in mind.

Such authors aimed to cloak their dissent with some reasonable deniability, using genre, the distancing claim of “translation,” and doubled language to protect poetry of protest. The atmosphere of court necessitates this sort of subversion. This dissertation will take its title from the collective noun for a group of courtiers: a threat.<sup>4</sup> The term is appropriate. The charged atmosphere in which these authors lived has been thoroughly explored by literary scholars and historians alike, but my work aims to examine that atmosphere as a tool used by writers, rather than solely as a limiting or provoking factor. Courtly milieu serves, in its way, as a context for the courtiers in the same way that translation, transcription, and tradition, variously, serve as context for their works: lending legitimacy, offering a vocabulary evocative of the genre, and cloaking, protecting. Working in the highly prescriptive social “language” of court courtesy and custom, the men and women of Henry’s court learned to use courtly behavior to protect

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<sup>4</sup> I owe my own discovery of this term to Susan Brigden; she defines the noun in *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: The Rule of the Tudors, 1485-1603*.

themselves; they were also able to use these codes of behavior at times to justify, defend, or hide intentions that ran counter to Henry's own.

The details of courtly context further allow us to analyze the energies of these poems as subversive, specifically, not as more generally resistant, critical, or even radical. This specification—subversive—is important because the history of court is a history of interpretations and intentions. Wyatt's very career is, in some ways, subversive, as he aims to establish a space for himself in a system that depends on a hierarchy meant to exclude men like him. Henry's Humanist goals have created a space for such advancement, but Henry then constantly emphasizes the importance of a social hierarchy that acknowledges his innate superiority, complicating any clear distinction of conservative or radical positions. Wyatt uses his talent for his own ends, true, but he is also constantly pressured by the ends to which Henry and Surrey want his talents used. Figures like Douglas and Howard, more well-established in the court, nonetheless take on roles that Henry clearly identifies as subversive, even as they themselves try to contextualize those roles as highly traditional. Surrey, particularly, may not have seen himself as a subversive agent, but as one pushing for a return to an earlier, more ideal mode of doing things—even as he worked hard to create and preserve a space privileging Wyatt's talent as somehow outside or above the privileging of aristocracy and nobility. Henry's control, though, means that these various figures with their widespread agendas all reach for subversive outlets.

While translation, transcription, and tradition all can serve as methods of cloaking subversive thought and of lending it legitimacy, each functions with distinct limitations and advantages, as well. Poetic translation is used, or at least survived, most often in the works of noble and gentry men. In part, translation serves to underscore the education of the translator-poet, emphasizing his place in a Humanist and classical tradition. That place, though, functions



in several distinct and different strains of Henrician cultural change, as will be examined in the chapters on translation. Further, though, the well-established understanding of translation as a vehicle for political thought may have made such work more accessible to a wider audience. I will examine the impact of *Tottel's Miscellanie*, for example, as an effort to spread and preserve subversive energies, complicated by Surrey's own drive to preserve often competing aristocratic and poetic privileges, simultaneously. Though translation would be seen later in the Renaissance and had been seen in the Middle Ages as women's work, the Henrician era sees a marked division of labor, with translation, particularly published translation, preserved as a space for male poets.

I will argue that women are less included in this vein of work because to work in translation would have added weight to their ideas in ways that worked against the strategies court women seem to have adopted at this time, given the contemporary culture's association with such work with a particular brand of education. Transcription will be examined here as the most protective strategy of subversion, deployed to allow almost complete deniability of any real content. Women writers like Shelton and Douglas used transcription to re-contextualize established works and frameworks without drawing unwanted attention to their work; the method seems also to have appeal for more minor male courtiers. This intersection often means transcription was also the most limited in large scale, real world affect—manuscripts were passed amongst a particularly select audience and often have no direct outlet to reach the populace at large. However, the very act of circulating subversive thought at Henry's court as a woman merits the attention here paid to the act, particularly the sophistication involved in accomplishing such circulation while maintaining a performance within the bounds of female courtiership.

Tradition, then, is the least clearly defined category, but I think it can be contained by a definition based in effect. Henry, for example, used traditional tropes to shore up the controversial energies of his early poems, but he did not feel the need to rely on the more distancing potential offered by translation or transcription. Poets who use tradition to support the energies of their poetry, then, may be less interested in cloaking their desired ends. Sometimes, this strategy may rely on a position of power, as is the case of Henry's own work, but as also likely applies to some of Surrey's more reckless works towards the end of his life, as he overestimated his own potential power. Other times, though, the writer may underestimate not his own power, but the power and scope of his thought; a poet may rely only on tradition because he thinks his work is not particularly or markedly subversive. If taken up by certain audiences or certain interpretations, though, a poem may ultimately take on subversive energies beyond the author's intent, as I will argue was sometimes the case in the Skelton's poetry. Tradition as subversive strategy, then, relies on effect: if the powerful are offended or threatened, the use of a traditional trope can be assumed to be subversive. Taken together, the three strategies address a nearly comprehensive view of poetry at the Henrician court. They indicate the many different subversive strategies of the authors and the many ways that subversive energies could arise even from attempts at orthodoxy, in a culture where orthodoxy could be subversive.

The project is, of course, deeply influenced by the framework texts of New Historicism, particularly those by Stephen Greenblatt. Raymond G. Siemens's and Peter C. Herman's more recent works on monarchic poetry provide some important context for the analysis of Henry's own work, establishing the principles of power and negotiation through which monarchic verse must be considered, and Herman's work on Margaret Tudor's writing also influences the analysis, here, of work by her daughter, Margaret Douglas, as he engages the negotiation of royal

power and gendered disenfranchisement. By adding to this analysis the approach espoused by critics like M.C. Bodden and Margaret Hannay in their recovery of women's texts and contexts, I aim to approach what may seem to be elitist texts with a more comprehensive view. Women were among the most prominent collectors and transcribers in the manuscript culture of the Henrician court, and their creation and use of that culture bears particular scrutiny as a site of subversive creation. The analysis of the centrality of women to production of texts in Early Modern England opens up the several key elements to understanding the coding that took place in such texts, particularly complicating any attempt to simplify the Petrarchan love lyric as an expression of male frustration. Although the poems analyzed here do belong to the courtly context, I hope to show how these courtiers' works reflected and influenced the spread of humanist thought throughout England, not just within her upper classes. The threat that such new systems posed to the established order suggest the reasons that particular categories of subversive coding became entrenched in the production of courtly verse. These categories of coding responded directly to Henry's centralization of power, which, by emphasizing his own ultimate authority, undercut the assumed power even of the middle-class men he raised to prominent positions.

This work is divided into three sections, each addressing a separate method of subversion. The first section will deal with the use of translation. In the first chapter, the focus will be on translation of Petrarch and other poets in the courtly love lyric tradition. Though Wyatt and Surrey are the most well-known actors in this genre, the chapter will also look at the works by more minor courtiers, including those preserved in the Devonshire Manuscript.<sup>5</sup> As the

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<sup>5</sup> The ambiguity here of which "minor courtiers" is partly due to the difficulty of analyzing the ownership of particular poems in the manuscript form.

chapter will emphasize, the value of translation had been understood for centuries, by its many separate acolytes, as adaptable to engage different messages, rather than as a strict transference of the original meaning from one tongue to another. Further, Henrician poets borrowed from their Continental predecessors an appreciation and understanding of the ability of the courtly love lyric to convey political frustration. Of course, this tendency is well-documented, but the scholarly work on the energies expressed in translation will serve as an excellent base for further inquiry into the ways that such coding works in other genres of courtly poetry. By joining translation to similar subversive coding techniques, we can highlight some consistent systems of political response and resistance at play across poetic genres, while the joint analysis will also highlight the ways that coding works differently in translations than through other outlets, with more clarity in its critiques and so more risk. Further, the previous focus has often been on decoding the emotions being expressed and on relating those expressions to specific events. Here, the focus will be instead on the use of translation as a genre that codes those emotions, makes them socially acceptable, and lends these emotions legitimacy through an attempt at universalizing the poets' experiences.

The second chapter will then shift attention to translation from classical and ancient sources, engaging translations like Surrey's *Aeneid* and Wyatt's *Psalms*, before moving forward to examine the use of translated work by young women in the last years of Henry VIII and brief reign of his son Edward, examining translations from verse into prose by Elizabeth I and Jane Lumley. The sheer weight of interpretive tradition associated with Virgil, the *Psalms*, or Euripides increases the translator's interaction with, and reaction to, the cultural myths surrounding each work. Surrey's *Aeneid* and Wyatt's *Psalms* both offer the poets imaginative access to positions of power. While both poets critique the performances of power by their leader

subjects, they both also align themselves with the authority of these men's positions. In addition to conferring authority on the critiques and valuations the two men outline in their translations, this authority may also be intended to legitimize the linguistic innovations Surrey and Wyatt add to their versions of the texts—and through which they seek further authority as masterly courtly makers. In contrast, both Elizabeth and Jane Lumley choose to work away from the verse versions they translate. The women both offer a vision of rhetorical authority for their female narrators or characters, but that authority is bounded by appeals to a greater masculine power. In a court that understands the potential of verse translation as resistance to authority, these young translators choose to instead protect their voices through greater appeal to the system. By moving their work into prose and framing women's voices as granted authority by their subjugation to a larger force, Elizabeth and Lumley mute, but do not silence, the implied resistance of a woman speaking.

The next section moves into a consideration of the strategies of transcription. This section will open with the third chapter of the work, devoted to the practice of transcription as practiced in circulated manuscripts of the time. Transcription, as shown in the opening analysis here, does not necessarily mean the strict and exact re-inscribing of a section of text. In fact, the practice often involved studied revision on a scale ranging from particular pronouns to entire stanzas, often offering an entirely different effect from that of the original piece. The effect of transcription also depends largely on context. The Devonshire Manuscript serves to demonstrate courtiers' proficiency at placement, highlighting the effects of such strategies as placing a couplet from one verse alongside lines from another to emphasize a particular theme or to create an entirely new poem from sections and lines of several separate poems. Like the practice of translation, transcription was understood as a method through which courtiers could reimagine a

text, making works more immediately resonant with their world. Compared to translation, however, transcription allowed for both greater flexibility and greater deniability. The imaginative engagement with the text is of a different sort, because the text can be more explicitly rearranged or broken apart to join with other texts. This chapter will be indebted to the work of Paul G. Remley, whose analysis of Mary Shelton's practice of transcription has opened important new avenues for manuscript research. The work aims to go beyond Remley's initial piece, though, in examining the practices of other authors and looking at the products of the manuscript as a collaborative project where transcription unites with multiple authorship. The further context of and comparison to translation and tradition should also allow for greater insight into exactly what transcription offered its authors that other outlets did not.

The fourth chapter, then, will continue the consideration of transcription, but shift into a focus on exchange and dialogue within manuscript creation. The focus of the chapter will be the exchange between Margaret Douglas and Thomas Howard during their imprisonment in the Tower and the process by which that exchange came to be preserved in the Devonshire Manuscript. The chapter will also, though, look at the ways that other sections of the manuscript preserve exchanges and conversations, wherein writers respond to and riff off of one another's works. The widespread use of such strategies emphasizes the particular literacies involved in the use of poetry at court; those particular literacies must be established for subversive energies to circulate successfully via context-dependent codes.

The work will close with a section on what may initially seem to be a more, or even overly, general theme in Henrician works: tradition. The fifth chapter here will deal with the tradition of the courtly love lyric. Particularly relevant to this chapter will be Henry's own verse. Henry worked almost exclusively in original compositions, many of which were likely meant to

be set to music. Henry showed an apparent resistance to using translation in his own work, perhaps because of the potential to be understood as using a system of coding which he understood as less authoritative. Nonetheless, Henry clearly saw the value of adapting established tropes to reinforce and reimagine his own position. This analysis will follow Siemen's and Herman's established critique of Henry's self-assertion through verse in the first decade of his reign, but further will aim to examine the king's use of particular frames as self-justification throughout his reign, drawing on historians' analysis of Henry's centralization of power as a radical act. Henry's attempts at centralization created reactive, conservative responses from his courtiers, who then themselves created spaces for new acquisitions of power. Henry and his courtiers wanted the ability to assign power while also wanting to preserve their own power on traditional terms, and drawing on traditional forms and themes to justify their assignments of power helped bolster such claims.

The sixth, and final, chapter will engage with the manipulation of particular historic traditions when addressing Henry's reign. Surrey, of course, famously uses the figures of both David and Sardanapalus to critique Henry's policies, but Surrey is far from isolated in these choices. The tradition of using Biblical and famous kings of classical antiquity as allegorical stand-ins for a reigning king was well-established. Skelton's work will provide an early example of such interpretation, and the King's own material choices in self-presentation will also be analyzed. Henry's own choices underline the subversion that takes place when courtiers manipulate his choices of royal precedent so that they become critiques rather than validation or valorization. Essentially, the space seems to work best as one for the negotiation of power. Courtiers felt that their assumption of power was normal and right, just as Henry felt about his own monarchical powers. Both groups, though, were simultaneously aware of and resistant to the

need to put their most radical claims to power in codes that both protected such claims and robbed them of at least some force.

A more thorough understanding of the energies that guided the production of these texts and of the outlets through which courtiers sought expression should enable a more thorough understanding of the relationships that constituted Henry's court. More importantly, though, understanding those relationships will create new avenues to understand the changes that came to all of England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, charting the negotiation between the increasing centralization of power and the increasing push for popularization of power. The outlets through which the king and his courtiers attempted to preserve and privilege their traditions often opened up new opportunities, and the Humanist atmosphere of the court created men and women to take advantage of those new chances and changes. Taken together, these analyses should establish not only that poetry was used to express subversive energies in their various forms, but that courtier-poets at all levels were trained to recognize and use this poetic coding.



## II. Translation and the Subversive Tradition

Translation has been so often and so thoroughly understood as a sort of code for courtiers that beginning this project with a chapter on the practice may seem at best superfluous, or, at worst, to imply that I aim here only to extend the established critical practice to new works. Certainly, that is part of the project, and even part of the importance of this chapter: to establish the current conversation about translation as a jumping off point for understanding other courtly verse. However, the establishment of this kind of reading as conventional obscures some important facts about the practice of the creation of the verse. This reading may by now have become so accepted that it has become traditional and even conservative: we see the same tropes, and so we miss the subversive and even shocking nature of the content. In practice, however, it was possible for writers at court were able to spend years using translation as coded commentary on contemporary events without ever becoming conservative in that commentary.

In fact, the tradition for the practice was important in its contemporary setting. Courtiers relied on the reading of their action as “traditional” to justify and, to a limited extent, protect their works. The use of Petrarchan verse translations aimed at Henry VIII’s particular vanities. The poetry itself was part of the pan-European Humanist tradition of which Henry so very much wanted to be considered the pinnacle. Given how ancillary England was seen as being by the usual Continental power players, the amount of praise Henry garnered as an ideal Humanist prince is worth noting, and will be discussed in greater detail in the fifth chapter of this work. Further, that attention shaped the expectations of the courtiers who served him, who understood their role as both artistic and advisory. These artists believed that part of their duty was to shape the politics of their country, even—or perhaps especially—when that meant criticizing the king.

The Henrician courtier-poets, then, were placed in a particularly difficult position by Henrician policies that essentially criminalized dissent.

The courtiers of Henry's court also often used translation to explore what it meant to be a man, as well as what service to king and country meant. Translation may have been particularly useful to such exploration because it tacitly allowed comparison of England's politics with those of the country in which the poem was originally written or in which other translations were already available. It opened up a space for imagining other ways of being. Equally important to poetic production, though, was the circumscription of such possibilities. Henry's court didn't just develop within a system of strict gender-coding; the entire structure of the court *depended* on that coding and so enhanced and developed its own highly particular system. Henry's courtiers often use the love lyric to work through frustrations at the subordinate, and so, to their view, feminized nature of appropriate courtly performance. Though Wyatt and Surrey are the most well-known actors in this genre, the Devonshire Manuscript preserves the work of other courtiers in this mode, as well<sup>6</sup>.

The value of translation had been understood for centuries, by its many separate acolytes, as adaptable to engage different messages, rather than as a strict transference of the original meaning from one tongue to another. Henrician poets borrowed from their Continental predecessors an appreciation and understanding of the ability of the courtly love lyric to convey political frustration. Of course, this tendency is well-documented, but the scholarly work on the energies expressed in translation serves as an excellent base for further inquiry into the ways that such coding works in other genres of courtly poetry. By joining translation to similarly

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<sup>6</sup> The ambiguity here of which courtiers is partly due to the difficulty of analyzing the ownership of particular poems in the manuscript form, as examined later in the chapter.

subversive coding techniques, such as those used in transcription and in original composition, we can highlight some consistent systems of political and social resistance at play across poetic genres. The joint analysis will also highlight the ways that coding works differently in translations than through other outlets. As I will argue, in translation this system functions with more clarity in its critiques and so more risk, as the topic may explicitly be a corrupt ruler, and even the more shielded love poetry was widely understood as poetry about service at court. However, the nature of “translation” also offered a certain kind of deniability that could protect the poet/translator.

That clarity and deniability were both bound up in the tradition of the thing. Across Early Modern Europe, Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* “was considered ... [a] repertory, a sort of commonplace book where poets could find ready-made materials and a common, transnational poetic language *per figuris* shaping emotions and feelings for a widespread western European aristocratic milieu” (Domenichelli 66). That language—the available vocabulary—functioned on a huge scale as one kind of coding, but the English courtiers invested their own particular contextual anxiety into their restructuring of these works. Petrarchan poetry serves as a useful outlet for such expression “because of its engagement with such political issues as the distribution of power among agents, the assimilation of difference, and the organization of individual desires into common structures of action and reaction” (Greene 131-132). This last point, on the organization of individuals into a common structure, is important for any analysis of courtly verse, but particularly here, where I wish to emphasize the uses of such poetry as part of a social structure and, simultaneously, as a force which aims to shape that social structure. In fact, their training in understanding translation as an adaptive commentary may have helped shape courtiers’ ability to adapt other genres into commentary. The habit of accessing alternative meanings could be applied to other forms, once

learned—in the same way that I am aiming to use our established understanding of the multiple meanings of translation to open up new understandings of other courtly poetry. Translation, then, becomes a point of access for these practices not only in our modern understanding and criticism, but also in the original historical practice.

The previous focus has often been on decoding the emotions being expressed and on relating those expressions to specific events. I wish instead to focus on the use of translation as a genre that codes those emotions; makes them socially acceptable, expressible, and exchangeable; and lends these emotions legitimacy through an attempt at universalizing the poets' experiences. In short, I want to look at translation as one element of a system of coding, rather than accessing the code of each poem for its own sake. Greene expresses the appeal of "[l]ove poetry [a]s one of the available discourses—for sheer volume in this period, perhaps the most available—in which the concerns of power, selfhood, and difference can be figured with shadings of particularity and ambiguity" (149). As the most prominent discourse, translation of love poetry marks a natural starting point; as only one of the available discourses, the practice can be used to explore what elements transfer between disciplines and how each kind of poetic work influences others.

Finally, as each of these poems was included either in *Tottel's Miscellanie*<sup>7</sup> or in other, later collections the work will consider the imposition of titles across all of these works as an extension or result of the system of coding inherent in such work. Tottel's motivations are unclear, though I attempt to analyze each example within the larger project of the *Miscellanie*. The work of compilers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though, also assigned titles—and sometimes

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<sup>7</sup> The *Miscellanie* was a collection, first printed in 1557, of various courtly love lyrics. On the one hand, the *Miscellanie* was an invaluable repository for Wyatt's and Surrey's works, among others. On the other, as I explore throughout, Tottel's investment in legitimizing forces may have led to the erasure of some authors and to the cloaking, intentional or accidental, of the more subversive content in the verses he chose to include.

authorship—that continued the imposition of Petrarchan and love themes in the absence of such cues from the poem. However, the lack of titles in the original works would have emphasized their flexibility. I do not think, then, that the context of the courtly love tradition enforced a strict interpretation of all lyrics as love lyrics, in the way that the later projection of titles might suggest. Instead, this process suggests that the work of the original authors was successful in its construction of deniability and alternative interpretations, but that greater work must be done to consider the socio-historical context and the compositional context—of manuscript culture, multiple versions, and courtly exchange.

Because my goal is to explore the most prominent practice as a kind of template for accessing other, less studied strategies, I begin here with perhaps the most prominent and prolific courtly-maker: Thomas Wyatt. The versions of Wyatt's and of Surrey's works included here will be taken from *Tottel's*; although the versions in Tottel's collection often differ significantly from the manuscript versions that first circulated at court, there is value in seeing the forms these poems took in their first presentation beyond the court. Generally, the subversive and even overtly critical elements of the poems are maintained, and the only mitigation added is Tottel's titles. Indeed, the first example of Wyatt's poetry which I wish to examine includes also one of the most incongruous titles: Wyatt's "CEsar, when that the traytour of Egypt," which Tottel titles "'Of others fained sorow, and the louers fained mirth" (22r). The title added by Tottel may function in two distinct ways: either as a misreading or as an additional layer of subterfuge. For what reasons does Tottel assume that this poem, which seems most overtly about the hypocritical performances demanded of those in the public eye, applies to or speaks of a love affair? Why does Tottel speak only of others' "sorrow," when the original poem balances between Caesar's feigned tears *and* Hannibal's assumed cheer? Partly, Tottel may be understood to appeal to the

aristocratic tradition of courtly love as an authorizing force—that is, for much the same reason that the preeminent name on the flyleaf is Surrey’s, whose position, title, and bloodline far outstripped Wyatt’s. Additionally, though, the man who created this collection would necessarily have access to the interpretive force of the frustration, resentment, and often anger which these courtier-poets expressed through their verse. As such, these titles may also serve as an attempt to gain security for the text by masking its challenges to authority.

If the titles do attempt to preserve the ability of the poems to mean more than they say, they simply extend part of the project of Wyatt’s poems. Sacks makes the point that sonnets like Wyatt’s “may come into being in large part to construct or repair enough sense of interiority...so that they can address and maybe redress whatever has shamed them into being” (28). Greene characterizes the objects of such poetry as “celebrated and deplored as epitomes of the speakers’ and their societies’ polarized values” (Greene 133). Certainly, such a characterization applies, too, to the kings and ministers who were often the veiled objects of such poetry. Henry, particularly, seems an appropriate target for such doubled reference, celebrated as the perfect Humanist prince and deplored as an archetypical tyrant. Such multiplicities are apparent in “CEsar, when that the traytour of Egypt,” where Wyatt expresses “the incommensurability of human insides and outsides, and the helplessness of the first person within a warped system of communication” (Greene 145). In *Tottel’s* version, the poem runs thus:

"Of others fained sorow, and the louers fained mirth"  
CEsar, when that the traytour of Egypt  
With thonorable hed did him present,  
Couering his hartes gladnesse, did represent  
Plaint with his teares outward, as it is writ.  
Eke Hannibal, when fortune him out shit  
Clene from his reigne, and from al his entent  
Laught to his folke, whom sorow did torment,  
His cruel dispite for to disgorge and quit.  
So chaunced me, that euery passion

The minde hideth by colour contrary,  
With fained visage, now s[ad], now mery,  
Wherby, if that I laught at any season:  
It is because I haue none other way  
To cloke my care, but vnder sport and play (22r)

Greene's reading accesses Wyatt's expression of frustration at the limitations of self-expression, both those that are natural to the human state and those imposed by the courtly system. However, we must acknowledge that such frustrations are inherently political in the Henrician system, where limitations and rules of self-expression are at least ostensibly determined by the monarch.

Wyatt seems to use Caesar as a frequent analogue or stand in for Henry, as in "Whoso List to Hunt" and "Circa Regna Tonat;" the relationship is of course strengthened by the understanding of "caesar" as simply "king." And in this depiction of a king who rejoices over the death of his noble adversaries while pretending sorrow, Wyatt could have thought of any of a dozen incidents in Henry's own reign. Indeed, the entire first two quatrains of the sonnet seem most likely to apply to Henry, as emphasized by the use of commanding historical heads of states for analogous examples. Further, the first quartet initially seems to cut off any potentially sympathetic interpretation. Historically, understandings of Caesar were more complex—he could be both villain and hero. The opening of Wyatt's poem, though, takes a particular and decided stand:

CEsar, when that the traytour of Egypt  
With thonorable hed did him present,  
Couering his hartes gladnesse, did represent  
Plaint with his teares outward, as it is writ. (22r)

Caesar does not truly weep for Pompey, and his sorrow is all show. Since Caesar's sorrow is show, he is allied with the traitorous "other" of the Egyptian. Indeed, one particular identity for the 'traitor' could be Pothinus—certainly one of the central plotters—whose association with the feminized luxury of the east and whose status as a eunuch would, by association, emphasize the

unmanliness of Caesar's actions. The implication then, reaches much further, casting the speaker's lot with one particular ideological interpretation of history. Caesar is *not* a hero, these first lines imply, and perhaps a tyrant who overthrows popular rule *cannot* be a hero, or even a proper man.

The lines on Hannibal, though, are less plainly critical; the inside and outside of the man still do not match, but now the reader understands the separation as a sign of courage. The "Eke" that begins the fifth line emphasizes both the shift and the connection, as the next example commences:

...Hannibal, when fortune him out shit  
Clene from his reigne, and from al his entent  
Laught to his folke, whom sorow did torment,  
His cruel dispite for to disgorge and quit. (22r)

This, then, emphasizes another element of the lines on Caesar—in both cases, the mismatch between show and emotion is actually advantageous. In opening with the hypocritical Caesar, Wyatt apparently critiques this show, but he quickly shifts to an example that can be understood as sympathetic, even admirable. Further, the reader's sympathies are, in some sense, misaligned according to the values of the day. Wyatt offers two examples of masculine performance, both celebrated generals, but one in the flush of victory and the other in the agony of defeat. There seems, in the poem, more imagined opportunity to play the man in the face of martial failure than in the bloom of success, particularly given the presence of the likely-feminized Egyptian traitor. This, then, complicates the understanding of the poem's potential commentary on Henry's reign—certainly he could be the hypocritical Caesar, but he is also a king oft disappointed in war, aligning him with the defeated Hannibal. Further, Pompey had been the head of the conservative faction. Interpreting the conservation as one of power for the elites, rather than government by the common man, creates a quite different effect—Caesar's show of sorrow is appropriate and



efficacious, and there may be little shame in only pretending to mourn an enemy of the people. The criticism is both decreased and turned against the norms of a culture which demands such performance.

The shift between the second quatrain and the following tercet, then, opens the possibility of a change of the orientation of the critique from personal to societal. The speaker gathers, from his earlier examples, the conclusion

...that euery passion  
The minde hideth by colour contrary,  
With fained visage, now s[ad], now mery, (22r)

Initially, then, this may seem another lament about the falseness of society. However, the final tercet interrupts this set of expectations as well—the social critique now applies to the speaker of the poem:

Wherby, if that I laught at any season:  
It is because I haue none other way  
To cloke my care, but vnder sport and play (22r)

The speaker is as duplicitous as anyone else, but that duplicity is also a utility—a way of preserving interiority. Sacks supposes that the question underlying this “critique of dissembling” may still be “to what extent could such an appearance, however ‘honest,’ serve the inner life it is supposed to lay bare?” (22). If social expectations create the parameters of communication, the speaker’s and the objects’ practices of dissembling may be the best way to protect and to project the individual.

Further, because the importance of those historical figures of the opening lines is not erased, the critique also serves to collapse social boundaries. Wyatt’s problem, the charge his speaker faces, is the same as that faced by kings—and kings across time, moreover. Even as the poem critiques the court system, then, it also suggests an inevitability to these limitations and

frustrations. From overt critique, the lines turn to statement of fact, a simple description of the world within which Wyatt exists. Such a description offers the reader an important guideline—trust nothing on the surface. If Wyatt’s poems are understood, then, as a piece of a larger system of coding, the message is clear—do not trust the apparent message of any given piece. Whatever a poem seems to be “about,” the poem is as much a part of the courtier’s performance as his dress, his play, or his speech, and the poem suggests that its lines should be similarly distrusted and dissected according to the context, just as the “real” reactions of both Caesar and Pompey can be accessed through a restoration of the original, surrounding action.

Wyatt’s “I Finde no peace, and all my warre is done” demonstrates the interpretive importance of such context. Tottel uses the title “Description of the contrarious passions in a louer,” and indeed such a title does speak to the placement of the poem in a tradition of love poetry based in contrasting extremes (22v-23r). The poem begins with six lines, each containing a contrast, followed by a contrasting couplet, then proceeds with another six lines of internal contrasts. Part of the context, then, is this sort of balancing verse as a feature of courtly love lyrics. However, the larger context is also a historical context, and Wyatt’s own oeuvre of complaint often extends to courtly service. Seen through this lens, the poem takes on much more subversive energies. From the first line, the speaker’s arguments can be seen as resistant to the contemporary strictures of service.

In this context, the first line—“I Finde no peace, and all my warre is done” —may in fact be a double complaint; the space of martial achievement has been cut off, and the speaker is also not left in peace. The increasing centralization of the court and decrease in military action of the period could produce such a complaint in any number of aristocrats—a class who traditionally gained honor in combat was now expected to instead pay constant court to the King as the new

source of honor. The third line, then, “I flye aloft, yet can I not arise,” similarly expresses a doubled tension of a system within which power is held so extensively by the King and those he favors at a given moment. Wyatt himself would have experienced this problem any number of times in his career—favored enough to be sent frequently abroad as an ambassador and at times admitted to Henry’s most intimate social circles, but never raised in any permanent way above the status his father had achieved, and always subject to Henry’s tempers and suspicions. Indeed, the line that follows— “And nought I have, and all the world I season”—seems particularly appropriate to exactly the work of an ambassador, sent throughout Europe but under the strict and often impossible dictates of his monarch.

The following four lines, then, unite around a theme of carcerality, another topic with strong connections both to themes of courtly service and to Wyatt’s own experience:

That lockes nor loseth, holdeth me in prison.  
And holdes me not, yet can I scape no wise:  
Nor lettes my liue, nor dye, at my deuise,  
And yet of death it geueth me occasion. (23r)

The speaker complains of a force that imprisons him in misery without any apparent, “real” physical constraints. Such lines offer a clear case of the ways in which Petrarchan tropes were revitalized by the complaints of Henry’s courtiers. Love as a prison was a poetic ideal; Henry’s rule proved, though, that acts of love or service improperly performed could lead to much less metaphorical constraints and punishments.

One line stands out from the rest for its physicality and for the lack of analogues in other contemporary love lyrics. The freezing and burning, the torture and delight are fairly common tropes, but following the prison lines, the speaker claims that “Without eye I se, without tong I playne.” A blind and mute speaker, apparently as a result of some kind of disfigurement, is a more visceral image than that of the rest of the poem, or than is typical of the larger body of

work. In this moment, I suggest, the poem itself becomes the speaker. Analogous riddles were highly popular at court; they filled the same kinds of exchanged manuscripts and commonplace books that would have been the first homes of much of Wyatt's verse. The thing that sees and records the actions of the unjust master/mistress and the tortured servant is the poem. What that poem records is that the speaker's self-loathing is intimately bound up in his service to another:

I wish to perish, yet I aske for helth:  
I loue another, and I hate my selfe.  
I fede me in sorow, and laugh in all my paine,  
Lo, thus displeaseth me both death and life,  
And my delight is causer of this strife. (23r)

If a doubled interpretation is opened up, wherein the speaker is lover and poem, then the "delight" becomes similarly doubled, both the beloved and, potentially, the act of writing or of self-creation, in a sense. The poem's desire to die, then, complicate the speaker's desire to die; if the poem is an act of performance of self, the speaker's contradictory desires can potentially be read as possible if he can escape this space of performance. While Tottel's title encourages an interpretation of this service as that of unrequited or tortured love, the context of Wyatt's extensive work suggests that the "other" could as easily be the person behind the imposition of courtly service under which he so often chafed. The final line may codify Tottel's decision to treat the lyric as love poetry, but Wyatt's long and complex history of court service suggests any number of alternatives.

While "I Finde no peace" may perhaps offer some cues towards consideration as a Petrarchan love lyric, "My galley, charged with forgetfulnesse" aligns more definitely with "Caeser, when that the traitor of Egypt" in the absence of any clear suggestion of such a context. Nonetheless, Tottel adds just such a distinction through his title:

"The louer compareth his state to a shippe in perilous storme tossed on the sea"  
My galley, charged with forgetfulnesse,

Through sharpe seas, in winter nightes doth passe,  
Twene rocke, and rocke: and eke my fo (alas)  
That is my lord, stereth with cruelnesse:  
And every houre, a thought in readinesse,  
As though that death were light in such a case.  
An endesse winde doth teare the sayle apace  
Offorced sighes and trusty fearefulnesse,  
A rayne of teares, a clowde of darke disdaine  
Haue done the weried coardes great hinderance,  
Wrethed with error and with ignorance,  
The starres be hidde, that leade me to this paine,  
Drownde is reason that should be my comfort:  
And I remaine, despairing of the port. (23r)

Again, the insistently limited metaphor of the title suggests that Tottel assigned it with some distinct aim in mind, but the exact authorizing action is difficult to assess. Nonetheless, if the title insists that the poem is casting Cupid as the speaker's cruel lord and torturer, then Cupid (or the speaker's heart) forces the speaker to do what his rational mind does not want. Given that the courtier is also in a sense a "louer" of the monarch, the title may not, ultimately, shut off the alternative interpretations available.

In the poem, lines three and four emphasize the applicability of the poem to Wyatt's service at Henry's court. "Twene rocke, and rocke: and eke my fo (alas)" both continues to chart the journey of the galley/speaker and aligns the foe with the rocks and "sharpe seas" around which the soul must navigate. The enjambment emphasizes the surprise of the next line: "That is my lord, stereth with cruelnesse." The foe is also the lord, and also the one at the helm of the journey. This lord, however, steers his craft with cruelty. The analogy of ship to country springs easily to mind, and, in this case, the captain is a hard one. The comparison is further emphasized by Henry's own role in establishing the Royal Navy, perhaps even veering near a dangerous reference to Henry's naval defeats against the French early in his reign.

The language is further suggestive of a lost path, throughout, which calls to mind the changing perceptions of Henry and of his kingship.

An endlesse winde doth teare the sayle apace  
Offforced sighes and trusty fearefulnesse,  
A rayne of teares, a clowde of darke disdaine  
Haue done the weried coardes great hinderance,  
Wrethed with errour and with ignorance,  
The starres be hidde, that leade me to this paine,  
Drownde is reason that should be my comfort:  
And I remaine, despairing of the port. (23r)

The speaker cannot see the stars or revive the reason which should guide his galley; the tack of his ship has been worn down through tears, disdain, error, and ignorance. As a result of all these complications, the speaker no longer trusts the end of his journey. Here, that end may be of the soul, whose fate has been called into question by the Protestant reformation, or of the physical body, whose fate, most courtiers now understand, may be subject to the capricious jealousies of their king. As such, the galley is “charged with forgetfulnesse” in , at minimum, the senses of needing to forget what was expected in order to go forward, of being loaded down by the weight of what others have forgotten, and of being charged by the captain/foe to forget—to move only forward, leaving the mistakes of the past as irredeemable. By emphasizing the “charge” of forgetting, the speaker paradoxically encourages a process of recalling, as the reader tries to sense what it is that must be forgotten.

From these examples of Wyatt’s contextualized practice, I want to move into a new comparison of Wyatt’s and Surrey’s versions of Petrarch’s Rime 140, considering each specifically as an expression of its poet’s subversive ideals. Wyatt was, perhaps, the more cynical of the two, in terms of his belief in the efficacy of language to effect change. However, Surrey’s belief in the efficacy of his own efforts is linked to a particularly arrogant strain of naiveté—a misapprehension of his own importance and power. If Wyatt is less certain that the

world will turn out all right by his lights, he seems also more sympathetic in his frustrations and his worldview. Surrey's own view of what a "good" world would be is less appealing to the modern audience, and his sense of his own infallibility can be frankly off-putting. Wyatt's poetry tends to speak to a *wish* that his world placed more value on talent, that goodness and/ or talent might be enough to secure some sense of place and surety of safety, and that goodness and talent might be more easily reconciled—that is, that men of talent, such as himself, did not so often feel that they could only fully exercise those talents through compromise of personal moral codes. In contrast, Surrey's poetry booms with a *belief* that morality belongs to a particular brand of nobility, that talent will almost always follow the inborn worth of the nobleman, and that Surrey himself is preeminently noble, preeminently talented, and so, of necessity, preeminently *right*. The third and fourth points are inarguable; Surrey's rich history of assault and rash action makes his conclusion impossible.

Domenichelli argues of Wyatt that "[t]he kind of English he uses, the kind of expression he looks for...bears witness to a lower, more colloquial linguistic choice;" he contrasts these choices with the "higher" language of Surrey (Domenichelli 74). The particular projects of the two poets were indeed different—but their belief in the importance of language was shared, even if they brought to that belief quite disparate ideological preconceptions and aims. In this separation, the stakes were on not only language, but "also self-perception: the right way of feeling shaped by the naming of the figures of the mind's life" (Domenichelli 74). It follows, then, that when Wyatt chooses the more common language, he makes an evaluative statement about how one should be and of what sort of men the court should be composed. Regardless of the ostensible object of a particular poem, Wyatt's very language makes every poem a subversive act, arguing for a space for the Englishman as a central figure at the court—the site and

seat of government. While Wyatt's vision may not be entirely radical—that his language is more common does not make it the language of, for example, rural farmers—his vision is nonetheless several degrees more comprehensive than Surrey's. Domenichelli catches the poetic, that is to say, in this case, the more abstract, philosophical significance, but does not fully engage the sociopolitical implications thereof. Wyatt's poetry works in Wyatt's world; Domenichelli comes nearest to the importance of this with his points that "Wyatt's idea of poetry, his own implicit *ars poetica*...must be understood in the same key of *mediocritas* struck by Castiglione"

(Domenichelli 75). Indeed, such arguments for meritocracy indicate the very reason that Henry could be both denounced as an upstart and celebrated as the coming of the new Ideal. Humanism invested ability over tradition—and so men of ability could rise. Henry himself would very likely not have understood his own power or fame in these terms, and it is possible that subjects like Wyatt might not have, either, particularly given Wyatt's father's rather touching loyalty to the Tudor dynasty. But the fact remains that Henry's investment in raising England up is related to his project of establishing a government of meritocracy. Surrey, though, understood things pretty much exactly that way—it was quite all right for his beloved Wyatt to be raised to a certain status based on merit and talent; it was quite another to put a king on the throne based on anything other than hereditary right, and Surrey was not, his later actions indicate, completely convinced of the greater Tudor claim to the throne.

In addition to privileging a system based on talent, though, "Wyatt's *lingua d'uso* seeks to identify with the very language of truth against 'newfickelness,' hypocrisy, and courtly life itself, which is seen as a huge lie" (Domenichelli 75-76). However, Domenichelli misses the irony that Wyatt so clearly grasps, going so far as to call Wyatt's poetry "a strong and direct language" (Domenichelli 76). But Wyatt knows better—he knows he works in a medium which is



inherently dependent on deception and effect, and he manipulates that affect to allow for a system of coding. That coding is meant to convey a “deeper” truth, yes, but the poet is always pointing the reader to the artifice, because only by recognizing the artificial surface can the reader be inspired to dig into the code to unearth the meaning—or cued to do so, as I argue that courtiers knew to expect, engage, and move beyond the artifice that contained the constructed communal code. In contrast, Surrey shows a great capacity to simultaneously condemn the artifice of others and to explain away any such taint to his own honorable actions.

The titles which Tottel assigns instantly evoke the differences between the two poets, and each one’s approach to the translation, which I include here in a comparative figure. Surrey’s poem is “of a louer rebuked,” while Wyatt’s “louer for shamefastnesse hideth his desire.”

<p>“Complaint of a louer rebuked”</p> <p>Loue, that liueth, and raigneth in my thought,  That built his seat within my captiue brest,  Clad in the armies, wherein with me he fought,  Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.  She, that me taught to loue, and suffer paine,  My doutfull hope, and eke my hot desire,  With shamefast cloke to shadowe and restraine,  Her smiling grace conuerteth straight to ire.  And coward loue then to the hart apace  Taketh his flight, wheras he lurked and plaines  His purpose lost and dare not shewe his face,  For my lordes gilt thus faultlesse bide I paines,  Yet from my lorde shall not my foote remove  Swete is his death, that takes his end by loue. (3v)</p>	<p>“The louer for shamefastnesse hideth his desire within his faithfull hart”</p> <p>“The long loue, that in my thought I harber,  And in my hart doth kepe his residence,  Into my face preaseth with bold pretence,  And there campeth, displaying his banner,  She that me learns to loue, and to suff[er]  And willes that my trust, and lustes negligence  Be reined by reason, shame, and reuerence.  With his hardinesse takes displeasure,  Wherwith loue to the hartes forest he fleeth,  Leauing his enterprise with paine and crye,  And there him hideth and not appeareth.  What may I do when my maister feareth,  But in the field with him to liue and dye,  For good is the life, ending faithfully. (20r)</p>
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Even setting outside the added titles, the poems themselves begin with difference. As Sacks has observed, in contrast to Wyatt’s long love, “[n]either Petrarch nor Surrey says anything directly about the length of love’s residency” (23). As Sacks has also pointed out, Wyatt actually emphasizes his addition through the meter, “[w]ith two immediately consecutive strong accents...involving a reversed, an caesura-severed, second foot” (23). Sacks argues that

Wyatt uses this stress on duration to “...augment...inwardness [and] contrast the length of love and the brief social moment in which it will be made manifest” (23); the point is analogous to the problems and limitations of court service, as well—performance is the only indication of interiority, and so loyalties and disloyalties can be masked or determined based on the actions of only a moment. Thus, a lifetime of service may be mooted by an untoward comment; a queen of twenty years who has failed to produce the symbol of a successful union—a son—may find that those twenty years count for very little, in the end. Here, then, the social system that is apparently accepted by the speaker of “Ceaser, when that the traytour” is called into question for its reactionary impulses—even as assumed performance is again emphasized as an appropriate protective measure.

Wyatt adds another element to his poem which is not present in Surrey or Petrarch’s poems—an explicit mention of “faith” (Sacks 223). Added to Wyatt’s line emphasizing the role of “reason, shame, and reuerence,” multiple and even competing interpretations are not only possible, but immediately available and apparent. The poem becomes a space for philosophical valuation—what kinds of service are best, if service to king, Church, and beloved are not commensurate? Functioning within love becomes functioning within an extant social order, one in which the poet is frequently constrained by the orders of an actual master—masters of several different levels. Detailing the Anglo-Saxon/ Latin clash of “lustes negligence” and the combined use of Old English suffix *-nes* and Latinate suffix *-ence*, Sacks argues that “the sonnet could almost be seen as a struggle, enmeshed with translation itself, between the two, aligned as they are with a native impulse colliding with an external code” (25-26). The contemporary political and social spheres of England mirror this tension—England is a country where imperialist ideals of the divine right of kings have been transplanted. Though the social structure was still rigidly

hierarchical, there was still an important difference in the philosophies of the systems. In some ways, the Humanist privileging of demonstrated talent was a return, rather than a new idea—a different sort of revolution. In others, the ideals of the Reformation that joined to Humanist thought undermined completely the established belief systems of an entire country.

Wyatt's poem creates a space that privileges service even within a tradition that often chafes at the requirements of such. The self is created in reaction to the external—particularly when that external is demanding conformity and obedience. One must be like, without equaling, the king. It may be in failures, though, that more of the self can be found, like the significance of manipulated interruptions in pentameter or the alteration, through transcription, of an accepted and well-known poem. In the final lines, "...the turn to the question of agency is made inseparable from an explicit turn toward the reader" (Sacks 28). This turn involves, implicates, and educates the reader. As the speaker questions the reader as to the appropriate action, "the poem produce[s] the potential for many faces—its own repeating face and...the prospect of any readers' pictured faces" (Sacks 29). The poem becomes a kind of simulacrum, replicating a speaker who does not exist and a code that is dependent on the recognition of its subject and object as not real, or at least as a performance which can be adopted and adapted by anyone. This kind of replication extends to the use of Petrarchan love lyrics throughout the Henrician court. The "nonexistence" of the idealized Laura must first be understood; then, the poems must be about more than a "beloved," since the beloved is not and cannot be real. The replications, further, become commentaries on themselves—each performance which comments on performance critiques, modifies, pastiches what has come before. At times, when the poems are read through in collection like *Tottel's* or in one of the contemporary manuscripts, the effect becomes nearly absurdist—the repetition of scenarios and of the words related to the theme—love,

fleeing, serve, etc.—become so layered that the lack of realized object becomes inescapable, like the widely known effect wherein a repeated word seems to lose meaning—or to lose its original meaning and become instead a symbol of the arbitrary nature of language. This, then, is the effect of the repetition of Petrarchan tropes—a symbol of the arbitrary nature of social performance and socially assigned roles *and* of the extent to which those tropes have also become the “natural” order of things. While the practitioners who worked with these tropes certainly knew that no literary convention served as a strict reflection of reality, they seem to stretch these particular conventions to the limit. I argue that this stretching is partly meant to draw the readers’ attention to the effort and so the possibility of alternate performances.

The strictures of these roles are more evident in Surrey’s version of the poem than any particular ability to overcome or manipulate such tropes. This regularization is apparent even in the meter, as Sacks sees a greater correspondence to form in “Surrey’s immediate march, after the first foot, into the lockstep of normative iambic pentameter” (23). The regularity of form is matched by a regularity of tone; in Domenichelli’s phrase “Surrey’s register is definitely higher, and it corresponds to...what a truly aristocratic and poetic language should be...the impression one receives is that Wyatt’s poem seems more direct, less polite” (80). Domenichelli sees a contrast between “Surrey’s... courtly language of politeness and indirection [and] Wyatt’s...directedness, and even outspokenness” (Domenichelli 80). However, part of the art of Wyatt’s version is actually in the indirection—in the delay of clause endings, for example. In fact, both poets tend towards different sorts of directness and outspokenness—Surrey’s work is often far from any masterpiece of polite indirectness. The difference is partly in the clarity and rank of the objects of their critiques, and the strategies match the men’s positions and ambitions. Wyatt aims to level the playing field—his language is simpler and his critique is of the system.

Surrey aims to maintain his place at the top—and so his language is more elevated and his critique is of those who oppose him or who he feels undermine the aristocratic system.

Domenichelli helpfully outlines the word choices that make Wyatt's love more "common" than Petrarch's or Surrey's (81); Surrey's love reigns on a throne, setting forth arms and banners, where Wyatt's harbors in a residence, pressing forth, pretentiously (Domenichelli 81). Surrey's Love is nonetheless cowardly, and if we consider Love to be the parameters and restrictions of the contextual social system, this makes perfect sense. Surrey sees the structure as fallen away from earlier ideals. Love's martial unfitness aligns with one of the major problems Surrey sees in Henry's court, as emphasized his "Th' Assyrian King in Peace with Foul Desire." Love is a coward, but the social rules require that Surrey follow his "master"—just as he views the King as martially cowardly, but must follow his rules and restrictions nonetheless.

There is, ultimately, an energy in Wyatt in contrast to a lack of vividness in Surrey—Wyatt is declaring allegiance to particular social constructs, while Surrey is merely decrying the failures of the extant construct. In Surrey's conclusion, "the speaker is a captive, defeated by a conquering interloper who has built his own throne, from which he now reigns" (Harris 300). The parallel to Henry, given Surrey's views, is irresistible. Love represents both the king and the social order he has introduced and reinforced—Surrey's speaker in his poem does still see his role as to fit in to some degree, but we already see the resistant fissures that would lead to the poet's death. Love "is no guest in Surrey's version; he is an invader who now maintains allegiance by sheer force of arms" (Harris 300). "The urgent drive of the passions beyond rational human restraint, in complete and tyrannous disregard of any willed self-control, is figured far more sharply at the beginning of Surrey's poem than in either Petrarch's or Wyatt's" (Harris 301). Harris agrees with Thomson that Surrey's poem departs from "the big moral issues" (Thomson,

qtd. in Harris), even belaboring the point, but in fact both critics are erasing a fair commentary on big moral issues. The speaker has been subjected to a force he resents, a force that he must serve, but that he sees as ignoring the rules of decent, noble conduct. The correlation speaks to Surrey's resentment of Henry, and his conviction that this was because he was morally more "right" than his king,

Surrey's poem contains a contrast and separation similar to Wyatt's, but to a very different effect. Like Wyatt, Surrey pits Love-as-master and the mistress as completely separate, though he excludes the vague elements of religion that color Wyatt's poem. Indeed, Love and the mistress are so separate that, as Harris observes of the mistress, "Of Love's responsibility for this breach in conduct she seems unaware" (Harris 302). Harris argues that in this conflict, between the interior driving force and the exterior controlling element, Surrey "recreates that conflict between the inner and outer existences of the passion-driven man" (Harris 302); I would say, though, that more accurately Surrey recreates the conflicts of the man constrained by a highly structured social system.

The specific elements of that social system represent the point of tension for Surrey; the rules are changing, and the result is less power for the speaker. Harris neatly summarizes this dynamic: "Emerging as the poem continues to evolve is a rounded history of a domain under a succession of rules—the mistress once proclaimed her edicts, a vaunting usurper has since conquered and dares to show his colors, and now the earlier lawgiver threatens again" (Harris 303). The poem dramatizes, then, a problem of allegiance, but a within a different set of problems than that of Wyatt's version—the system that the speaker understands to be proper, at odds with the greater force of the more inappropriate, domineering "love." This "Love in defeat is a blusterer turned coward" (Harris 304); because of the limitations of such a lord "no loving

relationship between liege and yeomen has been developed” (Harris 304). Ultimately, then, the system falls apart:

the unsteady balance of power suggested by the antiphonal quatrains suddenly collapses when the latest suzerain shamelessly abandons his enslaved vassal to the wrath of an adversary. . . . The power vacuum that results invites expectation not that a loyal squire will remain with a beloved leader even in defeat but that the pawn of war will revert, as always in the past, to the conquering force. (Harris 304)

The speaker, then, has been “exposed and betrayed by a cowardly conqueror; he reveals not grounds for unquestioning loyalty to a beloved liege but justifications for fleeing an oppressive tyrant” (Harris 304). Ultimately, Harris sees the end of the poem as a pledge of allegiance to the sensual, reasonless tyrant, but in fact the final lines leave a more resistant, resentful reading open. If the speaker claims that “Yet from my lorde shall not my foote remove,” because “Swete is his death, that takes his end by loue,” an interpretation is available that sees this love, lowercased and not personified, as loyalty to the “better” system. The speaker can potentially be turned against the usurping Lord, in an act of disobedience that will claim his life. Where Wyatt aims for preservation of self in a system where conflicting allegiances cannot be reconciled, Surrey’s speaker must be turned either against the mistress, against his master, or against the system of which he complains.

To those works of Wyatt and Surrey’s included in *Tottel’s* I want to add some translation from a contemporary manuscript, indicating the multiple platforms available for these kinds of resistant writing. The works discussed here from the Devonshire MS are both in unidentified hands, those Heale labels Hands 1 and 8. Hand 8 frequently transcribes works by Wyatt—perhaps because of this, the poem here described was included in *Tottel’s* as Wyatt’s, and was included in Thompson and Muir’s edited collection of his works. Hand 1 uses a translation from Pietro Bembo, the figure to whose ideals Demonichelli compares both Wyatt and Surrey’s language, and in the translation creates a sustained metaphor of the forces of love on the speaker as warring

elements of fire and water, each keeping the speaker from the death that would represent release. Because these Manuscript works are generally less known to modern readers, and because of the particulars of manuscript writing, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, I include the entire text of the poem as written by Hand 1, here:

At the<sup>8</sup>

At last *withdraw* yowre cruell[te]  
or let me die at ons  
It is so moche extremitie  
Devised for the nons  
To holde me thus aleve 5  
In paine still for to dryve  
Whatt maye I more  
sustayne alas that dye wuld fanne  
and cane not dye for panne

for to the flame wher*with* ye burne 10  
my though and mye dysyre  
when into ashys it shulde turne  
my hert by ferwent fyer  
ye send A stormy rayn  
That doythe it qwynche Agayn 15  
And makys myn eys expresse  
The tearyes that Do redres  
My lywe in wrecchydnes

Then when thes shulde hau drownde  
a and ouerwhelmd my hart 20  
The heate doithe then confownde  
Renewing all my smart  
then doithe flame ent[rea]sse  
my tormyntt can not cease  
my woo doithe then revive 25  
and I R Remaine alyve  
*with* deathe still for to stryve

Butt if thatt that he wolde haue my death  
and that ye wolde no nother

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<sup>8</sup> I include this two word false start to reflect the content of the page, but I do not include it in the line numbering of the poem. I am not certain that it should be considered part of the poem, but neither have I fully considered what role it might play. I include it to prevent erasing those possibilities.



shortly then for to spem my brethe   30  
*with*drawe the to woon or tother  
 for thes yowr cruelnnes  
 doithe lett it selfe doubles  
 And it is reason why  
 no man alyve nor I                   35  
 of doble dethe can dy (4r-4v)<sup>9</sup>

The work also offer opportunities to analyze what can be lost as poetry is regularized. In the same way that Tottel's added titles constrict the meaning of the poems in his collection, modern editions of these poems often deny the strategies of the original author. As an example, Elizabeth Heale's addition of punctuation in her edition of the poetry, moving "sustain" to the preceding line, setting of "alas" with commas, and joining all of the lines with a closing question mark, clarifies the meaning, but risks a correction where analysis would be more appropriate (56). The rhetorical effect of "What may I more sustain?" is quite different from the potential opened by movement of the enjambent, which potentially reads "What may I more?" with the answer "sustain, alas, that die would fain /and cannot die for pain" (Lines 8-9). In the edited version, the rhetorical question is essentially limited to a question of the ability of the speaker to continue in pain. In contrast, the reading of the line as question and answer creates a stoicism in the poetic voice—the speaker knows his or her fate and accepts the inevitability of the speaker/lover's subjection to the beloved object. In either case, death is presented as an escape for the speaker, but an unavailable escape.

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<sup>9</sup> My transcriptions are my own work from my time with the Devonshire at the British Library in July of 2015; however, I am indebted to the groundwork and paleographic samples created by the compilers of *The Devonshire Manuscript: A Social Edition*, on Wikibooks, and to the interpretive background laid by Elizabeth Heale's modernized edition *The Devonshire Manuscript: A Women's Book of Courtly Poetry*.

My transcript conventions preserve original spelling, expand contractions as indicated by italics, and indicate lines struck through in the original as accurately as possible. ^...^ is used to indicate writing included above the rest of a line, though not necessarily superscript, while [...] is used to indicate uncertain transcription.

Heale further corrects the “he” of Line 28 to “ye,” deemphasizing, but not eliminating, the potential of the poem both to refer rather more explicitly to Henry VIII and to disrupt to traditional, though hardly uniform, gendered roles of Petrarchan tropes. The gender ambiguity of the poem may be undercut by the final, defiant lines: “no man alive, nor I,/ of double death can die” (Lines 35-36). However, the “man” here seems more likely to work as a referent to humankind. The speaker here charges the object of the poem with keeping him or her alive only because death would end the speaker’s torment and object’s pleasure. Read as the voice of a courtier under Henry’s reign, though, the lines also call attention to a defiant streak which claims perseverance in the face of the king’s unpredictable, inconstant, and threatening behavior.

The other selection from Devonshire is not a strict translation of any known poem, but draws heavily on a poem by Aquilano. Partially because of this association, the poem has often been attributed to Wyatt, who frequently reworked Aquilano’s poems, but the attribution is not certain. The poem Hand 8 writes details, in each stanza, tropes of the spurned Petrarchan lover, but responds to each situation with the mocking refrain “But ha, ha, ha full well is me,/ for now I am at liberty” (Lines 5-6), undercutting the destructive potential of the beloved’s power by claiming an already achieved escape. Although the attribution to Wyatt has made this poem more widely available, I include here the text as it appears in Devonshire, not least to show the effect of the variations on that refrain:

Tanglid I was yn loves snare  
 opprest *with* payne tormente *with* care  
 of grefe right sure of Ioye full f bare  
 clene in dispaire bye crueltye  
 but ha ha ha . full well is me  
 for I am now at libretye

the wofull dayes so full of paine  
 the verye night all spent in vayne  
 the labo<sup>r</sup> lost for so small gayne

to wryt them all yt will not bee  
but ha. ha. ha. &c

Everye thing *that* faire dothe sho  
when prof is made yt previthe not soo  
but to<sup>r</sup>nithe mirthe to bittre woo.  
wiche in this case full well I see  
but ha. &c

To grete desire was my guide  
and wanton will went bye my syde  
hope rulid still. and made me byde  
of loves craft *thextremitye* the extemity  
but ha.

*with* faynid wo<sup>r</sup>d[es] *with* ware but winde  
to long delayes I was assind  
her wylke lokes my wittes ded blinde  
thus as she wolde. I ded agree  
but ha. c

was never birde tanglid yn lyme  
that brake awaye yn bettre tyme  
then I that Rotten bowis ded clyme  
and had no hu<sup>r</sup>te but scapid fre  
now ha ha ha. full well is me  
for I am nowe at libretye (79v-80r)

Muir and Thompson acknowledge the potential of the “ha, ha, ha” of the refrain as a referent to the poems of Aquilano, but the widespread use of monograms for the royal couples may open up an additional interpretative outlet. Given the use of acrostics throughout the manuscript, the repeated, joined letters could easily reference such initials. The HA, then, may emphasize through repetition the union of Henry and Anne—and, potentially, Henry and *either* Anne. If written by Wyatt, the poem may refer to his supposed interest in Anne Boleyn—particularly given the clearly gendered object “she” in Lines 24-25. In these terms, the “ha” refrain takes on the sarcastic, bitter tone we associate with Wyatt’s wit, and which his contemporaries would likely have associated with his compositions as well. However, even if not written *by* Wyatt, the

courtly context makes the reference to an embittered, disappointed suitor of Boleyn available: stories of such lovers were current in the court and, as my analysis of manuscript production in Chapter Three emphasizes, these stories shaped the ways that courtiers produced and received all of their peers' poetic creations.

However, if copied by any of the *female* courtiers, the relative isolation of that gendering may work to leave the poem open to a somewhat unusual application of the Petrarchan tropes to Henry VIII—perhaps moving beyond typical applications of love poetry to the service of courtiership and instead speaking simultaneously about love and courtiership. Certainly, following Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour's meteoric rises, any female courtier who caught the king's eye could hardly be blamed for entertaining further ambitions. Drawing on two contemporary proverbs, the stanza repeats traditional warnings about the dangers of courtiership—dangers that were particularly marked for female courtiers. The poem then frames terms of escape in less cynical or sarcastic terms—the escape of a woman from Henry's attentions may be a genuine relief, even if ambition temporarily blinded her to the dangers of her potential rise. This possibility also underlines the relative unimportance of gendering hands or speakers—because the poetry was produced in a work so aligned with the female courtiers of the time, any poem that could be understood as being in a woman's voice always had that interpretation readily available to the original audience.

This original audience—a community of writers and readers—is largely what this work attempts to emphasize and reconstruct. That Wyatt and Surrey used Petrarchan love lyrics to express frustrations at courtly service is still important, however well-established, but from here we need to move further and forward. Because these authors understood that such work would be easily understood by their readers, we can begin to recognize elements of a system of coding that

allowed courtiers to communicate to one another their discomfort, discontent, and disillusionment with the shifting tensions of the Henrician court. That these same patterns are used in the manuscript production of the time emphasizes the likelihood that courtiers used the strategies that have been so well-examined in translation in their original composition and in their copywork, as well.

### III. Modes of Translation; Modes of Subversion: Men's and Women's Approaches to Canonical Texts in the Late Henrician Court

The various strategies used in manuscript production will be more thoroughly engaged in the second section of the work, in the third and fourth chapters. For now, we move into a further contextual consideration: when translation was published or commissioned, what did the audience or patron expect from such work? How are the concerns of translation altered when the stakeholders are more clearly defined? This chapter continues investigation into the functions of translation as subversive literature, but the focus here shifts to translation from classical and ancient sources, engaging translations like Surrey's the *Aeneid* and Wyatt's Penitential Psalms, while also looking at two prose translations created by young Englishwomen out of foreign language verse: Elizabeth Tudor's *Mirror of a Sinful Soul* and Jane Lumley's *Iphigeneia*. On one hand, the canonical texts may offer greater constraints than the Italianate love poetry examined in the previous chapter. These canonical authors had, after all, already famously highlighted particular concerns and themes; while the same can be said of Petrarch, certainly, the weight of the traditions were simply different. These works were often approached as more sacrosanct and less open to entirely new interpretations. This argument was particularly foregrounded in translation of religious texts, and further emphasized by the contemporary controversy on whether vernacular translation of religious texts was even appropriate. On the other hand, though, this offered a cultural store of response which writers might manipulate in particularized ways, either working through their own tensions as mirrored in the classical texts or manipulating their content to match or frustrate perceived desires and expectations. While a similar cultural resource was accessed when writers translated courtly love lyrics, the sheer

weight of interpretive tradition associated with Virgil, the Psalms, or Euripides increases the translator's interaction with, and reaction to, the cultural mythos surrounding each work.

Some elements of translation as subversive work transfer fairly simply from the previous chapter; as Clarke summarizes, "the act of translation itself may be a highly coded political or ideological intervention where the guise of another's words can help to evade the authorities" (169). In fact, through the translation of culturally important texts, authors could not only evade the authorities, but also gain legitimacy through official endorsement by those same authorities who might resist similar ideas had they been presented as entirely new works. Further, as Clarke also observes, the "relative marginality or slipperiness of ownership can be exploited as a form of agency to figures who otherwise lack it" (170). This distance, already examined in the previous chapter, was likely particularly important to the young women whose translations are examined in the last section of this chapter.

This last section of the chapter, on young women's translations, is included to emphasize the contemporary awareness of the resistant energies of verse translations. Surrey's *Aeneid* and Wyatt's *Psalms* both offer the poets imaginative access to positions of power. While both poets critique the performances of power by their leader subjects, they both also align themselves with the authority of these men's positions. In addition to conferring authority on the critiques and valuations the two men outline in their translations, this authority may also be intended to legitimize the linguistic innovations Surrey and Wyatt add to their versions of the texts—and through which they seek further authority as masterly courtly makers. In contrast, both Elizabeth and Jane Lumley choose to work away from the verse versions they translate. The women both offer a vision of rhetorical authority for their female narrators or characters, but that authority is bounded by appeals to a greater masculine power. In a court that understands the potential of

verse translation as resistance to authority, these young translators choose to instead protect their voices through greater appeal to the system. By moving their work into prose and framing women's voices as granted authority by their subjugation to a larger force, Elizabeth and Lumley mute, but do not silence, the implied resistance of a woman speaking.

Because there is less inherent subversion in the act of creation for Wyatt and Surrey, their works offer greater models of cultural subversion. Both works offer criticism of rulers whose behavior is modeled as ignoble and damaging. In Surrey's *Aeneid*, his translation of the second book emphasizes the potential of a royal line to start anew with the heir selected by the ghost of Hector; his translation of the fourth then shows the damage done to a kingdom by a ruler overtaken by lust. This second theme underpins Wyatt's Psalms, which also address the problems of a sinning king taking on the role of spiritual leader to a kingdom. Drawing on Henry's own iconography of himself as a new David and of England as a new Empire, both works offer criticism of the king only barely contained by the mask offered by translation.

#### **A. Surrey's *Aeneid***

Why does Surrey choose to translate specifically Books Two and Four of the *Aeneid*? Of course, Surrey's execution at only thirty may have put an end to any plans for a larger project, and indeed proposed dates of composition have ranged from 1539 to 1545 (Ridley 1-4). The later date would place the translation fairly immediately before Surrey's final fall from favor. However, Ridley convincingly argues for the earlier end of these possible dates, showing that Surrey's recorded travels and the apparent influences for the text favor a late 1539 to early 1540 date (3-4). In either case, though, no evidence has ever been offered that indicates that Surrey intended a complete version of the work, whether he had eight years or only two for such consideration. At a minimum, we can proceed from the assumption that the evidence suggests



Surrey thought translation of these books, together, was the more important project. Both Richardson and Ridley see this choice as a stylistic one, tied to Surrey's ambition to make high art of the English language. Richardson points out that Books II and IV contain "about five times as many" epic similes as Books I and III (215); he connects Surrey's interest in these books to "Surrey's intent to elevate his diction through figurative language" (Richardson 216). Richardson partially acknowledges the political element of such elevation, but he constrains his argument largely to the politics of language. To take the argument further, the connection to Surrey's larger, often essentially egoistic, project is essential. A stylistic choice is not an apolitical one, and one of Surrey's major ideological drives was the worth of language, as Richardson suggests, but also, by association, the worth of the man who can use language correctly.

Although Richardson primarily studies the linguistic, and peripherally politico-linguistic, implications of Surrey's writing, several of his points emphasize the Humanist values which Surrey espouses by implication in his text. Richardson acknowledges that Surrey is "not among the humanists who read the classics as literature of knowledge rather than as literature of power" (217) and "does not represent a sterile tradition of neoclassicism among the humanists" (218). Instead, as shown in his linguistic choices, his "ideal of neoclassical imitation transcends didactic commentary and mechanical translation" (Richardson 218). The outcome of these choices and ideas, though, is more than an achievement for the English language. Surrey's project of promoting power for his native language is an important leg of his larger political agenda. Precisely because Surrey understands these classics as "literature of power," his adaptation of the materials should be understood as a move in the larger game of political power.

To understand this move, another question needs to be asked as Surrey's selective translation is analyzed: does Surrey understand Virgil's project as simultaneously propagandistic

and critical? Given the poetic tradition and Humanist ideal of speaking truth to power through art, an affirmative answer seems likely. As such, Surrey's choice of books needs to be approached on the terms of the content as much as by the style. In the separate books of the *Aeneid*, Virgil introduces complications and counters to the Roman values that the piece as a whole more generally espouses. When certain books are selected from the whole, then, some of the problematized values can be more clearly endorsed, and some of the mitigated understandings of vices are simplified. By choosing Books Two and Four, Surrey emphasizes a tragic love story and a specific performance of masculinity. Surrey's propaganda is both for the power of the language, as Richardson and Ridley argue, and for the worth of noble men; he may also gesture towards the necessity of following a larger destiny at all costs. Surrey's criticism, then, is of false oaths and of getting carried away with passion—particularly when that passion becomes an impediment to effective and honest rule. By bounding this propaganda and criticism within the translation, Surrey protects what would otherwise be open resistance; as a subversive text, the translation has greater appeal to tradition, a greater potential for further distribution, and greater protection for the poet. Unlike his work with the more malleable Italianate love poetry, Surrey's translation of the epic poetry of the *Aeneid* does not so often introduce new elements of critique or valuation as instead emphasize selective threads from the original piece through deletions, isolation of these particular books, and careful word choice—highlighting some of the strategies that the manuscript writers studied in the next chapter adapt from translation.

Throughout Surrey's translated books, the events recorded by Virgil seem to shadow surprisingly strong parallels in Surrey's own life. I suggest that rather than being purely coincidental, or, more precisely, naturally present only because of Surrey's own affinity for the text, these parallels are emphasized because of Surrey's abridged approach to the text and by his

linguistic choices. These linguistic choices, as Ridley carefully emphasizes, are themselves partially the product of Surrey's use of Gawin Douglas's Scots *Eneados*.<sup>10</sup> Ridley traces notable influences from Douglas in "more than 40 per cent of [Surrey's] lines" (42); he notes that in Book II these influences are particularly marked in passages several lines long, whereas in Book IV "they tend to take the form of striking single words or brief phrases" (Ridley 42). However, in a text with such a long history, choosing close work with a translation already nearer Surrey's own native language could suggest a greater drive towards personalizing the text, rather than an additional distancing element. The Scots translation may have also served Surrey's investment in valorizing the languages of the Britain. Throughout Surrey's version of the text, the selections he makes, whether drawn or departing from Douglas's work, reliably underscore particular patterns

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<sup>10</sup> There are some suggestive connections between Surrey, Gawin Douglas, and Margaret Douglas, the niece of Henry VIII, mentioned in the introduction, whose work is studied in the third and fourth chapters of this work. Gawin Douglas was Margaret Douglas's great uncle, the younger son of the same Archibald Douglas, Fifth Earl of Angus, who would pass his title to Margaret's father, another Archibald and the sixth earl. (Margaret Douglas's paternal grandfather, George, was killed at the Battle of Flodden by troops under the regency of Katherine of Aragon and the command of Thomas Howard, then Earl of Surrey and later Henry Howard's grandfather.) Gawin Douglas had initially had fairly good relations with Margaret Douglas's mother, Margaret Tudor, who had secured favors from her brother Henry VIII and from Cardinal Wolsey on Gawin's behalf in the mid 1510s. However, by the time Gawin moved to London, in the early 1520s, his relationship with Margaret Tudor had soured, as Gawin had taken up his nephew's cause in the legal battle ensuing from the couple's attempts to divorce. (Gawin seems not to have held his nephew in particularly high esteem, so the support must have stemmed from a sense of familial obligation.) All of this information can be pieced together from the individuals' biographies in the Oxford DNB.

As the following chapters indicate, by the mid-1530s, Margaret Douglas and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, were, at minimum, linked through Surrey's sister, Mary Fitzroy. Given the close court atmosphere, the relatively high rank of both Douglas and Surrey, and their mutual interest in verse, Margaret could certainly have suggested Gawin Douglas's work to Surrey. However, this conjecture is impossible to affirm, and Margaret certainly would not have had many specific or strong memories of her great-uncle as a man, as she was at most five when he and her mother became estranged.

of valorization of nobility, suspicion of the common people, and indictment of rulers who fail to live up to their potential or promises.

Given Surrey's relationship with Henry Fitzroy, particularly as he characterizes Fitzroy in his later poetry, the moment of Hector's visitation to Aeneas is one of the first in the text to take on this element of biographical or political refraction. Indeed, in "So Creuell Prison," Surrey specifically evokes the parallel, with the lines "a king's son my childish years did pass/ in greater feast than Priam's sons of Troy" (3-4). Further, Surrey must have seen some affinity between his own experience, with his dear friend's death in the summer of 1536 followed immediately by demanding military service against the Pilgrimage of Grace in the autumn and winter, and the mixture of grief and martial fury expressed by Aeneas throughout his recitation to Dido's court. Thus, when Hector first appears, there is a comingling of the loss of a friend, of the loss of the country in the death of the king's most promising son, and of the gory despoilment of the battlefield:

Loe in my dreame before mine eies, me thought,  
With rufull chere I sawe where Hector stood:  
Out of whoes eies there gushed streames of teares,  
...  
Ay me, what one? that Hector how vnlike,  
Which erst returnd clad with Achilles spoiles:  
Or when he threw into the Grekish shippes  
The Troian flame? So was his beard defiled,  
His crisped lockes al clustred with his blood:  
With all such wounds, as many he receiued  
About the walls of that his natiue town. (II.343-355)

The passage, like Virgil's text, simultaneously glorifies Hector's past achievements—his victory against Achilles, his naval success—and mourns the degradation of his body through the wounds inflicted in similar martial conflict. The balance is further emphasized in Surrey's language: Aeneas views Hector with "rufull chere," while Hector's hair is both "crisped lockes" (that is,

curled in a very intentionally structured manner) and “clustred with his blood.” While in the period, *cheer* would still primarily mean disposition or expression of that disposition, the connotation of “good” cheer was already current (OED); thus, Surrey’s word choice still emphasizes the balance of contrasts that characterizes his treatment of this section. His language both emphasizes Hector’s nobility—and so the importance of trusting his judgment—and Hector’s death, both as an end to his potential line and as a result of the tragedy of the situation.

The figure, further, is not only there to warn Aeneas, but also to affirm Aeneas’s value as the last scion of Troy. Of course, this emphasis is not only present in, but also essential to, the themes of Virgil’s epic, but the appeal to Surrey’s own well-documented ego seems very strong. As such, Hector’s speech emphasizes the most subversive, resistant strain of Surrey’s writing, generally; again and again, he comes back to allusions that stop just shy of suggesting his own appropriateness as an heir to the throne. Once more, reference to “So Cruell Prison” provides further evidence, as Surrey claims that between Richmond—the king’s only acknowledged son—and himself, “each of us did plead the other’s right” (12). Here, then, Hector’s message to Aeneas is one wherein the dead prince transfers responsibility for the survival of his noble line to his friend:

With bitter teres and dolefull deadly voice,  
O Troyan light, O only hope of thine:  
...from the bottom of his brest  
Sighing hy sayd: flee, flee, O Goddesse son,  
And saue thee from the furie of this flame.  
Our ennies now ar maisters of the walles:  
And Troye town now falleth from the top.  
Sufficeth that is done for Priams reigne  
If force might serue to succor Troye town,  
This right hand well mought haue ben her defense.  
But Troye commendeth to thy charge  
Her holy reliques and her priuy Gods.  
Them ioyne to thee, as felowes of thy fate.  
Large walles rere throw for them. For so thou shalt,

After time spent in thourwandred flood.  
This sayd, he brought forth Vesta in his hands,  
Her fillettes eke, and euerlasting flame. (II.358-381)

The themes of these lines are all essential to the *Aeneid*: the tearing down of something old, the building of something new, and the transfer of the old traditions to the new line. Such themes, though, were as politically important in Henrician England as they had been in the early Roman Empire. Like Virgil, Surrey wrote his version of this story in a world under siege from internal changes. Like Virgil, he faced the problem of negotiating varying claims of what was “traditional” as even major cultural shifts laid claim to a base in older systems. Surrey also dramatizes the transfer of power along nontraditional lines: Hector was Priam’s son and heir, but he does not appear to one of Priam’s house for his appeal. Rather, Hector looks to a different noble line as the line of renewal. Priam’s reign is done, and the town of Troy is fallen, but Hector commends Troy to Aeneas’s charge; the larger sense of the civilization will survive while the ruling family and established capital are allowed to pass into history. And unlike Virgil’s, Surrey’s lines do not have to only valorize the newly established line which has risen to power; his work can as easily be read as a suggestion that the current ruling family should be displaced by another, more vital line.

Surrey’s often expressed disdain for London and Londoners may further suggest the poet’s investment in abandoning the corrupt urban space. Though the common people’s poor choices are a common theme across most versions of the *Aeneid*, Surrey does seem to take a particularly vicious stance against the commoners of Troy, and his choice to focus so much of his translation on the destruction of the city may serve as a kind of fantasized elimination of those voices, preserving only the noble, martial men who sail with Aeneas. That this narrative also largely eliminates women, as Aeneas’s wife is one of the victims of the mobs of Greeks,

may also appeal to and simplify certain concerns for Surrey, whose choices when dealing with women in the text often emphasize the tensions already present in the original text and in the culture's convoluted, often contradictory, depictions of idealized womanhood.

Indeed, a kind of defense of women interrupts Aeneas's revenge fantasies against the archetypal 'bad' woman: Helen. The blame Aeneas heaps on Helen is interrupted by his mother, Venus. First, the hero of the work spies Helen hiding in the ruins of Troy:

Hateful she sate beside the altars hid  
Then boyld my brest with flame, and burning wrath,  
To reuenge my town vnto such ruine brought.  
With worthy peines on her to work my will.<sup>11</sup>  
...for though on wemen the reuenge  
Unsemely is, such conquest hath no fame:  
To geue an end vnto such mischief yet  
My iust reuenge shal merit worthy praise,  
And quiet eke my minde, for to be wroke  
On her which was the causer of this flame,<sup>12</sup>  
And satisfie the cinder of my feers. (II.754-773)

Although Aeneas acknowledges the dishonorable bent of his desire for revenge, he argues himself into an act of revenge as praiseworthy in the extreme situation. The focus of the passage is largely on Aeneas's internal justification, rather than on Helen's desert or actions. Further, in this initial passage, the language used seems to support Aeneas's argument: he is "bold," the

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<sup>11</sup> The Loeb edition translates the lines thus: "there comes an angry desire to avenge my falling country and exact the wages of her sin" (333); the corresponding Latin runs "subit ira cadentem ulcisci patriam et sceleratas sumere poenas" (332). Surrey, then, emphasizes Aeneas's independent will, removing the more passive construction. In this choice, he draws attention to the hero's agency, as "my will" becomes a choice in a way that the angry desire which seems to descend externally is not.

<sup>12</sup> The most relevant lines from the Loeb are these: "it will be joy to have filled full my soul with the fire of vengeance and to have sated the ashes of my kindred" (333). The Latin, in this case, is "animumque explesse iuvabit ultricis flammae et cineres satiasset meorum" (332). Surrey, here, actually removes a measure of self-interest. He softens "joy" to a quieted mind, keeping instead the earlier lines' focus on honor and valor. However, he heightens the sense of Helen's responsibility, making her explicitly the "causer of this flame."

work would be “worthy,” and revenge would be just and praiseworthy. While the final lines do undercut this image somewhat, suggesting a certain element of self-service in this act as one that will quiet the hero’s mind, the laws of Surrey’s England, particularly those created to enable the king’s movements between marriages, simply do reflect a belief that the murder of a woman to quiet a man’s mind was justified, so long as her offence was sufficiently severe.

However, in a striking juxtaposition of the virtuous mother and traitorous wife, Aeneas’s divine matriarch interrupts his justification:

With furious minde while I did argue thus,  
My blessed<sup>13</sup> mother then appeard to me,  
Whom erst so bright mine eyes had neuer seen,  
And with pure light she glistred in the night,  
Disclosing her in forme a Goddesse like,  
As she doth seme to such as dwell in heuen.  
My right hand then she toke, and held it fast,  
And with her rosie lips thus did she say.  
Son, what furie hath thus prouoked thee  
To such vntamed wrath? what ragest thou?  
Or where is now become the care of vs? (II.775-785)

Interrupting his claims of honorable vengeance against a woman, Venus steps in to remind her son where his concerns should lay, and her argument suggests that the honor and preservation of his immediate family should take precedence over revenge against those he sees as responsible for his country’s destruction. The characterization that confers her authority, though—her form as a “Goddesse” glistening in light—is linked to her beauty, even as Helen is figured as the destructive beauty who has brought about the ruin of Troy.<sup>14</sup> However, while Surrey’s replication of Virgil’s equivocal approach largely participates in the larger cultural narrative of

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<sup>13</sup> The Loeb chooses “gracious,” here (333); Surrey’s choice then heightens the divine goodness of the interceding goddess.

<sup>14</sup> While the Loeb translates similarly beatifying language for Venus’s appearance, the parallel between the two women is undermined by the repeated reference to Helen as a “hateful thing” and “unholy thing,” removing her femininity, identity, and beauty.



dangerous women, Venus's intercession suggests that a noble man always has larger concerns than revenge against even the most perfidious woman, offering a further criticism of Surrey's king without necessarily participating in any real mitigation of feminine threat.

The double-sided approach to women carries over to the fourth book, where Surrey's choices emphasize the figure of Dido as both a vengeful and capricious woman and as an essentially honorably woman whose choices are misguided by ill counsel. While Dido initially claims refuge in her sacred oath, she seems fairly easily persuaded by her sister's speech, which Surrey captures in an odd cadence that is both persuasive and quietly suggestive of the tragedy that will follow this choice:

O sister, dearer beloued than the lyght:  
Thy youth alone in plaint still wilt thou spill?  
Ne children sweete, ne Venus giftes wilt know?  
Cinders (thinkest thou) minde this? or graued ghostes?  
Time of thy doole thy spouse new dead, I graunt,  
None might thee moue: no not yet the Libian king  
Nor yet of Tire Iarbas set so light:  
And other princes mo: whom the rich soile  
Of affrick breedes, in honours triumphant,  
Wilt thou also gainstant thy liked loue  
Comes not to mind vpon whoes land thou dwelst  
On this side, loe the Getule town behold,  
A people bold vnvanquished in warre,  
Eke the vndaunted Numides compasse thee  
Also the Sirtes, vnfrendly harbroughe:  
On thother hand, a desert realme for thrust  
The Barceans, whose fury stretcheth wide. (IV.39-55)

Although Anna seems unaware of the problems of her proposal, even her counsel suggests the problems that will arise, as the proposed peace between rival kingdoms through marriage is undermined by a selfish drive towards an unsuitable mate. The balance of the language of her speech is much more about the threats surrounding Dido than the suitability of Dido's choice or any real justification for departing from her bond. Further, Dido will, ultimately, spill her youth,

not knowing a child, and attempt to find refuge in those evocative “cinders” that do not mind the actions or injustices of the world. Surrey’s rhythm and structure here shows Anna’s persistent de-centering of the subjects of her questions, moving beyond the normal, inverted subject/ verb interrogatory structure. While the “thou” of line 40 works as the implied subject of the two questions of line 41, by line 42 Dido is no longer the subject of the questions. More strikingly, her presence in that question has become parenthetical. In Anna’s efforts to ellide the true question at hand, she also begins to erase the proper subject of those questions, just as Dido’s eventual surrender to her sister’s logic will begin to erase her political and personal selves.

When Dido yields to her sister’s valorization of selfishness, she steps beyond the bounds of honorable conduct. Perhaps reflecting the values of his own time, Surrey emphasizes only Dido’s misconduct, rather than Aeneas’s, in most of his translation. However, his gendered depiction of the dangers of a monarch guided by lust may be taken more as an effort to feminize Henry, as he does in “Th’ Assyrian King,” than as an indication that the male ruler should be held any less culpable. While he partially borrows this inclination from Virgil, Surrey’s choice to translate only two of the books also does necessarily provide a greater emphasis on this affair than on the larger arc. This gendering is reflected in Surrey’s description following the two rulers’ night together:

Ay me, this was the first day of their mirth  
And of their harmes the first occasion eke.  
Respect of fame no longer her withholdes:  
Nor museth now to frame her loue by stelth.  
Wedlock she cals it: vnder the pretence  
Of which fayre name she cloketh now her faut. (IV.217-222)

Although the first two lines use the plural pronoun to indicate that what follows will affect both Aeneas and Dido (and, by extension, the two rulers’ kingdoms), the dishonor of the misrepresented marriage belongs entirely to Dido. The Latin does end similarly, with “hoc

praetexit nomine culpam (IV.172). However, earlier in the same passage, in the Latin, the phrase “fulsere ignes et conscius Aether conubiis” is used to reference the joining of the two leaders, which the Loeb then translates as “fires flashed in Heaven, the witness to their bridal” (IV. 167-8). If Surrey then takes from the Latin the idea that the sin is Dido’s, he nonetheless undermines the sense that she may not be mistaken by mitigating that marital language. While Surrey does translate “wedlock” for “conubiis” in his corresponding line, he de-personifies Heaven, eliminating the witness necessary to ratify a marital contract. In the final line, the spelling used by the printer for the word choice usually accepted as “fault” is a key example of the kind of slippery multiple meanings that were more easily incorporated in the Early Modern period. While more characteristic of manuscript writing than of translation, specifically, the word’s double function as fate/ fault is important to the line and to the larger understanding of Dido’s character in the work. The slipperiness of meaning offers a doubled interpretation: Dido’s fate is caused by her fault, or her fault is fated. Lust becomes a particularly dangerous fault that can alter a queen’s fate, inviting a commentary on the situation of Surrey’s contemporary court, where the official rhetoric held that one queen had already fallen victim to lust and the associated fate, and where the fate of the country seemed hostage to the king’s shifting caprices of lust.

The declamation against the lustful ruler, however, is momentarily interrupted by the long passage on the damaging force of rumor, which concludes that “This monster blithe with many a tale gan sow/ This rumor then into the common eares:/ As well things don as that was neuer wrought” (IV.243-245). The role of rumor is again tinged with Surrey’s resentment of the common people. In the Loeb translation of IV.173-197, Rumor is more clearly personified, a “foul goddess spreads here and there upon the lips of men” (IV.195). The earlier removal of Heaven’s personification more clearly condemns Dido’s error in judgment; the removal here of

rumor's personification instead pushes greater culpability on the common people, no longer subject to a "foul goddess." On the one hand, Dido and Aeneas are at fault: each has set aside a larger purpose to instead pursue lust, and each has broken vows to do so. However, in just these three lines, rumor becomes a clearer villain than either character: specifically a "monster" that adds to the truth "things don as that was neuer wrought." While the poet/translator offers clues throughout that Dido and Aeneas's actions are not fully acceptable or honorable, the lines nonetheless contain the sense that they are unfairly judged by a commons which only condemns their acts on the basis of exaggerated claims and which is not fit to condemn such heroes in any case.

The condemnation from the poet and translator of Dido and Aeneas, though, is brought forcefully to the front of the translation just four lines later:

And that the while the winter long they passe  
In foule delight, forgetting charge of reigne  
Led against honour with vn honest lust. (IV.249-251)

The echo here of Surrey's "Th' Assyrian King, in Peace with Foule Desire" is strong, indicating again that part of the appeal of these particular books lay in their potential to shore up many of the beliefs which Surrey already held as essential to noble conduct. The charge, though, is importantly not only to do with submission to lust; the focus is not on the religious values that Surrey would likely have also endorsed, but rather on the dishonorable conduct of those who choose personal comfort over the charge of their reigns.

One element of this charge is emphasized above all in the text: the importance of a child's inheritance. Destiny is emphasized as important in terms of what a man can pass on, and for that destiny a queen must be abandoned. When Mercury chastises Aeneas, he focuses above all on the reproach of robbing Iolus of his birthright:

Of so great things, if nought the fame thee stirr,  
Ne list by trauaile honour to pursue:  
Ascanus yet, that waxeth fast behold  
And the hope of Iolus seede thine heir:  
To whom the realme of Italy belongses  
And soile of Rome... (IV.351-356)

The language touches on the importance of person honor and fame, but the larger concern is on Aeneas's "seed" and "heir." Aeneas further emphasizes this concern in his response to Dido's pleas for explanation or reprieve:

Neuer shall I denie (Quene) thy deserte,  
Greater than thous in wordes may well expresse:  
To think on thee, ne irke me aye it shall  
Whiles of my selfe I shall haue memory  
And whiles the spirit of these Limmes of mine shal rule,  
For present purpose somewhat shal I say. (IV.432-437)

Having acknowledged Dido's nobility—and not, strikingly, implying any condemnation of her actions to this point, whatever the energies of the larger text—Aeneas then seeks to explain his own actions, coming ultimately to the point pressed by "The wronged hed by me of my deare sonne,/ Whom I defraud of the Hisperian crown,/ And landes allotted him by desteny" (IV.462-464). As the earlier condemnation of Aeneas and Dido similarly emphasizes, the relevant concern is one of duty. If a noble queen must be put aside to ensure that the right inheritance goes forward, then Aeneas's abandonment is noble; indeed, Surrey's specific choices in the surrounding passages offer relatively little resistance to a reading of Aeneas as purely right in his actions towards Dido at the end of Book IV. However, the suggestion that perhaps Henry himself is right to set aside noble queens in service of the preservation of the line is undercut by Surrey's characterization of Aeneas himself. By focusing his translation on Books II and IV, Surrey is able to offer a clear endorsement of a particular vision of Aeneas—martial, determined, and right in his ultimate decision to focus on the restoration of the Trojan line. Written under a king who

Surrey saw as insufficiently determined and unfit for battle, and who was famously plagued by the problem of securing a line of inheritance for his kingdom, the work subversively suggests the possibility of an entirely new heir as the ideal solution.<sup>15</sup>

While the codes of individual and noble conduct which Surrey valued provide a framework for his choice of content and his presentation, these books seem also to offer a particular opportunity for commentary on one further important controversy of Surrey's day: the role of religion and reformation. However, in contrast to the clear endorsements and indictments of particular modes of behavior, the religious politics of the selected books are more difficult to parse. The murder of Laocoon, a priest, misinterpreted by the people, may suggest either the persecuted Catholic priests or the reformers who were martyred for preaching abroad or, in England, for going too far too quickly. The monsters who rise from the sea famously murder Laocoon and his sons in spectacular fashion, and Surrey renders the moments in particularly visceral language:

Then raught they hym, who had his wepon caught  
To rescue them, twise winding him about  
With folded knottes, and circled tailes, his wast.  
Their scaled backes did compasse twise his neck,  
With rered heddes aloft, and stretched throtes.  
He with his handes traue to vnloose the knottes:  
Whose sacred fillettes all sprinkled were  
With filth of gory blod, and venim *rank*.

...

To Pallas temple, and her towres of heichte:  
Under the feete of which the Goddesse stern,  
Hidden behinde her targettes bosse they crept.  
New gripes of dred then pearse our trembling brestes.  
They sayd Lacons desertes had derely vought  
His hainous dede, that pearced had with stele  
The sacred bulk, and throwen the wicked launce. (II.272-291)

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<sup>15</sup> If the potential date of early 1540 is accepted for composition, Surrey would also have already fathered the "heir and a spare" so elusive for Henry VIII himself.

The brutal language suggests an indictment of whatever deity or force is responsible for the vicious snakes, but Laocoon's death is partly the work of the gods, and so his role as priest is neither clearly lauded nor condemned. The clear slant of the lines, though, is that the people who justify Laocoon's death cannot be trusted; neither, then, can the monarch who bends to the popular will. The lines on Athena's temple further suggest some deep religious corruption, as the serpents hide under the statue of the goddess after their murder of Laocoon and his sons. Partially, Surrey the Classicist can be understood to deal with the pagan Greco-Roman gods on their own terms, as not inherently moral beings. On the other hand, the temporal context of the translation necessarily influences the image of the twin snakes in the temple, glutted on the blood of the dead priest.

Of course, any analogy which attempts to assign a kind of allegorical equation through which Rome and Carthage become the Catholic and Protestant ideologies quickly becomes hopelessly confused. However, Surrey's own religious views have been similarly difficult to access. On the one hand, Surrey was a member of a generally reformist family, and served against the uprising of the Pilgrimage of Grace; on the other hand, he was in many ways conservative and opposed to those humanist impulses of Henry which might undermine traditional, aristocratic power. This vein of Surrey's thought is an excellent example of the ways in which subversive energies, turned against the King, were often not progressive energies, but were instead highly conservative in nature. Whether Surrey's lines hint at a suspicion of the temple iconography as full of vicious snakes or a valorization of honest priests cut down by malevolent potentates who seek their own aims, they certainly argue that the voice of the mob cannot be trusted, particularly in religious matters.

## B. Wyatt's Psalms

The question of religion, only, perhaps, addressed in terms of the role of the populace in Surrey's *Aeneid*, is naturally much more central to Wyatt's Biblical translations, though the poet's own motivations and beliefs remain similarly obscured.<sup>16</sup> When Thomas Wyatt translated his version of the seven Penitential Psalms, he offered an entry in an even greater tradition than that associated with the courtly love lyrics and Petrarchan verse for which he is perhaps more well-known. The psalms had become a foundational text for essentially every prominent version of European Christianity by the middle of the medieval period, and their influence only grew. The origins of considering the disparate psalms as one piece are unclear, as outlined in King'oo's research on the Psalms as a united text in late medieval and Early Modern England. Further, their purpose shifted across time and sect. What remained consistent, though, was that the "seven psalms often circulated together" (King'oo *Miserere* 13). This tradition, manifested in "material embodiments of the unified nature of the sequence" like illustrated manuscripts and popular prayer books (King'oo *Miserere* 13), "had the effect of fostering certain metonymic or synecdochic modes of interpretation: any particular psalm in the series might be explicated by association with any other psalm, or by reference to the greater whole" (King'oo *Miserere* 13). Thus, by the time Wyatt created his particular translation, with its addition of prologues connecting the narrative of the piece, the potential of the psalms to speak to one another or to outline a particular process of penitence was already well-established.

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<sup>16</sup> Biblical translation in the period has its own fraught history, which is beyond the scope of this particular project. However, some of the very general commonalities are worth noting. Translation, both Biblican and poetic, is linked with the idea of greater accessibility to more people. Because of this, both kinds of translation are linked to subversive energies of the time that aimed to challenge established, hierarchical authorities; both kinds of translation also often claim that their goals are a return to an older tradition or to a purer "truth." Both share, in short, similar methods of challenging and of claiming authority.



The psalms were an integral part of religious life across Europe, then; as King'oo emphasizes "however (and by whomever) penance was undertaken in the West, the Penitential Psalms were almost always woven into its procedures" (*Miserere* 14). However, Hamlin adds that "[b]ecause of the central place of the Psalms in English daily life, and their vital functions within the body of English culture, they were...in a powerful if peculiar sense, *English* works" (6). One of the defining characteristics of Early Modern understandings of the psalms was the understanding that "all of them had been composed by King David" (Hamlin 3). This thread should be united with the Humanist traditions of the courtier as a critical adviser and of the emerging English tradition of poetry as an expression of that advice and criticism; to wit, as Hamlin expresses the connection, "the fact that David, divinely appointed king and prophet, had written poetry provided Renaissance poets with a crucial precedent and justification for their own poetic vocation" (14). Hamlin quite clearly connects poets' psalm projects to another major thread of this kind of political poetry, calling the Early Modern period "a cultural movement founded on the enterprise of translation" (1). Because of the "generic indeterminacy" of the psalms, Hamlin argues, they were a particularly rich outlet for a variety of translations. King'oo acknowledges the various re-workings of the psalms through translation as "sometimes subversive, sometimes reactionary" (*Miserere* 3). As Hamlin summarizes, "what often seems most interesting about the Psalms in this period is the way in which they are transformed—adapted and assimilated" (11).

Because of the many assimilations and adaptations, any translation of the psalms had to negotiate the larger tradition. One canon, anthologized by Regino, abbot of Prüm, in the 906 text *Two Books Concerning Synodical Cases and Church Discipline* (*Libri duo de synodalibus causis et disciplinis ecclesiasticis*), "suggests that the seven psalms were read aloud during the dramatic

and severe ritual of excommunication” (King’oo *Miserere* 15); later, this rite was included in an influential pontifical composed between 950 and 963, then copied by Burchard of Worms and Johannes Gratian. (King’oo *Miserere* 16). While the public dimension of excommunication may be one important influence on Wyatt’s use of the psalms, there was also a tradition linking their use to personal faith, which would have appealed to the poet’s Humanist, and possibly Reformist, sensibilities. As King’oo outlines, “late medieval parishioners were allowed a surprising degree of spiritual self-management in penitential matters; by reciting the seven psalms, they could maintain the purity of their souls before God without needing frequent ecclesiastical mediation” (*Miserere* 17). As such, translations of the penitential psalms in the midst of the Reformation may act as a sort of propaganda—albeit with so many possible interpretations that their function may be difficult to define. On the one hand, such work could be used to indicate that the shift away from the Church of Rome did not fundamentally alter individual practice. Seen in this light, such translations would instead forefront individual practice as an important element of religion, strengthened by the new rules of the land. On the other hand, though, the focus on a practice of individual worship already allowed by the Church and connected to her sacraments could instead privilege the traditional worship in ways that undermined an imposition of new beliefs by the king. Wyatt’s translation works both to envision a shift in the process of penitence and to privilege individual worship in ways that may serve the Reformation, but also serve to underscore the problems of a king as any kind of high priest.

Wyatt’s translations of the Psalms are most distinctive because of his insertion of a frame narrative for the works. Though Alexandra Halasz and Richard G. Twombly have both pointed out that Wyatt borrows this feature from Aretino, the narrative is nonetheless unusual, and Wyatt’s version is unique. In the opening prologue, Wyatt’s narrator seems particularly to

valorize the voice of the resistant advisor and to condemn the king who falls prey to the sin of lust. Specifically setting the action following the seduction of Bathsheba, the narrator chronicles that

...when he sawe, that kindeled was the flame  
The noysome poyson, in hys harte he launced  
So that the soule dyd tremble wyth the same...  
So that he forgotte, the wysdom and forecaste  
Wh[ic]he woo to realmes, when that the [Kinge] fothe lacke  
Forg[ett]inge eke, goddes Maiestye as [fast]  
Yea, and hys owne... (3r -3v)

Like Surrey's Dido and Aeneas, Wyatt's David is guilty of sin which here rests partially, if not primarily, in his abandonment of his duty. The confused pronouns of the first few lines mix up the personified lust and the sinning king, suggesting that David's very identity has been consumed by his sin. His particular kingly traits—wisdom and foresight—have been forgotten, and his personal failure is a failure of his kingdom. While the Penitential Psalms were often portrayed as following the events of David's affair, Wyatt's choice to add this more explicit outline of events under Henry VIII is not likely to have gone unnoticed, particularly given the King's own penchant for portrayal as David.

However, Wyatt's own life offers another interpretation, both for current readers and for his contemporary audience. One of the issues over which Wyatt frequently found himself at odds with the King and his advisors was Wyatt's own mistress.<sup>17</sup> The possibility of the entire narrative as referring to Wyatt's own penitential journey adds several significant dimensions to the work. First, the self-reference offers an additional screen for Wyatt; not only is the work a translation, it

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<sup>17</sup> While no full biography has been written for Elizabeth Darrell, she figures significantly in Wyatt's history. In 1541, for example, Henry officially ordered Wyatt to return to his wife and end his relationship with his mistress (King'oo "Rightful" 156). He had at least one illegitimate son with Darrell (*DNB*), and their relationship is one obvious factor in his long estrangement from his wife.

is also a translation which he can be understood to undertake out of penitential self-interest. Second, though, that self-referential interpretation aligns Wyatt with the king—both David, the penitent poet, and Henry himself, the now infamous adulterer who often figured himself with that same Davidic imagery. Just as Surrey can imagine himself as Aeneas, defender of noble values and lynchpin in the shifting dynastic future of his people, so Wyatt can figure himself as both David and advisor. His perspective is given extra authority by his own image as the sinning but redeemed king. This odd balance of penitence and redemption—that is, of error but also of authority—was one of the reasons for Henry’s own Davidic iconography. Because the great prevalence of that iconography meant that reference to David would always first be interpreted as reference to Henry, Wyatt’s own ability to claim the poems as self-reference empowered the critical elements of his text, rather than truly effacing them.

The lack of sight and self-knowledge that so dangerously characterizes the David of Wyatt’s opening lines is further emphasized in David’s confrontation with Nathan, who enters the text as a righteous advisor evocative of the best Humanist and Biblical traditions. In his lust, David

blynded thynkes thys trayne, so blynde and close  
 To blynde al thynges, that nothing waye it disclose  
 But Nathan has spied out this trecherye  
 Wyth ruful cheare, and settes afore hys face  
 The greate offence, outrage and iniurye  
 That he hathe done too God, as in thys case  
 By murder for too clooke adulterye  
 He shewethe eke from Heauen; thee threatens alas  
 So sternly sore, thys Prophete thys Nathan  
 That al amased was, thys woful aged man (4r-4v)

Nathan emerges as the essential advisor to the king, whose own lost self-knowledge, emphasized by the insistent repetition of “blynde,” has convinced him that others are similarly blind to his sin. The language evokes a sense of convincing rhetoric, as well; as the king’s advisor, Nathan

“settes afore hys face” the outline of “thys case,” and “shewethe” the consequences of the king’s rash actions. Further, the text preserves no sense that Nathan has been “sent” by God, as in most Biblical translations. Instead, Nathan has spied out the king’s folly through his own observation, and he comes to correct the king out of his own sense of moral obligation. “Instead of an agent of God who foresees the future, we have a man who investigates David’s secrets and before whom David throws himself to the ground when the treachery is brought into the open” (Halasz 328). As a depiction of the appropriate relationship between a king and his advisors, Wyatt’s prologue suggests the necessity of corrective criticism. While Wyatt would have seen this suggestion as a necessary element of true service, his larger work clearly indicates that he had, at this point, sufficient experience in Henry’s court to no longer believe in the efficacy of such criticism, even when it could be safely offered. In his presentation of even the deeply flawed David as receptive to the kind of criticism Henry will no longer hear, Wyatt uses the translation as an outlet for that repressed expression.

David’s response emphasizes his trust in his advisor and the appropriateness of the action Nathan has taken. Once Nathan has laid out the “case” of his sin, David

Like him that meateth wyth horror and wyth feare  
 The heate doth streyght forsake the lymyttes colde  
 The colour eke droppeth downe from hys chea[r]e  
 So doethe he feeles hys fyre manyfolde  
 Hys heate, hys luste, his pleasure all in feare  
 Consume and waste, and streyght hys crowne of gold  
 Hys purple pauler, hys scepter he letteth fall  
 And to the ground, throweth him self wyth all (4v-5r)

Eschewing his kingly trappings, David accepts his advisor’s judgment and withdraws himself to cave to do penitence through his psalms. However, Twombly has examined the problem of David’s first attempts at penance; essentially, David has eschewed the performance of kingliness for the performance of the penitent. While Twombly’s focus is on the insufficiency of performed

penitence which does not truly accept the inability of the penitent to affect his own fate, I see a further corollary to the idea of performed majesty. As he throws aside the performance of king, David's education in penitence may also be an education in rule.

The double function of David's penitential journey is emphasized by the complicated relationship Wyatt creates between his poetic self, his narrator, and his poem's object. Halasz sees this relationship as speaking to the complicity of Wyatt, the courtier and poet, within the corrupt court to which he responds: "[a]s a poet, he addresses the king with a consciousness of loss. He can call the king to account, but he cannot do so from a position of innocence or spiritual purity" (325). Thus, when David first begins his psalms of penitence, most critics agree with Halasz in seeing an element of unworthiness or failure in his first appeals, elements not inherent to the psalm. Twombly, specifically, sees the problem as one of spiritual fitness, arguing that the "first of Wyatt's seven paraphrases opens with a David emotionally unprepared for prayer, uncomfortable with his own motives, and engaged (in a manner that becomes dramatically typical) in a kind of running argument with both God and himself" (352). The problems of David's initial approach are apparent in his language, which does not so much balance claims of goodness, aspirations to mercy, and evocations of God's justice as bounce furiously between extremes, presenting, in this first attempt, no logical or emotional "truth:"

That the repentaunce, whych I haue and shall  
May at thy hande, seke mercy as the thyng  
Of onely comfort to wretched sinners all  
Whereby I dare *with* humble bemonyng  
Of the goodness of thee, this thyng requyre  
Chastyce me not, for my deseruinge  
Acoordynge to thy iuste conceaued yre  
O lorde I drede, and that I did not drede  
I me repente, and euermore desyre  
Thee to dread... (6r-6v)

Wyatt's David imagines himself forgiven, in terms of mercy, but then frustrates the terms of that mercy by trying to judge his own "deseruinge," first presenting himself as humble and supplicant, then shifting to a view of his sins as ones which can only deserve punishment. Confronted with the idea of a just God, David retreats into fear, frustrating the Reformist energies towards a doctrine of mercy that will be more successful later in the psalms. The shifting doctrinal perspectives evoke the shaky grounds of Wyatt's England and a church which, subject to the variations of one man's mind, underwent a series of confusing and sometimes contradictory shifts. However, while the latent critique suggests the dangers of this model, the narrative suggests that hope exists for the king and that capitalizing on that hope is largely predicated simply on recognizing it.

In the first psalm, however, David seems determined not to recognize this hope of mercy. Even as he faintly gestures towards the idea of God's mercy, his language returns, again and again, to the more immediate threat of punishment. David pleads that God "Punishe it not as asketh thee greatnes/ Of thy furor prouoked by myne offence/Temper, o lorde, the harme of my excesse" (6v-7r). Wyatt's language—David's language—constantly emphasizes the justice of such punitive measures. While the concept of justice stood in a complex but co-developed relationship to the doctrine of mercy, Wyatt's David seems so obsessed with the first that he forgets the necessity of believing in the second. His language attempts a rhetorical persuasion of the judge, in effect—a tool common to Henry's own persuasive work and one with which Wyatt would not have been unsympathetic. Further, his fear of judgment is figured in highly physical language, often eliding the larger concern of the fate of the soul, as when he declaims that "My fleshe is troubled, my harte doth feare the speare" (7r). While the language is also metaphorical, the

specific focus on the physical, and on the flesh specifically, highlights the insufficiency of David's vision in this first approach.

When David does more appropriately center his concerns on his spiritual well-being, his language still remains mired in the fear of judgment and attempts at justification that plague this first psalm. He moves into a consideration of the dangers of the world as he begins to describe the specific temptations he fears:

Much more my soule is troubled by the blastes  
Of these assautes, that come as thick as hayle  
Of worldly vauities, that temptacion calles  
Agayn [I] the bulwerke, of the flesh frayle  
Wherin thee soule, in greate perple[xiti]e  
Feeleth the sences (7v)

The soul is a kind of captive to the flesh, but this odd separation again suggests a problematic theology on David's part. The soul is endangered *because* of the temptation of the flesh, rather than being truly complicit in the flesh's error as its presumed captain. When David speaks of the flesh and soul as separate, he aims to cast that separation as a kind of justification. Rather than seeing the soul as the immortal element housed in the flesh, he attempts a dichotomy that claims the soul as the virtuous victim of the apparently inescapable errors which the flesh simply cannot avoid.

The error is replicated in David's second psalm, where he speaks resentfully of those whose flesh has not similarly imperiled their soul:

And happye are they, that haue they wyfulnesse  
Of lust restryngned, afore it went at large  
Prouoked by the drede, of Gods furor  
Whereby they haue not on their backes thee charge  
Of other faultes, too suffer thee dolor  
For that theyr faulte, was never execute  
In open syghte, example [of] error (12v-13r)



Although there is an element of self-will acknowledged, the language still suggests that David has not fully accepted his own culpability in his sin, or, more importantly, his own inability to do anything about this sin other than accept God's grace. The ambiguous phrasing of the first three lines may be read as these others having restrained their will towards lust: "happy are they that have restrained their willfulness of lust." However, the lines may also be read as a passive voice construction implying another hand, perhaps God's, as enacting the restraint: "happy are they that have their willfulness of lust restrained (by God)." Thus, the charge that these men avoid may, in David's eyes, instead become a charge that God has not laid on them—and thus one that He has unfairly laid on David, insufficiently arming the king against this potential fault and "allowing" him to fall into error.

The end of the first psalm presents one of the most troubling consequences of David's limitation in this area, as Wyatt's translation emphasizes the near-threat of David's words to God at the end of the Psalm. Apparently fearing that mercy will not be granted—a reflection of his failed understanding of the nature of divine grace—David attempts to strike a bargain, of sorts, with his God:

Then yf I dye, and goo where as I feare  
To thynke ther on, howe shall thy great mercye  
Sounde in my mouthe, unto thee worldes care  
For ther is none, that can they laude and loue  
For that thou wilt no loue, among them there (8v-9r)

David tries to cast "love" here as reciprocal, as if the king's worship of God is like God's love to the king. In this case, if God fails to show his love by failing to grant his mercy, the king may withdraw his love by withdrawing his praise. David fails to understand justification, when he sees both kinds of love as potentially equivalent; he fails to understand mercy when he thinks it might fail.

Throughout the first few psalms and their prologues, Wyatt's David struggles between multiple interpretations of grace, mercy, and justification. In the second prologue, David "specifies the absolute inwardness of redemptive merit, yet craves the formulation of it in outward terms" (Twombly 356). This seems also true, though, of the narrator's voice. Partly, the function can be understood as an acknowledgement of the limitations of metaphor, which must serve to describe the state of the soul and of religious experience. However, the second prologue seems invested in highlighting, rather than mitigating, that insufficiency:

Whoseo hathe sene, the sycke in hys feuour  
After truce taken, wythe the heate or colde  
And that the fyte is paste, of hyse feuour  
Drawe fayntinge syghes, let hym I saye beholde  
Sorowefull Daud, after hys languor  
That wyth his teares, that from his eyen downe rolled  
Paused his playnte, and layd down hys harpe  
Faythfull recorde, of all hys sorowes sharpe  
Yt semed nowe, that of hys faulte the horrour  
Dyd make a ferde nomore hys hope of grace  
Thee threatens whereof in horrible terrour  
Dyd holde his harte, as in despaire a space  
Tyll he has wyll to seke for hys succoure  
Hym selfe accusynge, beknowynge hys case  
Thynkyng so beste, hys lorde to appeace  
And yet not healed, he fealethe hys dysease (11r-v)

A fever is both an insufficient synonym for the danger in which David understands himself to be, and a potentially perfect metaphor for the nature of God's grace as either already present or already absent in a person's life; either the fever will pass or it will not, and the Early Modern patient has little to do with the operation. However, David remains unwilling to accept this position. The complications of Wyatt's line "dyd make a ferde nomore hys hope of grace" highlight the mental acrobatics of David's arguments. That this is Wyatt's original composition, rather than part of the translated psalms, makes the grammatical difficulties of this section even more obviously essential to Wyatt's meaning. It *should* not seem to David that the horror of his

fault any longer threatens—or in any way impacts—his certainty of grace. Instead, though, the threat of his fault holds his heart in terror and despair, which drives him to renew his supplication. Even though it *seems* that David is restored through mercy to grace, he is unwilling to accept this state, and focuses instead on his attempts to appease his lord through, essentially, a careful and well-structured argument. David's refusal to accept his own lack of control in the situation reflects a serious misunderstanding of the religion he is meant to head, and Wyatt's readers would understand both the danger of such a misunderstanding and the particular problem of a church head who could not submit himself to mercy, rather than rely on justification.

Throughout the narrative, the problem of David's position as a king who is also the spiritual leader of his people is a peripheral but significant concern. In fact, the text's sidelong approach to the issue emphasizes exactly how prescient the issue was to Wyatt's contemporaries, and how aware Wyatt was of the dangers of his work. However, both the psalms and Wyatt's inserted prologues obliquely address David's status, and so reference his role as a religious and political leader. In one of David's attempts attempt to self-expatiate, he explains that "I for byscause, I hydde it styлле wythin/Thinkinge by state, in fault to be preferred/ Do fynde by hyding of my fault my harme" (13r). David acknowledges that he has created greater danger for himself because he thought himself above others and perhaps above judgment, or at least subject to different rules of judgment. As Halasz observes of the entire sequence, "David's sin is personal or private, but it unfolds itself through, and has consequences for, his princely or public power" (330). Indeed, as the lines above imply, David himself understands his sin as partially informed by his princely, public power; he suggests that he partially falls as a consequence of his preferment to power.

The problems of his position, then, imply a potential danger for those who must follow him. Wyatt's prologues also emphasize the helplessness of those followers, as when he notes that

...so close the caue was, and unknoweth  
That none but god, was recorde of hys payne  
Els hadde the wynde blowen, in all Israell eares  
Of theyr kynge, the wofull playnte and teares (21r)

The lines make Israel a kind of absent witness, reinstating the public in the text while also, paradoxically, emphasizing their removal. The people have no place as witness and must simply hope that their king can reconcile himself to the doctrine he is meant to convey to them, offering an imitation, of sorts, of David's own struggle with God, where he must learn to trust his own lack of agency.

This relationship, of David as God's servant just as the people must be his, continues from the third prologue, where the relationship is first figured in apparently appropriate language that then slides into dangerous ambiguity.

As the seruaunte, in hys maysters face  
Fyndynge pardon, of hys passed offence  
Consyderynge his greate goodnes, and hys grace  
Gladde teares dystylles, as gladsome recompence  
Ryghte so Dauid, semed in thee place  
A marble Image of synfuler reuerence  
Carued in the rocke, wythe eyes and hande on hyghe  
Made is by craft, to playn, to sobbe, to syghe (16r)

The final line reopens the fissures of David's penitent performance; if he "[m]ade is by craft, to playn, to sobbe, to syghe," who is the maker? The doctrinally correct answer is "God," but then the problem emerges of God's complicity in David's suffering. Of course, religious thought in the period was more than sufficiently complex to hold God's absolute power and absolute mercy as apparently contradictory but inherently co-active ideals. However, Wyatt's David does not, at this point, present an argument for any comfortable acceptance of this theology; rather, David himself seems only to alternate between the two views. David's own conflicted approach to both

views also implicates his role as his own “maker:” both in the sense that he is responsible for his own sin and in the sense that he creates a performance of penitence for that sin. Finally, the poet himself becomes the maker, especially of these prologues, which are original to Wyatt. The narrator/ poet *makes* David plain, sigh, and sob. Wyatt forms this king, who may or may not yet understand appropriate penitence; the implication may be that he wishes for a similar influence on his own king—that he could *make* him consider and confront this doctrinal position.

That Wyatt may be the greater force here is emphasized when he undercuts the potential for David to be his own maker. As David falls once more into his habits of justification, he laments

For I my selfe, loo, thinge moste unstable  
Formed in offence, conceaued in lyke case  
Am nought but synne from my natyuytie  
Be not these sayde, for myne excuse, ah alas  
But of thy helpe, to shewe necessitie inwarde (22v)

David’s protest that this defense “[b]e not...sayde for myne excuse” only emphasizes that this does, in fact, sound like an attempt to excuse his behavior. Further, the excuse implicates God as the causer of man’s frailty in a less-than-comfortable extension of doctrine. The moment emphasizes the ways that “Wyatt destabilizes both the narrator and David in order to expose the temporal, spiritual, and poetic issues that the figuration of David allows” (Halasz 336). Even nearing the end of the sequence, Wyatt’s David is a deeply conflicted figure who works through, but does not ultimately succeed in working out, the conflict of man’s drive for justification and his need for greater mercy.

Views of the ultimate conclusion of the poem differ sharply. Twombly sees the end of the poem as fundamentally redemptive; he argues that

Wyatt’s sequence, roughly, is a movement from helpless uncertainty in the heart and mind, through a frantic and paradox-ridden effort to dispel uncertainty, to a state where

David can speak with earnestness, forthrightness, and without the irony that comes from hidden motive. (Twombly 359)

Halasz, though, counters that the conclusion offers no such clear vision of David's final state. Instead, she sees David's voice as implicated in a larger system of self-interest that is meant to mirror the problems of Wyatt's England. Even after the process of the psalms, Halasz argues that "the pointing toward political allegory reveals that David's example can be enacted in bad faith, his voice assumed for interested purposes. What is true for the princely David is also true for the singer-self of the psalms" (342).

Halasz argues, ultimately, that this psalmic sequence shows David as an unsuccessful penitent. In the final discourse, in her argument, Wyatt "crosses the boundary between his text and the psalmic text and shows David's ostensibly scared words to be shaped by another moment of David's private discourse, not his discourse with God, but with himself and his own interests" (Halasz 323). At this moment, Halasz argues that David's self-interested appeal have betrayed his repentance as "mere appearance" (335). However, that David appeals to God in the interest of perhaps preserving his son is not, I think, so clearly a purely self-interested moment. First, this moment emphasizes the parallel to Henry, obsessed with the question of a son's inheritance. However, such an obsession, while temporal and worldly, is not necessarily sinful., I suggest that Wyatt's paraphrase stops short of showing David as subject again to his sin, and instead leaves an open ending which suggests the dangers that such temporal interests, however understandable, may pose to the immortal soul of the penitent.

In this same moment, Twombly sees instead "a reawakening of a sense of kinship with the race and a resulting notion that David's own problem is not unique and that the work of spiritual regeneration has therefore some broad historical principle behind it" (377). This language may perhaps be too strong in its certainty, as Wyatt is rarely certain of any good result.

However, I think Twombly's argument, when paired with Halasz's, offers a more comprehensive view of Wyatt's project. Wyatt aims to show the kinship of the king with the larger race—and in this aim, his work is fundamentally subversive, for he claims a spiritual equality with and so a right to criticize his social superior. He also suggests the problems of putting a king—whether Henry or David—in the position of extreme religious power, as man, and all men, are fallible.

Wyatt likely wrote his verse paraphrase during his imprisonment for treason in early 1541; the charges against him were specifically of collaboration with the Papist community while abroad as an ambassador (King'oo *Miserere* 95-96). As Wyatt himself noted in his equivocal defense, he was, and remains, more likely to be understood as a Reformist than as a Papist. Wyatt's version of the Psalms may serve as quiet entry on the side of the Reformist energies, perhaps intended to offer a careful balance dissociating their author from Catholicism without associating him with any too radical parties. A 1537 bilingual devotional guide on the Psalms by Robert Redman "preserves two dissimilar approaches to the Penitential Psalms" (King'oo *Miserere* 107), which King'oo then describes, using Roland Greene's theoretical terms, as the *fictional*—relating the Psalms as composed all in sequence, by David—and the *ritual*—relating the psalms by their function (*Miserere* 107). King'oo then illustrates the ways in which Wyatt's Psalms are fictional rather than ritual: "Whereas in the ritualized paraphrases...the Penitential Psalms require *identification* and *self-effacement* on the part of those who read or hear them, in Wyatt's fiction they beg for *interpretation* and *analysis* instead" (*Miserere* 119, emphasis in original). Because they are presented as a narrative, reader criticism is inherent to the form Wyatt gives his psalms.

Wyatt writes an element of that criticism into his work through his addition of the narrative voice. The 1549 edition of his Psalms, published under a more actively Protestant king,

then emphasizes this element, “since it not only sets the narrator’s voice apart from David’s but also privileges that voice, giving it extra command” in the headings titled “the Auctor” (King’oo *Miserere* 121). This increased assumption command comes with risks, but because Wyatt is no longer available as a culpable body, the voice can instead claim an authority for poetry—rather than the individual author, the entry can be made to champion the traditional privileges of Art. Ultimately, once the poet himself is gone, “the prologues derive extra clout from being associated with the incomparable wisdom and courage of Wyatt himself” (King’oo *Miserere* 121), who, as Surrey’s poetic labor, examined in the final chapter of this work, has guaranteed, will serve as a figure of poetic genius and the privileges that it ought to be afforded.

### **C. Two Translations into Prose by Early Modern Englishwomen**

This final section addresses a category of work that is not, precisely, a part of courtly verse production, but which works in and responds to that system, and which may serve as a demonstration of the larger literary strategies at work in the Henrician court. At least two quite young women at the Tudor court, near the end of Henry’s reign and the beginning of his son’s, chose to translate works from verse for presentation to their parents. In both cases, however, these women chose to translate the verse into prose. I suggest that while these authors—Elizabeth Tudor and Lady Jane Lumley—wanted to access some of the cloaked criticism available to them through translation, they also sought to distance themselves from any implication of real rebellion by avoiding the acknowledged strain of resistance of the tradition of verse translation in the Henrician Court.

A number of parallels exist between the two works, in terms of both production and thematic content. Elizabeth’s work, a translation of Marguerite de Navarre’s *Le Miroir de l’âme Pécheress*, was presented to her stepmother as a New Year’s present either quite late in 1544 or,



naturally, very early in 1545, when Elizabeth would have been just over eleven years old. Elizabeth dates the prefatory letter to her step mother as the last day of 1544. Jane Lumley's work was likely written in 1550, and Harold H. Child argues that the volume was paired with her husband's translation of Erasmus's *Institution of a Christian Prince* in a present to Jane's father (vii). Born in 1537, Jane would have been about thirteen at the time of her work. Perhaps because both women were so young, critics have often dismissed both works as fundamentally schoolroom exercises. Often, Lumley's clear title—*The Tragedie of Euripides called Iphigeneia translated out of Greake into Englisshe*—is simply ignored (63r), and rarely is the work presented without the caveat that Erasmus had printed a Latin version earlier in the century. However, I contest that, as a gift demonstrating her scholarly acumen to her father, Lumley's text is quite possibly, as she presents it, a translation from the Greek. As she had only recently married, her father likely was well aware of his daughter's abilities, particularly given his clear investment in her education (Oxford DNB "Lumley"). Perhaps because Elizabeth's education is more widely documented, the authenticity of her work has not been called into question, but critics do usually speak of some other "assigning" the work to Elizabeth, and often present her engagement with the text as purely mechanical.

### **Elizabeth's *Mirror***

In this vein, Prescott begins her analysis of Elizabeth's translation from the premise that "whoever asked or encouraged her to translate the *Miroir* forgot or did not know that it is more than a piece of piety by a famous and friendly patron of moderate reform" (68). She argues that whomever this other agent was, he or she must not have been familiar with the work, since it would

have occurred to any adult who read beyond the first two hundred lines that this poem, with its impassioned evocation of God as a great king and judge who is kind to daughters

and does not execute adulterous wives, was a most unsuitable means of displaying Elizabeth's talents at Henry's court. (Prescott 71)

However, I would suggest that on the contrary, Elizabeth's mentors might well have seen this as an appropriate text for Elizabeth to translate and that Elizabeth herself might well have participated in the choice of text. While Elizabeth was likely old enough to make some of the choices regarding the translation under her own direction, she was already a diplomatically savvy enough individual to have almost certainly consulted with her tutors on her choice of book for Parr's New Year's present. Perhaps those who worked with her or were aware of her work saw the entry as the kind of courtly rebuke that was expected of ideal courtiers—and a great prince was first to be an ideal courtier. Perhaps, rather, the work was meant to flatter Henry's vanity—to imply that this young princess did not see her father's hypocrisy. Or perhaps the motives can be combined. The text could be used to subtly remind Henry of the ideals to which he should aspire, shaming him into a better example to both preserve his final queen and to live up to his younger daughter's expectations, having rather spectacularly failed his elder's. Elizabeth's actual translation work, though, seems instead to foreground appeals to motherly or brotherly love, evocations of filial duty to a father, and justifications for women's power and voice, suggesting that, in this early work, she was more interested in self-preservation and promotion than in a specific larger political agenda.

In the short prefatory letter, Elizabeth draws a parallel between the narrator, who turns to God for salvation of her imperfections, and her stepmother, following a discussion of the larger argument of the text's narrative of salvation with a passage appealing to her stepmother's mercy for the text:

althoughe i knowe that as for my parte, wiche i haue wrought in it: ~~the~~ (as well spirituall, as manuell) there is nothinge done as it shulde be, nor else worthy to come in youre grace handes, but rather all vnperfyte and vncorecte: yet, do i truste also that oube it is like a worke wiche is but newe begonne, and shapen: that the fyle of youre excellent witte, and

godly lerninge, in the reding of it...shall rubbe out, polishe; and mende (or els cause to mende) the wordes (or rather the order of my writing), the wich i knowe in many places to be rude, and nothinge as it shuld be (Elizabeth 42)

Mirroring the soul's appeals to God in the text and as outlined in her preface, Elizabeth's appeal specifically mentions the shortcomings of her spiritual as well as her manual work; she appeals to her stepmother to forgive and guide both her intellectual and her religious work. The parallel is interesting because by addressing her stepmother, specifically, Elizabeth elides the more traditional connections between God and king that figure with some prominence in the translation which follows. Instead, she replaces the masculine figure with the maternal, as indeed she replaces Marguerite's "pere" with mother in a later line in the text.<sup>18</sup>

Elizabeth's language in the letter to Parr also mirrors some of Marguerite de Navarre's traditionally self-effacing language in her own original preface. However, as Snyder has pointed out, this self-effacement slides into assertions which suggest female equality with men, in at least spiritual, if not sometimes larger, terms. Elizabeth's translation preserves this effect, beginning with an assertion of the limitations of work by a woman that quickly moves into an assertion of the worthlessness of all men and worth of all believers:

beholde rather the matter, and excuse the speche, consydering it is the worke of a woman: wiche hath in her neyther science, or knowledge, but a desire that eche one might se, what the gifte of god doth when it pleaseth hym to iustifie, the harte of a man. For what thinge is a man, (as for hys owne strenght) before that he hath receyued the gifte of fayth. (Elizabeth 44)

In this preamble, as Snyder sees in the original, the specific "'Femme' ...slides into [a generic] 'homme,' and Marguerite's gendered humility transmutes into a veiled assertion of equality with men" (Snyder 450). Elizabeth preserves this sense, which gains perhaps further weight from her appeal to her stepmother as a figure of intellectual and spiritual power in her own preface. The

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<sup>18</sup> For further discussions of this replaced word, see Prescott, Snyder, and Mueller and Scodel.

beginnings of both the original and translated texts suggest a space for women's expression as justified through the same forces as men's, and so draw parallels that confer authority on women's writing.

This theme is reinforced by Snyder's suggestion that for both Marguerite and Elizabeth, a thematic concern is the role of a sister who is intellectually equal, or even superior, to a younger brother who is the celebrated heir. Speaking of Marguerite, Snyder writes that "for all her adoration [she] could not help being aware from their early years that her abilities were as good or better than her brother's. Intellectually and even diplomatically, she outshone him" (449). The characterization is satisfyingly appropriate to Elizabeth, as well. Both relationships are further complicated by the women's necessary dependence on these figures; "the one whose potent presence makes her inferior and worthless is also the one who confers status on her, the one through whom she reclaims worth" (Snyder 452). For Marguerite, many of these tensions may have been lessened by her close relationship with her brother, who ensured that status and worth were consistently conferred on his sister and who had left the country under the regency of his mother at least twice. I suggest that Elizabeth may have known enough of this relationship to be inspired by this "natural" model of closeness in France, as exemplified by Louise, Francois, and Marguerite. Elizabeth may attempt to highlight the sisterly models of the *Mirror* as a consideration of a version of that model including her beloved stepmother and young brother, while excluding her Catholic older sister and her father, whose decline, by 1544, would have been apparent. By translating this Reformist text, with its structural reliance on familial relationships, Elizabeth could appeal to her stepmother at present and set up a precedent for established sisterly loyalty and support when her brother came into his own.

Perhaps as part of this system, Elizabeth uses some of her most evocative language in her translation of a passage which figures the traditional image of the sinner in a forest or wilderness of sin. Because of Elizabeth's careful elision of a clear subject, though, the figuration becomes equally powerful as an image of believer or a virtuous person set amongst the vices of the court:

For i am too farre entred emongest them and that worse is, i haue not power, to obtayne the true knowledge of one...If i thinke to loke for better, a braunche cometh and doth close myne eyes: and in my mouth doth fall when i wolde speake the frutte wich is so bytter to swalowe down. If my spirite be styrred for to karken: than a great multitude of leaffes doth entre in myne eares and my nose is all stoped with flowres. (Elizabeth 46)

Although the lines are ostensibly about the experience of the soul trapped in guilt, the imagery is suggestive of the experiences of a woman trapped in a court turned against her –whether against her in terms of preservation of her religious virtues or in terms of political honest and clarity. The speaker does not have the power “to obtayne...true knowledge of one;” that is, she cannot penetrate the nature of her sin or of the group surrounding her. Her senses are confused by excess and bombardment. In this case, Elizabeth's choice to move from verse into prose also emphasizes the narrative sense of the entrapment and makes the figurative language function more dramatically and less poetically.

The text goes on to join this imagery to imagery of the carceral. The joint imaginings of carcerality and courtliness in the period are discussed at greater length in Chapters Three and Four; here, though, the movement from jungle to jail evokes the oppressive combination of confusion and rigidity in role performance that often characterized poetic depictions of court conditions. Within this garden of sin or vice, the speaker imagines “my poore soule, a slaue and prisonnere doth lye, withoute clartie, or light hauinge both her fete bound by her concupiscence, and also both her armes through vuell vse” (Elizabeth 46-48).<sup>19</sup> Her language suggests the

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<sup>19</sup> The apparent oddities of the citations in this section are due to the nature of Mueller & Scodel's edition, which produces the original spelling side by side with a modernized edition.

problems of being bound to a place full of dangers—both in the larger spiritual sense of the world of flesh and in her more immediate sociopolitical context.

Elizabeth's language also, then, figures the servant relationship to God in ways which seem designed to plead her case before a more immediate master, in apparent appeals for protection from some of these dangers. In these appeals, Elizabeth preserves a greater tendency towards Marguerite's original *copia* than in the translation generally. She compiles multiple offenses in her metaphor of service to God, lamenting her own inadequacy with "Alas, what a mayster withoute to haue deserued any goodnes of hym but rather serued hym sloughtfully and withoute ceasse offended hym, euery daye, yet is he not slake in helping me" (Elizabeth 50). The appeal to these masculine figures is again emphasized in her later line, "O what goodness and swittenes Is there any father to the duaghter, or els borthor to the syster, wiche wolde euer do as he hath done" (Elizabeth 54). While her language ostensibly underlines the inadequacy of such relationships, she also appeals to a desire to mitigate that inadequacy, implicitly asking that brother and father do aim to mirror divine love in their treatment of her. Given, as Prescott points out, Elizabeth's tendency to eliminate Marguerite's repetitions in most of the text, her choice to maintain them in "Father, father: alas, what ought i to thinke: shall my spirite be so bolde to take vpon hym to call the, father, ye, and also, our father" becomes striking for its difference from the rest of her rather pared down text (Elizabeth 58). She follows the lines by specifically referencing the Pater Noster as a precedent for this address. These lines are taken from Marguerite with little alteration, but there is nonetheless a poignancy in Elizabeth's appeal to a text to establish her ability to name her father that, if it strikes the reader five hundred years later, was likely not lost on the unusually politic eleven year old writing to her third stepmother.

The same problem of legitimacy and naming is further emphasized in one of the few areas where Elizabeth alters an entire phrase of her translation, in the lines “I am not worthy (i tell it afore euery man) to ~~call my selfe~~ be called thy childe, but (o bountiefull father) do no worse, vnto me, but as to one of the householde seruantes” (Elizabeth 66-68). The deletion of a choice of phrase, rather than just of a misplaced letter, is unusual in the edition. Elizabeth has specifically edited out her agency, choosing the passive voice construction and eliminating her ability to name herself this Father’s child. Nonetheless, Elizabeth’s translation also frequently emphasizes the relative security of this connection in contrast to worldly relationships. Of God, she claims “there is true paternitie in the” (Elizabeth 58)—a striking formulation for then still bastardized Elizabeth—and finally comes to the claim that God “hast broken the kindrede of myne olde father, callinge me, daugther of adoption” (Elizabeth 62). Elizabeth suggests her religion as a source of more secure identity, but she also suggests that, if her father, Head of the Church, would mirror his Father, he must offer her more “true paternitie.”

While the filial language of some of the translation is more quietly subversive in its evocation of Elizabeth’s troubled relationship with her royal father, other moments in the text offer criticism that, were it not in translation, could only be seen as overtly referring to Henry VIII. Marguerite’s original came as near to criticism of the king’s power, but Henry’s increasing use of execution as punishment adds a greater element of irony to the line “If i haue desreued death he (as a kinge) shall geue me grace, and pardon, and deluer me frome prison, and hanging” (Elizabeth 68). That Henry continued to enact increasingly strict laws, from which he decidedly did not give grace or pardon, also affects the later line, “Thou gyuest vs a lawe, and punishement if we do not fulfille it: and thyselfe wolde not be found to it, forbdiing vs the thinge wich thyselfe didyst” (Elizabeth 74). This second moment is somewhat abated, placed, as it is, in the

voice of Miriam, who the contemporary reader understands to be “wrong” in her questioning of both her brother and of God. However, the text itself is not as clear in its condemnation: Miriam still suffers her traditional punishment, and she is still restored to her community through the work of her brother. However, her questions are neither answered nor invalidated. Her doubt is only wrong because of who she doubts, and the charge—that her brother gives laws without following them—is dangerously applicable to Henry, as well.

In her translation of Marguerite’s many lines on the insufficiency of human relationships, Elizabeth cannily maintains the implied compliments to those whose relationships *are* found sufficient, in their mirroring of divine love. Particularly informative is the formulation of her translation of Marguerite’s claims to a shared inheritance as a natural result of a shared relationship: “Nowe than that we are borther, and syster togyther, i care but lytell for all other men. Thy laundes are my owne inheritaunce, lett vs than kepe (if it pleaseth the) but one husholde” (Elizabeth 76). Snyder again highlights how Marguerite’s original uses this apparently subject relationship to actually empower and entitle the female speaker, making her subordination to her brother a claim to share his lands. While “if it pleaseth the” does offer a shield of deference to the claim, the language is nonetheless bold, and even bolder in the mouth of a disinherited daughter. Once more, Elizabeth’s depiction of the strength of divine love, as figured through metaphors of familial relationships, seems also designed to inspire strength in her actual, temporal relationships.

However, even as Elizabeth valorizes these ideals, she emphasizes that reality is rarely so kind. In the original text, the claim that

If any mother hath taken any care for her sonne; If any brother hath hyd the faultte of hys sister. I neuer saw it (or elles it was kepte wonders secrete) that any husbande wolde forgiue his wife, after that she had offended hym and did returne vnto him. There be



inoughe of them, wiche for to auenge their wronge, did cause the iudges to condemne  
~~hym~~ them to dye (Elizabeth 76)

might have seemed overblown. Surely Marguerite saw instances of kindness, and her own family was a close one that likely did cover one another's faults and which certainly took care of one another. However, Elizabeth's life might indeed have shown her that this was the state of the world.

Following this indictment of man, the translation spends some dozen pages on the adulterous wife, almost tediously both justifying that her husband should put her aside, or have her more severely punished, and celebrating the clemency of husband who does neither. The passage concludes with the loving God-husband recalling his unfaithful wife with forgiveness, saying "But thou, wich hast made separacion of my beade: and did put thy false louers in my place and commyted fornicacion with them: yet, for all thys, thou mayest come vnto me againe" (Elizabeth 86). In this case, of course, Henry cannot live up to the model provided by divine love; he has already failed this particular test of clemency, and Elizabeth's careful work to offer multiple justifications for such punishment leading up to this line suggests that she was aware of the dangerous ground on which she trod. However, she nonetheless emphasizes the model of clemency as perfect.

Throughout her work, then, Elizabeth's translation also emphasizes the doctrine of grace and mercy that Wyatt's earlier psalms had presented as David's struggle. Whether her text was designed also to encourage Henry's Reformist energies, or only to appeal to her stepmother's more decidedly Protestant inclinations, Elizabeth's early work would later prove useful propaganda for her reputation as a most Protestant princess. Designed to strengthen her position through its appeals to specific family members and through its careful presentation of the potential dangers and benefits of familial relationships, the work would instead ultimately serve

to strengthen her position as a queen who no longer had any such strong relationships on which to rely.

### **Jane Lumley's *Iphigeneia***

In analyzing Lumley's text, this chapter does move beyond the chronological parameters of Henry's court. However, I suggest that this achievement in so young a woman is necessarily shaped by the influences under which she has been raised, and those influences are perhaps stronger, or more purely distilled, in such a young author than they are in older, more experienced writers who have access to a larger number of cultural systems. If Lumley's text is written in 1550, then the date of her work is sufficiently near the end of Henry's reign to trace similar influences and literary practice. Further, her father's position as Lord Chamberlain near the end of Henry's reign suggests that Lumley could, potentially, have been aware of Elizabeth's work translating foreign verse into English prose, and taken the princess as a model of female power, specifically as strengthened by familial relationships.

Harold H. Child notes that all of the texts save one in the manuscript which preserves *Iphigeneia* are recorded in "Lady Lumley's autograph" (v); the included facsimile from the volume shows a relatively unadorned and wonderfully neat hand. This facsimile also shows the "[o]rnamental flourishes [which] complete the half-filled lines at then of speeches and also frequently occur after catchwords," as noted by Child (x). Given the larger manuscript practice of the time, as more thoroughly outlined in the next following chapter, I argue that these flourishes suggest that Lumley did not want to allow for misinterpretation or for later additions to the work. Lumley's work to avoid such changes suggests her investment in her project as a preservation of her own voice, rather than as a larger cultural project on which others might collaborate.

This concern with self-identity is mirrored throughout the translation in the figure of Iphigeneia.<sup>20</sup> In “The Argument of the Tragadie” which begins this entry in the manuscript, Iphigeneia is named before her father (63v). Indeed, hers is the second proper name in the text, preceded only by Calchas, the prophet. Iphigeneia’s identity is quite quickly linked to her place as Agamemnon’s daughter and as a virgin (Lumley 63v-64r). Throughout the text, though, this identity is confirmed as Iphigeneia’s choice, just as the decision to go to the sacrifice will ultimately be her choice. Further, Iphigeneia ultimately rejects the additional identity which she could take on as Achilles’s wife, accepting his protection only insofar as he will enable her purpose. This kind of selective self-identification is a necessarily resistant act for an Early Modern woman, but Lumley contains her subversive message by reinforcing mores of chastity and spiritual education as central elements of women’s self-formation.

One major preoccupation of the text seems to be the connection between Iphigeneia’s imminent sacrifice and her pretend marriage. When Agamemnon first reveals his plot to Senex, he specifically links his misdeed to the fact that “now I haue determined the deathe of my daughter, *under the color of mariage*, and none knoweth of thus” (69r, emphasis mine). Even after Agamemnon has recanted his plan, the servant rebukes him for the horror of his deceit, emphasizing that “thou haste determined to sacrafice thy owne childe, under the colour of mariage” (69v). As Uman outlines, Agamemnon’s

pretense that [Iphigenia] is to be married rather than killed creates a none-too-subtle analogy between marriage and sacrifice, an analogy that illustrates the very public role of domestic arrangements and again reveals the futility of Agamemnon’s impulse to restrict his daughter to the private realm. (Uman 77-8)

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<sup>20</sup> I use, here, the spelling which Lumley uses in the first several pages of her text, but her use is not consistent; she also frequently uses “Iphigeneya” and other spellings are occasionally present, including “Iphigeneneya,”

Daughters, as Uman's argument outlines, will be "sacrificed" in some form or another to the father's ambition, and the bounds of what it means to sacrifice a life are blurred by Lumley's insistent focus on the metaphorical connection.

A series of repetitions after Achilles discovers the plot emphasizes this connection between marriage and sacrificial death, but also complicates any connotation that marriage should be feared. Indeed, the responsibility even of a pretend husband is emphasized both by Clytemnestra's pleas and by Achilles's concerns. In the space of twenty-eight lines, the concern is brought up in remarkably similar formula three times: Clytemnestra reproaches Achilles that "the reproche shalbe yours, seinge my daughter beinge sente for under the color of your name" (84r-v); Achilles responds that he will help because "if she beinge sent for in my name shulde be slaine, then truly it wolde turne to no small dishonor to me" (84v); and he ends the same speech by reinforcing that "it shoulde sounde to no litell reproche to me, if that through my occation your daughter shulde be slaine" (85r). While this kind of repetition may partially account for the oft-repeated modern dismissal of the play as a schoolroom exercise or unskilled work, repetition was a key strategy of many contributors to Early Modern English manuscripts. The use of nearly identical phrases emphasizes Lumley's theme: that Achilles's role even as faux husband makes him partially responsible for Iphigeneia, and that this role has the potential to confer honor or dishonor on his name.

Achilles's real desire for Iphigeneia when he learns of her virtue further mitigates the repetitions as related to any fear of marriage. After Iphigeneia first expresses her resignation to the sacrifice, Achilles responds

Trulie I woulde counte my selfe happi if I mighte obtaine the O Iphigeneya to be my wife, and I thinke the O grece to be uerie fortunate bicause thou haste norisshed soche a one: for you haue spoken uerie well. (Lumley 92v)

Although Iphigeneia still chooses to go forward to the sacrifice, Lumley's language and Euripides's characterization do not present this husband figure as threatening or domineering. Further, his speech not only honors Iphigeneia's virtue, it also explicitly references her worth as increasing the renown of her country. Her honor adds to the honor of her motherland, and both are increased specifically through her rhetorical skill and her virtue.

With her repetitions, Lumley successfully emphasizes the complications, already a focus of Euripides's original text, of the father/daughter relationship in patriarchal cultures where women are given in marriage. Only through the father does the daughter have potential access to learning, as demonstrated by Iphigeneia's rhetorical skill; security, as demonstrated in her confident and affectionate conversations with both parents; and, by extension of perhaps both of these, the secure future offered by a good marriage, as demonstrated by the cruel charade of betrothal to Achilles, who emphasizes his willingness to take on such an accomplished and virtuous bride. However, while Agamemnon may fail to ultimately uphold his obligations as a parent to protect his daughter, Lumley's text, with its emphasis on Iphigeneia's choice and its insistent references to marriage,<sup>21</sup> also foregrounds that through his earlier, successful parenting of a learned daughter, he has upheld his obligations as a subject, to protect his country. Iphigeneia's choice is of fame and valor over marriage, ultimately, as she rejects Achilles's offers to attempt her protection. Thus, within her translation, Lumley successfully presents a woman's self-identification along what could easily be considered "masculine" values, while protecting her own voice and identity with the mask of translation and by avoiding the suspicion of resistance that likely accompanied verse translation.

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<sup>21</sup> Harold H. Child offers greater consideration of Lumley's work with and from the Greek in his introduction to the 1909 edition.

In the translations examined in this chapter, the translations by men seem to seek grounds for a kind of equality with, and certainly a right to criticize, those in power, while the translations by women instead seek to describe a relationship to one in power marked by particular obligations and by the women's potential as sources of glory and renown. While the next chapters will show that women at court frequently did have an interest in larger subversive projects, the two prose translations here are more limited in scope. This is likely partly because of the translators' young ages; these young women may have been more interested in self-identification or, in Elizabeth's case, self-preservation than in a larger power project, and indeed establishment of independent identity for a young woman was itself a subversive act of empowerment. The very fact that these young women chose to translate into prose rather than verse, though, suggests that their educations had made them aware of the resistant potential for verse translations, which they then avoided as counterproductive to their more personal projects because more obviously identifiable as subversive.

#### IV. Transcription as Translation: Writing the Language of Manuscript Poetry

Courtiers' practice of adapting translation to express frustration in the Henrician court has received a great deal of critical attention since Greenblatt first outlined the practices of "courtly making"; only recently has that attention turned to the ways in which transcription might serve similar purposes. Largely independent of this question, research has also begun to explore the ways that manuscript production could create and strengthen communities and the contributions of women to that production. Here, I want to unite these threads to show how manuscript production was used, particularly by women, to allow a different kind of criticism from that contained in translations by the more thoroughly researched courtly makers like Wyatt and Surrey. Transcription in manuscripts offered a more communal form of production, a different kind of deniability, and more specific structural context relationships with other writers and other works. Women's contributions must be understood not as just another access point or contributing element for analysis, but rather as the defining feature of the practices of transcription and sharing of verse in Henrician manuscripts. As I hope to show, women's production so defined the genre that even manuscripts which do not contain women's hands can still be understood as conforming or reacting to the larger cultural phenomenon, where women's role was central. The analysis of transcription practices here will focus on a text that almost certainly does contain women's hands: the Devonshire Manuscript, likely owned by a woman, containing some twenty hands, and composed primarily, but not entirely, in the 1530s.<sup>22</sup> The Devonshire is usually understood to contain much more transcription than original composition, and neither original author nor transcriber is often clearly designated. These features make the

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<sup>22</sup> The use of this single text does limit some analysis, and clarification will be provided for claims that cannot be generalized to other works or to explain why a generalization is possible.

manuscript an ideal sample for understanding why manuscript production, one of the primary modes of poetic composition at Henry's court, might deemphasize originality and sole authorship and instead emphasize social composition and styles of adaptation.

Transcription did not necessarily, or even usually, mean the strict and exact re-inscribing of a section of text. In fact, the practice often involved studied revision on a scale ranging from particular pronouns to entire stanzas, often offering an entirely different effect from that of the original piece. The effect of transcription also depends largely on context, and the Devonshire Manuscript serves to demonstrate courtiers' proficiency at placement. Like the practice of translation, transcription was understood as a method through which courtiers could reimagine a text, making works more immediately resonant with their world. This underscores the sense in which such work was subversive; whether the energies expressed were essentially conservative or progressive, the preserved messages are consistently resistant to externally imposed narratives and values. The strategies of transcription, like translation, also allow writers a certain freedom in their critiques, particularly of the king, because a lack of ownership is inherent to both forms. Compared to translation, however, transcription allowed for both greater flexibility and greater deniability. The imaginative engagement with the text is of a different sort, because the text can be more explicitly rearranged or broken apart to join with other texts and because the text was communally produced. This chapter examines the practices of manuscript contributors, particularly women, and looks at the products of the manuscript as a collaborative project where transcription unites with multiple authorship. That project works to preserve and promote subversive energies, as authors transcribe in a complex system of reciprocal validation, enlarging and reworking the themes of their own and others' work as they gain energy from the extant tradition.



The Devonshire Manuscript's effect is best examined as that of a whole document, or with the understanding that every poem is entered in the context of those already existing and in awareness of those that will later be entered. Bradley J. Irish notes that "[t]he current binding can be tentatively dated to the early to mid-sixteenth century," so the manuscript today is likely very nearly the same as, if not identical to, the original book as it appeared before any of the pages were filled (87). However, Irish connects this form to an odd conclusion, when he claims that "[m]embers of the queen's circle seem to have entered poems on an ad hoc basis, with little intention of compiling a finite or bounded collection" (87). I would suggest, however, that although a blank book doesn't precisely determine the volume or type of contents that will be filled in over time, it does provide a type of boundary—and that its use by a community of writers provides a kind of format that at least sets it on the way to being a book rather than simply a notebook. Because the manuscript was in its current form, it was already a finite, bounded collection—not in the sense that the shape of the words within was predetermined, but in the sense that the elements' spatial relationships and the limits of the text were already defined. When a transcriber moved to include a poem, that poem could either be placed in a particular context or placed in a space that made it a work to be commented on. Given the manuscript practice as demonstrated in the text, writers who chose less inhabited pages must certainly have expected that others would crowd around their works or actively comment on them. Further, the phrase "the queen's circle" almost actively denies one of the important elements of the text's production, as poems seem to have been entered during the reigns of Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Katherine Howard, Katherine Parr, and, in the case of the latest entry

in the manuscript, Elizabeth I.<sup>23</sup> Thus Irish's phrase undercuts the interplay of both the internal context of the placement of poems in the manuscript and the external contexts of court events. Not only does each internal context offer particular interpretive possibilities, but the rapid succession of queens emphasizes the increasingly anxious atmosphere of a court where five women serve as queen within the space of eight years. Any given woman who wrote in the Devonshire MS could have been part of a queen's circle one year and not the next. The women writers of Devonshire respond to this atmosphere by expressing their fear, their frustration, and their resentment in their collaborative poetic project, preserving their voices of resistance against Henry from within a culture that allowed them relatively few outlets for such expression.

The nature of manuscript collections at the time emphasizes the importance of context and the reason a manuscript collection would be an attractive outlet for frustrated courtiers to share their thoughts. Susan Frye shows that manuscripts later in the sixteenth were used to demonstrate connection to a particular community, and Jane Donawerth outlines the important dimension added by circulation through and between such communities. The systems converged in the ways that verse could be used to "establish a larger political support community and even to influence political decisions" (Donawerth 18). However, manuscripts offered another dimension because their value included "the marks of caring, of personal concern, and of previous owners attached to them" (Donawerth 8). Manuscript production could create subversive communities on an intimate level - bound together through reciprocity and through their modes of, and outlets for, expression. These bounds help explain the relative insignificance

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<sup>23</sup> Because this last entry is so much later than any other in the manuscript, I do not consider it further in this chapter, but it is worth noting that the poem is entered by Henry Stuart and quite possibly entered while he courted yet another queen: Mary, Queen of Scots. This again emphasizes the important contextual variety of the poems.

of original authorship indicated by the lack of attribution and the practice of free borrowing inherent to Tudor poetic production. Certainly, the Devonshire, like other manuscripts of the time, frequently incorporates signatures, initials, and personal emblems, but the relationships of these signs to signs of authorship is rarely straightforward. This expectation of assigned authorship, though, “is dependent upon the notion that assigning authorship is what matters” (Goldberg 21). Instead, the manuscript indicates that, as Carlson observes,

the considerable bulk of the courtier-poetry was circulated and collected at first, among the courtiers themselves, without attribution, as if personal authorship of most individual poems was of no or only occasional consequence among the people who first wrote and read them. (162)

The “as if,” here, I suggest, can be eliminated. In his analysis of Wyatt’s style, Jeff Dolven neatly argues that at court, such aligning with “authorship and...signature style” would have spoiled the traffic in manuscript poetry (77). The poem in a manuscript is a means of showing one’s ability to adapt a phrase to express something about oneself. Dolven uses sartorial style as an analogy: courtiers don one another’s compositions and adapt them as people don clothing made by someone else: not out of a lack of originality but to showcase the original way in which they select, alter, combine, and wear the clothing. In the cases where the writers of the Devonshire manuscript do take care to record some kind of “ownership,” the identities are as likely to be that of the transcriber, the object, or the dedicatee as of an “author” in our modern sense. That slippery sense of authorship is a central tenet of Tudor poetry that can be easily overlooked when the focus narrows too far on ideas of personal identity expressed through the composition of a poem rather than through the expression. The way in which a writer manipulated or presented a particular poem could say quite as much as an “original” composition.

One contributing factor to this presentation was the way in which “the intersection of the visual and the verbal created power signifiers that could be used for good or ill” (Frye 55-56). As

such, each time a contributor to the Devonshire added some kind of attributive or identifying mark, the meaning of the entire manuscript was altered. Some of this interpretive power is likely lost to us, because we will likely never be able to recover some of the knowledge of relationships and writing styles that informed the reception by the original audience. Other elements of this power, though, carried over into print production and preserved for us examples of the ways such signifying power could be interpreted. Goldberg offers an example of just this kind of practice when he examines Tottel's use of Surrey's name as the most prominent for the *Miscellanie*--the title by which we now commonly refer to the first printed poetry anthology in England, edited by Tottel, who freely revised as he edited. His original title for the anthology was *Songes and Sonettes Written By the Ryght Honorable Lord Henry Howard, late Earle of Surrey, Thomas Wyatt the Elder and others*. The title functions "as an authorizing name...a style that is announced and to which the poems are subsumed--a style, which, as everyone knows, is Tottel's imposition in terms of editorial changes, rewritings, the provision of titles for poems, and the like" (Goldberg 22). Tottel gains authority through his use of Surrey's name, but he also signals that he will be using a certain style to conform the poems to the style and vision of into his own collection. Dolven makes the point that "[t]he self-fashioning power of these poems was by no means limited to their first authors" (78). The power of the manuscript is that it both signals the conforming power of style and announces the differences of self-fashioning, with each new hand, new version, or new identifying mark.

The end effect of this process is nicely expressed by Carlson: "a poetry for which no-one can be held responsible...corporate submersion rather than individuation" (168) However, in focusing on the difference between print and manuscript cultures, Carlson skims over perhaps the most important element of this point: responsibility. The corporate submersion is not just the

standard approach to writing; rather, such submersion is a technique which strengthens the possibilities for subversion by denying responsibility. If a poem cannot be attached to a particular author, or if a writer can disavow an effect as merely a product of the process of copying, then subversive exchanges can be protected. The authors have, in effect, plausible deniability. While such denial will also remove some of the power of such energies—denying an authorizing name or an individually identifiable stance—the ability to express resistance even within constraint is elemental to cultural subversion of all types.

The first poem of the Devonshire Manuscript provides an elegant prologue to the subversive effect of the collection as a whole, particularly as a potential commentary on the Douglas-Howard affair mentioned in the introduction or, at a minimum, on the larger surveillance culture that led to that affair's very public end. This first poem reflects the ways that the collection has caught readers' and scholars' attention as a source for Wyatt's poetry, as a witness to some of the particularly dramatic moments at Henry's court, and, most recently, as a source for understanding women's role in early Tudor book culture. The first work seems to be identified as Wyatt's—and has since been attributed as such—and focuses on the narrative of a forbidden love affair discovered and punished by a culture of surveillance. Although attributed to Wyatt, the poem is not in his hand, which appears nowhere in the manuscript; rather, the poem is entered in the hand generally identified as "Hand 1," emphasizing the lack of "responsibility" and "authorship." Here, then, I will begin to use the term "writer," which throughout this chapter will mean simply the person who wrote a particular poem in the Manuscript, thus avoiding both the complication of "transcriber" where some pieces may be original compositions and the

obvious problems of “author.”<sup>24</sup> Further, this first poem provides an immediate example of the work done in manuscript that translates less easily to book culture, when the effort is made to transfer it at all. On the page, the apparent refrain “therefore take hede” which “ends” each tercet runs alongside, to the left in a repeating column joined to each stanza by a series of brackets:

Take hede be tyme leste ye be spy[e]de yor lovyng I yes can not hide at last the trwthe will sure be tryde	}	therefore take hede
for Som ther be of crafite Kynde Thowe yow shew no parte of yor mynde Sewrlye there les ye ^can te not^ nott blynde	}	therefore take hede
<del>for in lyke case there sselve of dyveris skools</del>		
ffor in lyke case ther selves ha hathe bene & thowgt ryght sure none had them sene but it was not as thye did wene	}	therefore take hede
all thowgth theye be of dyvers skoolles & will can yose all craftye toolles at leynthe thye prove them selves bott fooll	}	therefor take
yff theye myght take yow in that trape theye wolde sone leve yet in yor lape to love unspyed ys but a happe	}	therefore th take hede

The separation of the refrain from the poem emphasizes the message by creating a greater space for the work, adding width to the work and using all of the space on the page, unlike many entries which take up only a small fraction of the available writing area. On one hand, this may seem to counter the writer’s claim that private space is an illusion (saying that those who ‘thowgt ryght sure none had them sene’ are misguided). However, the poem is then both entered into the public manuscript, surrounded by works that offer commentary and response, and internally divided—the pieces of the poem are separate on the page. This separation also emphasizes the

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<sup>24</sup> Where authorship is agreed upon, it will be noted, but many poems do not allow a clear distinction between the work of writing, transcribing, or creating, and, indeed, this process of workmanship and alteration is largely my focus.

repetition of the refrain. That repetition may begin to incorporate the sense of absurdity that often accompanies repetition; this sense is emphasized when the repetition is interrupted by the alteration of the second to last instance of the refrain: “therefore take hede” becomes “therefor take.” The writer’s failure to complete the refrain manipulates the repetition to suggest an unwillingness to continue—a break is created that both uses and works against the refrain. The effect may mirror the strain of prescribed courtly behavioral patterns and of a surveillance society: sloppiness enters in which destabilizes the meaning of the repetition by emphasizing that it is repetition; that is, a pattern of prescribed behavior may make the behavior more obviously disingenuous, in so far as the behavior is inherently performance and that performance is emphasized by the nature of replication. If everyone behaves in a particular manner towards the king or towards some other social superior, the performative nature of that behavior will be most emphasized when there is a trip in the performance. When someone makes a mistake or a misstep, the sameness of the other performances is emphasized. Although such performance was itself full of meaning, any break focuses subversive energies as a kind of outburst suggesting impatience with the accepted, prescriptive models.

This potential for disruption makes the writer’s decision not to “fix” the line potentially important. Writers frequently correct themselves throughout the manuscript; writers are also not shy about correcting one another’s work. Of course, not every work in the manuscript is subjected to such editing, but it is also worth noting that this poem, on the first page of the manuscript, likely would have been subject to particularly frequent viewing and so often considered for editing or alteration. While an argument could also be made that, as the first page, it may have frequently been skipped over—in much the manner a modern reader might skip an oft-read preface or a title page—this seems unlikely. The page that now serves as the title page for

the Devonshire Manuscript is covered in doodles and unrelated signatures, suggesting that the first few pages were often revisited by different writers. Certainly, a person executing some flourish or sign on the first page might then skip forward, but the evidence suggests that the many writers of the manuscript viewed this poem repeatedly and chose not to “correct” or alter the original form, perhaps recognizing the line as more thought-provoking in its original state.

Another set of lines illustrates ways that corrected mistakes can be used to enrich an interpretation of manuscript practice. Between the second and third stanzas, the line “~~for in lyke case there sselv of dyveris skools~~” has been deleted. This seems, on the one hand, a fairly simple and honest mistake, likely to indicate that the writer was copying from another written version of the poem.<sup>25</sup> Apparently, the writer has started with the first six words of the third stanza, whose first line reads “ffor in lyke case ther selves ha hathe bene” and then, in moving between reading and writing, skipped to the fifth word of the fourth stanza, where the first line is “all thowgth theye be of dyvers skoolles.” However, assuming that the writer is working from copy does not eradicate the interest of the deleted line, and in fact draws the eye to some interesting discrepancies. In the deleted line, “for” takes the single “f,” “there” includes a terminal “e,” and “sselv” acquires a double “s;” “dyveris skools” is similarly of markedly different spelling than in the recopied line one stanza later. Interpretively, only “there” seems to open up much difference, but the fact of the difference suggests the fluidity of the copyist’s work.

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<sup>25</sup> Research with manuscripts also often, necessarily, opens the possibility that such revisions are the composing work of the original author – changing a word or starting with one line and then choosing to use the phrases to different effect, variously. However, as the general consensus includes this poem in Wyatt’s canon, and this is decidedly not Wyatt’s hand, I have set aside such considerations, here. I do want to acknowledge, though, that our notions of authorship differ significantly from Early Modern work. Poems that we give single authorship may arise from much more complex composition practices. Although I feel copy work on 3r is the simplest answer in this case, such a simplification could still always be mistaken.



The writer, then, was not slavishly copying the version from which she worked letter for letter, which suggests that the writer originally saw this line as making sense—grammatically and with the sense of the poem. (My use of “she” as a pronoun for Hand 1 is explored later in this chapter.) Considering the line as a potentially “correct” line does add a particular sense of threat not elsewhere included: duplicity or multiplicity within the person or people who threaten the poem’s object. They are of various schools. Particularly, this duplicity or multiplicity can be understood, within the line, to refer to a time when those people have also sought a forbidden or hidden love affair, that is, when they were “~~in lyke case,~~” they were, within “~~there sselv[.] of dyvers skoolis.~~” The “correct” lines do not offer such an alternative; the people who threaten the object may be of “dyvers skoolles,” but there is no suggestion that the division is internal; rather, several different factions are united together against the object. The poem gains force from both meanings, but both meanings are only possible because the writer at least momentarily saw the “mistaken” line as a logical possibility. The temporal context of the poem then informs this mistaken line, a court in the throes of at least two significant scandals based in such “hidden” love affairs—both the Douglas-Howard marriage and the accusations against Anne Boleyn. In the mid-1530s, the hypocrisy of a ruler who condemned hidden affairs would have been a topic whose subversive force was apparent to all courtly readers.

The writer’s choices offer subversive interpretations not only in these lines whose difference marks them as “wrong,” but also in considering some of the more difficult spellings presented by the poem in this transcription. Though the entire manuscript, of course, exists without an external standardized spelling, this does not at all mean that the authors are not concerned with spelling. Helen Baron outlines this as a particular concern of Mary Fitzroy, and indeed uses this concern to link her extant letters, with their many line edits, to her work in the

Devonshire. Many different hands reflect this concern where words are marked out and replaced with a preferred spelling; poets were well aware of the multiple potential meanings of a word. These changes in the choice of word forms and spellings, then, may at least partly be understood as an attempt to create or contain particular meanings; Goldberg explores this possibility in Mary Shelton's transcriptions, particularly, pointing out that her spellings seem often designed to elude easy interpretation. The analysis extends to the other hands, though it should not be separated from Baron's points about Fitzroy's concerns for correct performance of status. The two projects are, in fact, linked: a person of importance and intelligence knows the "right" spelling, but she also knows that the right spelling is the one most appropriate to her project—that is, the spelling most likely evoke alternative connotations useful to her and to eliminate those possibilities which might undermine the larger sense of her transcription or composition. Female poets may have been particularly attuned to these difficulties, given the impossible terms of ideal female courtiership, as expressed in Castiglione. Women's spelling becomes a manifestation of that famous "difficult mean," both meaning more than it says and often resisting readers' efforts to pin down its meaning.

There are several examples of this kind of work in the poem; for example, the somewhat difficult "Sewrlye there les ye ^can te not^ nott blynde." The sense of this sixth line almost demands "eyes" for "les," although "less" can also be made to work with some effort, but the line becomes more interesting for the interruption caused as the reader puzzles through the meaning. Potentially, the reader can understand "les" for "lies," as a missing "y" makes as much sense as "les" as a spelling for "eyes." Further, "sewryle" can be read "surely" or "severally"—that is, the line can be read as simply "surely their eyes you can't blind" or "severally their lies you can't not blind." There are, of course, a number of possible combinations involved here, as

well; the confusion calls special attention to the line, particularly the troubling “les.” The word becomes indecipherable and undefinable; even as the line itself insists this subject is beyond the object’s control, it is also beyond the reader’s. The reader, then, assumes the object position—unable to hide and unable to control or even fully understand the thing that sees, understands, and at least affects, if does not control, the object/reader. In this sense, the object is a parallel to the Henrician courtier, and the message becomes a warning. In a court ruled by a paranoid king, even personal choices, like love affairs, can become treason; the poem represents the impulse to hide one’s actions, in this context, as natural and perhaps universal, but also as essentially futile.

The theme of the poem—the impossibility of secret love in a society of surveillance—also touches on several motifs of the manuscript selections generally. First, the secrecy of love does not seem to imply inconstancy or falsehood within the affair. Although the love is “unspyde,” the secrecy is the only indication that something inappropriate may be happening, and even this sense depends on the audience’s contemporary anxieties. Second, this secrecy is understood to be temporary: through the manuscript, temporality is emphasized, as is change, both in the scenario of the poem and by the nature of composition and contribution over time. Even when lovers are constant, the world is not. The instability of such attempts at secrecy is further underscored by the fact that the poem, about a wish for secrecy, itself publicizes the lovers’ relationship, albeit anonymously. Third, love is threatened by an external force which, fourth, comes from surveilling others. The trope of surveillance in the manuscript is particularly relevant given its Tudor context. Additionally, the poem is a warning about the impossibility of escaping that threat, and if the deleted line is understood as nonetheless a part of the composition as it exists, about the hypocrisy and duplicity of the individual who threatens. Finally, the poem works to encourage reader identification with the object, both by the typical use of direct address

to a putative listener and by the process of obscuring meaning to involve the reader in the process of interpretation and frustration of understanding. In the increasingly unstable Tudor court, this manuscript poetry became a resource for expressing dissatisfaction with the surveillance culture and with the restrictions and injustices resulting from the king's inconsistent punishments of the "crimes" he and his agents surveilled. From within this system, manuscript production also offered an opportunity to frustrate that surveillance, as such poetry was ostensibly not entirely or originally the author's.

Only a few pages later, another entry highlights some of the opportunities unique to manuscript production as a space to register dissatisfaction with the terms of service in the Tudor system of surveillance. Carlson notes that in Early Modern manuscripts generally, "the phenomenon of the repetition of the same item [i.e. poem] more than once in the same manuscript anthology, regularly rather than exceptionally" (168). A repetition of a poem on 3r occurs much later in the volume, on 75v. The poems are both versions of a work accepted as Wyatt's translation of Aquiliano. The poem centers on a complaint of insufficient remittance for service offered and of the inability of the victim to act effectively against this insufficiency. The version on 3r omits a line, while throughout the version on 75v the transcriber inserts periods (which were not at that time necessarily used to indicate sentence endings). The periods stabilize the meaning of the poem in some sense, emphasizing the sarcastic tone of the speaker. But the effect also somehow feels more distant, as if 75v speaker speaks from closure while 3r does not. This sense is perhaps emphasized by the relative placements - of 3r on its own page, while 75v is only one of several poems inscribed in much smaller hand. That is, the placement of the event on the page suggests that it can be contextualized and so minimized for writer on 75v, but looms

larger for 3r. Although I cannot replicate that effect, I do include the two poems here for comparison:

<p><b>Example from 3r</b>  My harte I gave the not to do it paine  But to preserve <del>was</del> yt was to the taken  I served the not to be forsaken  but that I should be rewardyd againe  I was content they slave to remain  but not to be paid vnder suche fassyon  nowe sins in the ys no maner of reason  do displease the not tho I do reffreyn  vnsacyate off my wo and my desyer  ffar well I say partyng ffrom the ffyre  ffor he that beleves lernyng in hand  ploues in the water and sows in the sand</p>	<p><b>1</b>          <b>5</b>          <b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Example from 75v</b>  My herte I gave the not to do yt paine  but to <i>preserve</i> / yt was to the takin  I <i>seruid</i> the not to be forsakin  but that I shulde be rewardid againe  I was content thy <i>seruante</i> to remaine  but not to be paide vndre suche fasshion  nows sinse <i>that</i> in the is none other Raison  Displease the not if that I do restraine  vnsatiat of my woo . and thy desire  assurid bye crafte. texcuse thye faute  ffarwell I saie parting from the fire  for he that beleuith bering in hande  plowithe in water and sowith in sande/</p>	<p><b>1</b>          <b>5</b>          <b>10</b></p>
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The most drastic change in the two versions is the deletion, in 3r, of the tenth line usually included in versions of the poem.<sup>26</sup> Thus, if the lines are strung together, the “sentence,” as it were, in 3r reads “nowe sins in the ys no maner of reason/ do displease the not tho I do reffreyn/ unsacyate off my wo and my desyr” (now since in thee is no manner of reason/ do displease thee not though I do refrain/ insatiate of my woe [‘woo’] and my desire); alternatively, the “sentence” can be understood to end at “reffreyn,” starting a new phrase at “unsacyate.” The “sentence” of 75v, though, is markedly different, as indicated by the shift from “my” to “thy,” and made even more so by this writer’s decision to insert punctuation: “now sinse that in the is none other Raison/ Displease the not if that I do restraine/ vnsatiat of my woo . and thy desire/ assurid bye

<sup>26</sup> Both poems actually eliminate another line from the Egerton MS which I consider, for current purposes, the “standard” version of the poem. This version restores the Petrarchan rhyme scheme, as line eleven (that is, the line that would be placed between lines 10 and 11 of the version on 75v) reads “But since it please thee to feign a default” (modernized). Joost Daadler offers evidence for dating the translations from Aquiliano (of which this is one) to the early 1530s (220-222), placing the completion of Wyatt’s version, with its standardized rhyme, before these compositions in the Devonshire.

*crafte. texcuse thye faute.*” The added line separates the “farewell” from the speaker’s choice to refrain or restrain, as the verb is now instead joined to the first part of line 9, while the second half of the line becomes the beginning of the phrase which ends in 75v’s line 10. The potential meanings of the two poems open up in quite different directions. For 75v, the speaker may be understood to say that he or she will likely restrain from excusing the beloved’s fault; that he or she will no longer be pursuing the beloved and that the beloved’s desire will excuse the beloved’s fault; or that he or she will stop the pursuit, disappointing both the speaker’s and the beloved’s aims or desires. 3r, in contrast, says much more simply that the lover plans to stop, and that the beloved addressed should not/shall not be displeased by this cessation. The implication, since both “wo” and “desyr” are attributed only to the speaker, is that the addressed person could only be upset because there is “no maner of reason” in him or her. The pronoun change in the two poems, though subtle, is quite important, since it further emphasizes the likelihood that 3r either intentionally altered the poem or was working from a different draft which emphasized subtly different concerns. In 3r, the speaker has not had either “wo” or desire fulfilled, or, potentially, the object has not been satisfied by the speaker’s woe or desire; in 75v, both the speaker and the addressed are deprived of something, since one “woo”s and one “desire”s. The difference in spelling also opens up greater potential meaning for Hand 1, who may claim to be deprived of woe as well as woo—the two homonyms are linked by the tone of the speaker’s complaint. If she addresses the object as “unsacyate,” she points out the illogic of desiring her woo or woe; if she herself is “uncasyate,” then she combines her suit with her sadness, suggesting the two are interchangeable. 3r’s choices make the poem more clearly resistant and resentful, emphasizing the potential dangers of this un-reciprocal relationship by making the speaker more clearly the single victim—and a victim who has no recourse.

Both small changes in spelling and in word choice reverberate through the tones of the two versions. In the first line of the poem, Hand 1 transcribes “harte” where Hand 8 transcribes “herte.” Hand 1 thus connects to expected tropes unifying love and the hunt through the figure of the hart/heart; Hand 8 instead calls to mind the theme of the hurt heart. The verb choices “reffreyn” and “restraine” adopt and encourage subtly different moods. To refrain is a sort of negative action; a not-doing that is somewhat passive. To restrain implies, rather, to hold back actively—that is, rather than passively letting an opportunity pass by, the speaker in 75v is instead working to hold something back or working against something. One further alteration between the two versions is in their respective fifth lines, where Hand 1 writes “I was content they slave to remain.” Hand 8 preserves almost the same line, with some spelling changes or corrections, but also changes “slave” to “seruante,” restructuring the implied terms of service. Like the difference in verb choices, the difference suggests a greater submission or a greater passivity for the speaker in 3r, and a more active speaker, more of an agent, in 75v.

The last line may be particularly rich for identifying evidence, given the work Terttu Nevalainen has produced on gendered linguistic shifts in Tudor-Stuart England. One of Nevalainen’s studies focuses on the use of (e)s or (e)th endings, which, she finds “became associated with register differences in the evolving standard language, -(e)th with formal and literate styles and -(e)s with informal and oral” (46-7). Further, the two endings began to be used along gendered lines, as well as regional:

In the first four decades of the sixteenth century, the regional patterns of diffusion remain almost the same: the North continues to promote -(e)s, and the Court and East Anglia resist it. London’s weight, however, drops below 0.5. Although women’s overall frequency of the variable is low, a difference also begins to emerge between the sexes: women favoring -(e)s, men disfavoring it. (Nevalainen 49)

The difference is particularly important, here, then; however little we know about the writers of the Devonshire Manuscript in some cases, we do know that the writers would all have been at

Court, where the (e)th ending is found to be significantly preferred. Hand 1, however, transcribing the selection on 3r, uses “es” for the endings of verbs in the final two lines; Hand 8, transcribing the selection on 75v, prefers the “th” conclusions. Although naturally insufficient to gender, much less identify, either hand, the evidence is still an important element of the characterization of each writer. Hand 1 is not consistent in the (e)s/(e)th use, sometimes using both in one poem as on 4r, but the use in 3r is also definitely not anomalous for this writer. Hand 8 is quite regular in the writer’s preference for (e)th use. As reported by Nevalainen, the total instances of (e)s use in letters written by persons at Court for 1500-1539 is 735, representing a relative frequency of only 1% (54). The relative frequency of use by all men in the sample from the same period is 4%, while for women is it 29% (Nevalainen 54). Given that the data will skew towards a higher proportion of courtly women in the sample of all women than courtly men in the sample of all men, the correlation between (e)s use and feminine gender seems fairly strong in courtly writing of the period.<sup>27</sup> While a closer study which differentiated by both gender and class would help strengthen this connection, the available data suggest a strong likelihood that Hand 1 is that of a woman<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> 49% of the men whose lettered were used for the data belonged to the gentry, nobility, or royalty, in comparison to 85% of the women (Nevalainen 46). For the period from 1520-39, there are perhaps twenty fewer women than men sampled; these women also contribute fewer words per sample than their male counterparts (Nevalainen 46-47). This emphasizes the great likelihood of a writer who demonstrates particularly gendered linguistic markers being of the correlated gender.

<sup>28</sup> Hand 1 also follows a linguistic shift strongly preferred by women on 2r in the first transcription discussed where the writer uses “yow” rather than “ye” for a subject, twice, though “ye” is also used twice. Nevalainen finds of “you” in the subject place that the shift “was led by women throughout the country” (45). She summarizes

a radical increase in the general frequency of *you* between 1500 and 1590 from below 20 percent to nearly 100 percent. The 70 percent mark is reached by the female writers in the first half of the sixteenth century, but men’s use of the form only reaches the frequency of 50 percent by the 1560s. (Nevalainen 45)



There are some further distinguishing marks between the two hands which are relevant for the poetic analysis. Hand 1 enters six poems, all on the first six pages of the manuscript, but interrupted by other hands, while Hand 8 enters, astonishingly, over sixty poems, in unbroken sequence from the first entry on 69r to its last on 87v. The evidence of the two hands suggests a greater importance for the poem for Hand 1, simply in terms of placement and proportion compared to total production in the Devonshire. Hand 8 is the neater hand, and its entries are carefully organized on the page in a more or less regular script, maintaining size and ruling with relative consistency. Hand 1 is fairly neat, as well, though markedly less regular and less carefully ruled; this is particularly true of Hand 1's transcription of the final four lines of this particular poem, where, in the middle of line 9, the hand nearly doubles in size, while the ink suddenly lightens markedly. Hand 1's shift in the poem, of course, also provides a potentially alternative explanation for deletion of line 10 in 75v's version from the 3r version; perhaps, given the shift into somewhat sloppy handwriting, the transcription is also sloppy, and the writer has simply missed a line. However, the deletion impacts the tone of the poem sufficiently that exploration of alternatives is still worthwhile; further, the hand does not make any other pronounced changes in the final lines, or suddenly skew into corrections or deletions. Given the remaining space on the page, the writer had ample room for such corrections; the choice not to make them may therefore be important. Perhaps the writer completed the poem at a different

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However, the use in 2r is less relevant because there is no other copy of the poem in the manuscript to compare and because it is less conclusive. Nevalainen's results for this shift from 1520-1539 show a 29.2% incidence of use among men and a 72.4% incidence of use among women. At an internal incidence of use of 50%, Hand 1's use in 2r falls fairly neatly between the two camps.

time and in a mood of increased frustration, as the situation continued or as the writer further brooded on her inability to enact any change or insist on any further restitution.

The complete lack of gendering for the speaker or the addressed individual further opens up particular applications for this poem, and the relative flexibility of the terms used emphasize the potential for love poetry to be used to quite different effect in complaints of the period. While “woo” and “desire” do have some connotations linking them to courtly love traditions, the poem’s general emphasis on service and reciprocal indebtedness makes the terms quite easily applicable to courtly systems of patronage and service.<sup>29</sup> Only the first line make the following exchange explicitly refer to love, and even in that line, the “heart” that is given can easily be understood in terms of fealty and allegiance. The terms of courtly love were borrowed for courtly service, and the terms of courtly service helped define the hierarchy and traditions of courtly love. However, Hand 1’s version, if the hand does belong to a woman, may be further limited even in her resentments. Because women’s frustrations are less acceptable, and because her complaints are not offered any kind of validation in the larger system, her resentment of that system—and of the lack of acknowledgement from those she renders service—may be inversely, proportionately greater.

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<sup>29</sup> To the outlines of the distinctive features of women’s writing outlined by Nevalainen we can add her and Helena Raumolin-Brunberg’s information about linguistic change across classes, supplemented by information about class movement in Henry’s court. Both Susanna Hornebout and Levina Teerlinc, for example, were artisan women who gained status through marriage as a direct result of their service to Henry (Frye 78). The two cases together tell us that more typically “courtly” women born to aristocracy shared space with artisan women promoted on the basis of their talents and through marriage and patronage. Circles of courtly women, then, had access to socially aspirant linguistic shifts, to connect the specifics of this milieu to Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg’s work. This overlap of forms used by women and forms used by socially aspirant persons may also be tied to the subversive energies of the Manuscript; as Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg point out, “there may be covert prestige in vernacular forms” (134).

Other poems definitely inscribed by women in the texts indicate similar blurring between love complaints and complaints of service. Such complaints are of course characteristic of poetry of the period—indeed, they may be considered a defining element—but fairly standard complaints of the male speaker gain subversive energy when the complaint is made by someone who is “supposed” to be in an inferior position of service. An example of the change effected by women’s writing can be found in “My ywtheffol days ar past” as written on 68r and 68v by Shelton. The page begins with a series of stylized openings, where a hand distinct from that inscribing the poem begins three times to write “Madame,” and after the third attempt continues: “Madame margeret et madame de Richemont Ie [v]odroy bien quil ful.” Elizabeth Heale translates the phrase as “I dearly wish that it were.”<sup>30</sup> Heale argues that, joined with the heading of the two women, the French “jottings imply a sense of regret and loss that must have been shared by both the women and their friends” (17). That the hand which enters these names has not even been suggested to be variant of Shelton’s emphasizes the communal nature of the text; the poem is one of lamentation and loss, and the unknown hand connects Shelton’s laments, ostensibly about service, to the suffering of her friends and fellow ladies-in-waiting.

Oddly, very few scholars have given serious consideration to the possibility that Shelton wrote this piece entirely herself, despite the fact that this manuscript represents the earliest known version of a poem which remains unattributed. An initial at the end of the poem has often been read as “W,” but may as easily be interpreted as “M” for “Mary,” though, as I discuss later, such initials may as easily identify a transcriber or even love object as an author. In general, of course, a central tenet of this analysis of the manuscript is that authorship is less important than

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<sup>30</sup> John DuVal has confirmed the essentials of this translation, with very slight difference; he suggests, in conversation, “I really wish it were so.”

the sort of ownership or appropriation of style which is declared through manuscript revision. However, the case for the Early Modern writers of the Devonshire is not necessarily the case for the modern scholarship. The possibility that it was not Shelton who appropriated the poem by changing “she” to “thee,” but rather Tottel who appropriated the poem by inserting a male voice, has important implications for understanding the poem, the manuscript, and *Tottel’s Miscellanie*. The fact that the only extant scholarly edition of this work completely elides this possibility in the notes and in the introduction demonstrates the problem of truly re-asserting women’s place in the verse of Early Modern England, since it is difficult to imagine a first-and-only version of a poem written in an identifiable male poet’s hand being similarly dismissed. If Shelton is instead offering an original composition within this communal project, her voice takes on a larger dimension through the context of such an original. Rather than a poem composed by a single speaker in lamentation, the voice becomes one of a disenfranchised community who finds, in poetry, a rare outlet to express their frustrations, anxieties, and, particularly in this poem, misery.

Because it is impossible to say whether Shelton here copies from another complete version or whether that version is her own or someone else’s, the analysis of the process and product must shift. The focus cannot be on alteration or deletion, but only on technique. Uncharacteristically, but not uniquely, Shelton uses lines to underscore stanza breaks throughout the poem. While this decision may add a sense of anchor or clarity, that sense is immediately, simultaneously, undermined by Shelton’s quite difficult spelling. Goldberg has argued that “what makes the texts certainly by Mary Shelton in the manuscript particularly elusive and difficult to transcribe is that their spellings allow quite alternative readings” (27). In the context of this larger analysis of the manuscript, I hope this effect is highlighted as a strategy. What we see in Shelton’s writing is not an amateur, either in writing or spelling, but rather a master. Her

technique obscures her writing, but in an intentional and often quite effective manner, emphasizing instability and difficulty as themes in her work. When male poets use similar effects in their original poetry, the effect is rarely dismissed as a result of inadequate education; this perspective must be restored to women's writing, to avoid minimizing the ways that such manipulations were not only practiced, but perfected, in manuscript writing that needed to record resistance without inviting destruction from the patriarchal culture in which it needed to survive.

Because I feel that this earliest version may be granted a particular authority, I include the entirety of the poem here, as a counterexample to the regularized version later offered in *Tottel's*.

Shelton's written version is as follows:

my ywtheffol days ar past  
my plesant erese ar gon  
my lyffe yt dothe bot wast  
my grawe and I hame wan  
my morthe and al ys ffled  
and I hame won yn woo  
desyar to be dede / my mescheffe to ffor goo

I born and ame acold  
I ffresse amades the ffyar  
I se the do *with*hold ~~that~~  
that most I do desyar  
I se my helpe at hand  
I se my dethe also  
I se wer the dothe stond  
I se my ffryndly ffoo

I se the know my hart  
and how I kannot [st]an  
I se the se me smart  
and how I leff yn pane  
I se how the dothe se  
And yt the wel be blynd  
I se yn helpeyng me  
the se and wel not ffynd

I se wan I comby by  
~~I haw the dothe w[r]y~~  
 I se haw the do wry  
 wan I be gen to mon  
 I se wan I comby  
 how ffane the wold b gan  
 I se wat wold yow [m]ar  
~~the wold me gladly wold yow kel~~  
 the wold me gladly kel  
 and yow shal se therffar  
 that the shal hawe ther wel

I kannot leffe *with* stans  
 yt hes to hard a ffawde  
 I wol be ded at ta[n]s  
 yff yt myt do them good  
 the shal hawe ther rqwest  
 and I must hawe my nend  
 lo her my bloody brest ~~to pleset~~  
 to ples the *with* unkynd (68 r-v)

Shelton uses a beginning-of-line repetition similar to that of an earlier transcribed poem from Wyatt, also in her hand. Margaret Douglas is fond of refrains, as I will explore in the following chapter; Shelton seems fond of this beginning-of-line style. In this particular poem, the repetition of “my” and “I se” asserts a very definite, central identity, countering the self-destructive words of the speaker. However, the very placement amongst the manuscript production of the Devonshire also implies that this “I” speaks for more than just the single poet, particularly in the context of all these borrowed, manipulated, and re-formed verses. Instead, the entry becomes one that invites further use by those who identify with its message of disempowerment.

The poem, in this earliest available form, does not include the gendered pronoun use of later versions; only the conventions of Petrarchan and courtly love poetry mark the work as complaint about a lover. Because those conventions were also in the service of complaints about

courtly life, and sometimes of service to God, the version in *Tottel's* may have created a misinterpretation of a poem not connected to the courtly love tradition in any meaningful sense. Rather than being a love lyric that is secretly about court, Shelton's version here can easily be read as fairly explicitly about court, with only the metaphorical language allowing for a smokescreen of the potential alternative reading. The plural "they" particularly emphasizes a threatening other that is more or greater than a single, scornful lover. Shelton's "the wold me gladly kel" (they would me gladly kill) has a great deal more force than the hyperbole assumed when the subject is a woman; the cruelty of her "they" may be real, with real political power behind it.

This sense is emphasized by the terms that of suit implied earlier in the stanza, where the objects "wry" at the speaker's "mon," and "wold b gan" when the speaker is "comby" (that is, the person or persons addressed wry [likely in the contemporary sense of cover up, hide, or turn away] at the speaker's moan, and would be gone when [s]he comes by). Alleviation of the speaker's plight is within the object's gift, as is often the case for the more clearly Petrarchan lover. In this case, though, the page's header, 'Madame margeret et madame de Richemont,' slants the poem's meaning sharply into more political terms. The header refers to Margaret Douglas and Mary Fitzroy, the latter being the young widow of Henry's son, Henry Fitzroy. As outlined in the introduction, Henry created the law that made Douglas's tragic first marriage treason only after he discovered the marriage. The plight was entirely the king's creation, and so could certainly have been solved by him. Similarly, Fitzroy found herself in an untenable position when trying to claim the properties due her after her husband's death. Her case could easily have been settled by Henry's intervention, particularly since her husband had been his acknowledged son, yet her suit was not settled until the summer of 1538, a full two years after

Henry Fitzroy's death (Baron 318).<sup>31</sup> The heading on 68r, then, reading "Madame margeret et madame de Richemont," strengthens the connection between the complaint of the poem and the complaints of each woman during the decade of the most work in the manuscript. The writer lodges a protest by leaving off Douglas's surname, pointing to her complicated status as both widow and, by the terms that made her original marriage illegal, never married. She becomes simply "Margaret," referred to neither by her maiden name nor by the married name which has been denied her. This omission then emphasizes Fitzroy's title and her connection to her deceased husband, thus also emphasizing the legal grounds for her claim to the disputed property.

The single contribution Fitzroy makes to the manuscript, on signature 55r-v, seems also to relate to her own difficulties at the English court and in her marriages. While Fitzroy's hand has only rarely— and to my mind, unconvincingly— been disputed, the authority of her poem as a version of her brother's, Henry Howard's, "O happy dames" has been undermined by her frequent corrections and difficult spellings. Baron uses her comparison of the hand and style of the poem to Fitzroy's letters to point out that the earlier "suggestion that Mary Fitzroy's frequent deletions in D show an attempt at a littératim transcription of her original, including its (supposed) redundant flourishes resembling the terminal *es* abbreviation ...is undermined...by...Mary Fitzroy's frequent habit of erroneously adding *es* to words" (320). In addition to these unnecessary endings, usually uncorrected, Fitzroy "deletes many words and then rewrites them merely with a different spelling" (Baron 320). While some have seen these

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<sup>31</sup> Beverly Murphy indicates that the difficulty was entirely based in Henry's resistance to settling Mary's agreed upon jointure and connects this difficulty directly to the Howards' larger fall from favor, both because of the execution of Anne Boleyn and because of the Douglas-Howard marriage.



marks in the poem particularly as characteristic of laborious transcription, Baron's analysis of Fitzroy's letters reveals the limitations of these claims:

If, therefore, these characteristics are interpreted as a quasi-scholarly effort to transcribe accurately letter by letter a difficult original, the deletions and rewriting in her correspondence must also be interpreted as attempts to copy someone's difficult original...it is far more likely that she was habitually uncertain and anxious about her writing in general and spelling in particular. (Baron 320)

Baron convincingly argues, then, that Fitzroy's writing, whether original or copied, is likely to show marks of concern with getting the "right" spelling. Where I depart from Baron's analysis, however, is in my view of what Fitzroy would have considered "right," and why this concern is so manifest in her writing.

Baron concludes of her analysis of Fitzroy's copy of her brother's work that "the unfortunate consequence of using *D* and not *T* as a copy-text is that Mary Fitzroy's unusual spellings render the poem more obscure, despite her many superior readings" (323). Taken within the larger context and project of the manuscript, though, the obscuring effect of Fitzroy's spelling choices is not at all unfortunate. Rather, the work of the manuscript suggests that this complication and even obfuscation of meaning are valued strategies of composition. In his analysis of the poem, which he ascribes to Shelton rather than Fitzroy, Goldberg makes the useful point that "these crossings out and substitutions might...indicate her rethinking whether or not the word she just wrote is the word she wants, and then deciding that it is—or, perhaps, deciding that the respelling says better what she wants" (27). Although the "she" shifts, the point still holds, and applies to Fitzroy's letters as well as it does here. Trying to contain or carefully orient meaning, indeed, might be particularly likely to result in the sort of anxiety that Baron sees as surrounding Fitzroy's writing in the manuscript and in her letters. Fitzroy's desire to carefully control her meaning results from her social context: a woman in a contested position in a surveilling culture. She is, and must stay, highly alert to the importance of appropriate

performance carefully conveyed, but she is also sensitive to the opportunities for resistance and for expression of frustration which may be open to her if she proceeds with sufficient caution.

The spellings which Fitzroy does choose are often, as Baron notes, atypical. One such choice is “woffulle” for woeful in third line. In eschewing the “oo” spelling of “woe” which is so common throughout the manuscript, particularly in Shelton’s transcriptions, Fitzroy erases the connotative link to “woo.” Rather, the double “ff” and double “ll” give the emphasis to the second syllable, “ffulle,” thus underscoring the enormity of the emotion which overwhelms the speaker. Her choices in “mowernenge” (mourning) and “mowren” (mourn) in lines six and twenty-one both evoke Early Modern English spellings of “morn,” which included “morowen” or “morwen.” Time is thus emphasized through her spelling choices, emphasizing the temporal nature of the manuscript as subject to change caused by altering and commenting hands. Thematically, Fitzroy signals her awareness of the larger project in which her transcription is now participating. The second use then emphasizes the lonely waking of the speaker, as the conclusion of the stanza:

alas howe offte I ~~im~~ in dremes I ssee  
thovs yees that were my ~~ffoode~~ ffoode  
wyche ssumetyme sso dellyted me  
that yet they do me good  
wherewith I wake ~~with hes~~ his ~~retorener~~retourne  
whoosse { ... } absente fflame [do]oht make me boren  
bwt whan I ffynde the lak[e] lorde howe I mowren (55v)

Fitzroy’s “boren” for “burn” has the further connotative effect of figuring the flame of the beloved as a giver of life, reinforcing the gendered roles of the speaker and object. The poem’s premise is based in those roles—men go to war, while women lament at home. Fitzoy’s choice of spelling, within the gendered context of the poem, may both reinforce the agency of the male speaker as the instigator of a reproductive act and emphasize the powerlessness of the female speaker, giving even her potential biological reproductive power over to the absent object of the

poem. However, the female speaker is herself unusual enough in the period for the poem to have drawn notice in wider criticism; in the assumption of a female speaker, Fitzroy finds an outlet for frustration at this lack of agency. She also takes on a poem by her brother and appropriates the verse for her own use, thus demonstrating a flexibility in the bemoaned lack of agency. The context of the Devonshire manuscript as primarily a woman's manuscript allows Fitzroy the chance to re-appropriate her famous brother's appropriation of the female voice, suggesting that even the most conventional performances of gendered roles may still contain hidden room for subversion and for women's control.

Thus far I have focused my analysis primarily on the shape and texture manuscript writing creates within individual poems, adding to my analysis some of the recent work which may allow us to trace genders in otherwise unidentified hands; I want now to turn attention to the technique of grouping as used in manuscript creation, particularly as it reinforces the use of manuscripts to preserve communal grievances and modes of resistance made possible through communal writing. The analysis of contextual importance will be extended in the next chapter, where I examine the "epistolary" verse in Devonshire, but I want to begin by analyzing what poetry does in its immediate context. The group here under analysis includes two apparent "fragments," on 22v, as well as the "complete" versions of the poems from which those fragments are pulled, which cover 23r through the top of 24v. Interrupting these dual versions of poems, as the bottom entry on 22v, is a short, four-line composition in Mary Shelton's hand and concluded with her signature, generally treated as an original composition. The selection, here treated as a deliberate group, then concludes with one additional, longer poem on 24v and 25r, followed by a substantial blank on 25r, with 25v left completely blank.

The section begins with the first three lines of “The knot which fyrst my hart dyd strayn” and the first two words of the fourth line, entered by Hand 3, who also completes the poem on the later pages. The selection is annotated above and below by Hand 10, including the odd “fynys quod Iohn” (finish[ed] quoth John) which follows the clearly unfinished partial quatrain. Hand 10 then transcribes the second poem on 22r: the first seven lines of a version of “He Robyn gentyll robyn,” a particularly elastic poem which frequently recurs in the period. The version of the opening lines transcribed here by Hand 10 is distinct from the version entered two pages later by Hand 3, where the first line is “*Hey Robyn Ioly Robyn tell me and thys.*” The ending note “fynys quod Iohn” after the first, though, and the concluding line after the second, seem attempts to codify these interruptions, making the cut offs appear intentional rather than accidental or disrupted. Even if the original copyist was, in fact, simply interrupted, the annotating Hand 10 then marks the poem as though this abbreviated version could be treated as a finished quotation. This is a particularly important annotation in a manuscript that pays little attention to authorship as a general rule; possibly, the annotation can be taken as an attempt to further separate the hands on the page, distinctly marking where one writer leaves off and another takes up. In that case, the attribution to “Iohn” does not necessarily challenge the accepted attribution to Wyatt; Hand 10 may be identifying the hand of the poem’s copyist, rather than the original author of the poem. This possibility is complicated, though not negated, by the “W” with which Hand 10 marks the conclusion of the seven included lines of “Hey Robyn.” If the “W” at the end of the second poem is understood as a potential attribution, then the “Iohn” entered by the same hand on the preceding poem may also mean to function as an identification of the author. However, Wyatt was not the only “W” at court, and the initial may be still refer to the copyist—or, it may indeed refer to Wyatt as a subject referent. The consistent and definite feature of these marks on the

page, though, is that they function to add a sense of finality to segments that would otherwise be more clearly “unfinished.”

These short sections, then, affect the reader’s understanding of, and expectations for, the four lines Shelton enters at the bottom of 22r. Primarily, the knowledge that these entries are excerpted from longer works may also create an expectation that a longer version of “A wel” exists. The format follows the other two entries: a few lines of verse followed by an identifying note, in this case a signature generally agreed to be the writer’s and the original author’s. However, no longer version of “A wel” exists anywhere in the manuscript, much less in this short grouping. The reader, then, is engaged in the process of imagining or anticipating a longer version which is then denied, in a rhetorical move that echoes, though not precisely reinforcing, the tropes of the short poem. Yet this denial influences the reception of the short verses earlier on the page. If Shelton’s verse is presented as independent and original, the reader may be encouraged to reinterpret the other verses independently, as their own versions of poetry. This version of “He Robyn” offers some unique interpretations if viewed as its own poem, as the lady’s response is cut off from the last line, and possibly reinterpreted as the identifying mark that concludes the poem: “and yet she wyll saye W.” The woman no longer becomes indistinctly resistant; instead, she rejects the speaker in favor of another, specific lover. The object may then become an agent, offering resistance to the usual Petrarchan narrative in which even the beloved’s rejection is spoken of from the male perspective. Instead, the verse ends with her voice, and with her own utterance of choice.

Just as the short poem by Shelton encourages independent consideration of the “incomplete” versions that share that space, the longer versions of “He Robyn” and “The knot which fyrst my hart dyd strayn,” coming in the same order as the two short selections from the

poems, reinforce the expectations that the next selection, which begins on 24v, will be the longer version of the third poem on 22r. Instead, an entirely new poem is entered, which continues onto 25r, though the fragments on both pages seem capable of standing alone. Hand 3 appears to enter the poem, though the writer also adds faux-illumination characteristics to the letters with which it works, a choice not necessarily characteristic of the hand. However, this poem which disrupts our expectation of a longer version of "A wel" is itself a particularly interesting commentary on loss and power: "It was my choyse It Was my chaunce" which is, furthermore, another excerpt. The thematic function of this longer poem, as related to Shelton's entry, may then be considered in terms of the relationship between the short and long entries of "He Robyn" and "The knot which fyrst my hart dyd strayn."

The shorter version of "The knot which fyrst my hart dyd strayn" runs as follows:

The knot which fyrst my hart dyd strayn  
Whan that your sarwant I becam  
doth bynd me styll for to Remain  
all wais (22r)

The longer version adds a further 38 lines to this, beginning with the conclusion of the first stanza, after an altered spelling of "ways":

all was yor owne as now I am  
and if you fynd that I do fayne  
*with* Iust Iugement my self I dam ene  
To haue Dysdain (23r)

There are relatively few changed spellings in the first four lines of the two poems; the exceptions are "dyd"/ "did" in Line 1 and perhaps "sarwant"/ "saruant" in Line 2, though the strokes of "u" and "w" can be difficult to distinguish conclusively in the hand. The only alteration that immediately opens up interpretative difference, though, is "wais"/ "was." In the second spelling, the potential verb use opens up: "all was your own." However, the spelling in the first poem limits the meaning and so shuts down the insisted continuance of the line implied by the verb

use: “doth bind me still for to remain/ always.” The limited interpretation of “wais” enforces the sense of the excerpt as complete; the reader knows the quatrain is not meant to stand alone based only on familiarity with the poem in other contexts or through gaining that knowledge upon reaching the longer version two pages later. In comparison to the first version, the longer work reinforces the theme of service, but also makes the terms of that service more explicit—the writer reinforces his or her fealty, but also takes on any judgment of that fealty as his or her own. The speaker determines the terms of the punishment, even if that punishment is to be for a failure of service to another.

The “He Robyn” shows more difference between the two versions, no doubt partly because they are inscribed by two different hands. The shorter version, in its entirety, reads

He Robyn gentyll robyn  
tell me howe thy lady dothe  
and thou shalte knowe of myn

My ladye is vnkynde *perdye*  
allas why is she soo  
She loves another Beter then I  
and yet she wyll saye W (22r)

The longer version alters the first stanza to two lines split between “me” and “how”, with an odd, off-set placement of “of myn” slightly above the rule of the second line. The poem goes on to add another twenty lines, organized in five quatrains, starting with an addition to Line 7 of the 22r version, line 6 of the version on 23v: where 22r cuts off and inserts the ambiguous “W” mark, 23v concludes with the woman telling the presumably male lover “noo.”

These shorter selections, then, have at minimum a spatial relationship to Shelton’s four lines:

A wel I hawe at other lost  
not as my nowen I do protest  
bot wan I hawe got that I hawe mest  
I shal regoys among the rest (22r)

The insistence on adding some sense of conclusion to the excerpts, though, encourages an understanding of all three short lyrics—that is, the shorter versions of ‘The knot which fyrst my hart dyd strayn’ and of ‘He Robyn gentyll robyn,’ along with Shelton’s ‘A wel’—as independent but related. On its own, the theme of the first poem is devoted love or service, without end; the longer version then unusually emphasizes the speaker’s choice and control within this service. The second stands less firmly alone without the concluding initial taken as part of the poem, but it still sets up the premise of a dialogue in which a lover complains of the unkindness of a lady whose response to the speaker’s charges is cut off. The last poem, composed and signed by a woman, speaks of general loss and of potential restoration—but in language marked by suggestions of response. I argue that the three poems, taken together, may be interpreted as a dialogue which interrupts the lovers’ complaints with the voice of the lady, who protests the misinterpretation of her actions and interest and who emphasizes the importance of her choice in the matter. The placement of “A wel I hawe at other lost” then encourages a dialogue with both poems, but emphasizes the importance of these particular fragments, as well - the placement near the longer sections implies a certain relationship, while the placement on one page with the fragments emphasizes their importance as “independent” selections in their own right.

Although a less distinct group, the poems on 65r and v present an opportunity of comparing Shelton and Margaret Douglas’s work together on a smaller scale, if in some sense the whole manuscript can be understood as a project of their larger collaboration. The poem Douglas transcribes on 65r is a three stanza version of a poem she also writes on 58v and 59r in a four-stanza form, on the general theme of constancy and devotion. As with the long and short versions of the poems discussed above, the repetition suggests that the placement and form of each is deliberate. Shelton then writes a short poem on 65r on the theme of failure to pretend



emotions one does not have or hide those one is feeling. Douglas again takes over on 65v with an excerpt from a poem attributed to Wyatt, one which speaks particularly to bitter sorrow. On the same page, Shelton then writes a poem on the utility of pretending happiness in the midst of sorrow, a sharp counter to her own copy from the previous page and to Douglas's lament just above.

The group together forms a sort of narrative emphasizing the ultimately tragic fallout from the events to which Douglas may be responding in 65r. That is, regardless of the time of composition, Douglas's contemporaries would have read the poem, transcribed by her, as a reference to the Douglas-Howard affair. It follows, then, that these poems on grief, sorrow, and performance, etcetera, would have seemed to them to comment on these events, as well. Further, the poems together function as a kind of conversation: Douglas asserts her loyalty, Shelton pontificates on the necessity of showing one's emotions, Douglas asserts her own desperate sadness, and Shelton changes her tune, arguing that perhaps, in some circumstances, hiding one's emotions is better. Finally, Shelton writes a self-deprecating couplet after her poem, reading "ryme dogrel how many/ myle to meghelmes."

This last suggestion comes also with a hint of warning. After comparing a smiling face over a sad mood to a hood in the rain, Shelton's poem on 65v continues, in the fourth line, "well they were wet that bare head stood" and concludes with the seventh line "better a patch than a hole out." If their contemporaries would have likely understood Douglas's laments as relating to the tragedies of her love affairs—particularly her first husband's death—then Shelton seems to advise that, in the current atmosphere, counterfeited compliance is the best outward show. However, in acknowledging such show, the poem elides the possibility of changing the inner emotion. Douglas chooses to end her poem with the threat of "cries, remorse, and grudges." In

the context of her friend's anger and threat, quite possibly against Henry, Shelton's short poem suggests a show of compliance, rather than a return to loyalty or a true submission of will. Her final, dismissive note on her own poem, then, may be meant to create distance or to undermine the potential energy of the poetry.

Examining the strategies used by the courtiers who produced the Devonshire Manuscript allows a greater insight into poetic composition of the period as an expression of subversive energy. While new research may allow us greater insight into identification of the hands used in the work, the original creators largely focused on the flexibility of ownership and authorship. This flexibility extended to their ideas of what constituted poetry, as well as how spelling or punctuation could be used in their writing. Through obscuration and multiplication of meaning and authorship, poets like Shelton and Douglas, along with the other writers in the Devonshire, created and protected a community of subversion. As a reaction to the strictures of the late Henrician court, writers engaged in a new kind of poetic composition, designed to preserve their collective voices. The work of manuscript writers reflects how central women were to these compositional practices, and the particular energies added by their own difficult performances at court. The careful negotiation of resistance and restraint exemplified in the works in Devonshire indicates that these practices, central to poetic production in the Henrician court, were largely formed by the perspectives and talents of courtly women.

V. Let No Man Put Asunder: Resistance, Religion, and Unity in the Douglas-Howard Exchange

The previous chapter establishes some of the practices used, particularly by women writers, to express and preserve subversion in the Devonshire Manuscript. Now, then, we return to the exchange and the incident with which this work opens: the Douglas-Howard exchange. This incident provides a distillation of the paranoia and anxiety caused by the shifts that occurred under Henry VIII's reign: the increasing centralization of power and the increasing surveillance associated with the drive to protect that power. In response, though, both Douglas and Howard, or at least the voices apparently assigned to them in the Devonshire, used elements of the same performances imposed on them by this surveillance culture to express their resentment and resistance. Using the same gender roles that Henry himself had partially defined, Douglas and Howard define the legitimacy of their relationship and express the necessity of its primacy and privilege even in the face of official opposition. Using the rules of courtly love, Douglas and Howard both lay claim to an older and earlier system of fidelity and express the importance of idealistic love in the face of disappointing reality. Using the terms of service aligned both with that tradition and with Henry's court, Douglas and Howard paradoxically argue for their rights within the system that, in their portrayal, has betrayed and incarcerated them.

Three different entries, at minimum, seem intended to memorialize the events of the Douglas-Howard exchange and its aftermath in the Devonshire Manuscript. The first of these, according to scholarly consensus, records an epistolary-poetic exchange between Douglas and Howard during their imprisonment.<sup>32</sup> This exchange is recorded from 26r to 30r. Much later in

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<sup>32</sup> The agreement is essentially universal, including Heale, Irish, Remley, Southall, and Harrier, among others.

the text, on 88r, Douglas records a single poem, “Now that ye be assemblled heer,” which seems to dramatize her own vows of fealty either during or immediately after her and Howard’s imprisonment; because the poem figures the speaker’s death as a result of the loss of her lover, the poem’s dramatic situation may suggest a moment after Howard’s death in the Tower. Finally, the same hand which records the epistolary-poetic exchange between Howard and Douglas records the last entries in the Manuscript, organizationally, which begin after a few blank pages following Douglas’s composition. Following Irish, Heale, and Remley, among others, I believe that these final entries can also be seen as intentionally related to the Douglas-Howard affair. This very neat hand is used only for these two sets of entries,<sup>33</sup> and, in both the entries recorded, draws from the 1532 edition of Thynne mentioned in the introduction.

The poems are entered by the hand TH2, which, as the initials suggest, has at times been thought to be one of the hands of Thomas Howard. More recent scholarship has avoided this particular attribution, though some critics have left the possibility at least partially open. Bradley J. Irish, for example, avoids explicitly endorsing this assignment, saying that “[b]ecause no example of Howard’s hand has been discovered, we cannot know...if he inscribed the poems personally while imprisoned in the Tower” (89). However, much of Irish’s arguments about the poems proceed from the idea that indeed Howard did record these works. He acknowledges,

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<sup>33</sup> “A fourth handwriting which appears on two or three occasions on these folios is that which copied the Douglas/Howard poems on folios 26<sup>v</sup>-30<sup>v</sup> and the medieval stanzas on folios Sg<sup>v</sup>-ga<sup>v</sup>. A rhyme royal stanza on folio 59<sup>v</sup>, beginning, 'for thylke grownde yt bearyth the wedes wycke', confirms this copyist's knowledge of and taste for Chaucer, because these lines too are from *Troilus and Criseyde*., in this instance from Book i, lines 946-52, where Pandarus offers Troilus generalized 'sentences' of encouragement. This copyist has also made some jottings on folio 67<sup>v</sup>, including the half-line 'I ama yowrs an\ thought by Southall and Foxwell to be a response by Anne Boleyn to a supposed poem by Wyatt, but much more likely to be an echo of the conventional expression, 'I am yours and will be sure' to be found in poems on folio 17<sup>v</sup> and, copied by the same hand, on folios 90<sup>v</sup> and 27<sup>v</sup>” (Heale 310)

though, that “it is possible that the poems were collected after Howard’s death, and entered by an unknown scribal hand, as tribute and memorial to Lady Margaret’s former lover” (Irish 89).

Other recent scholarship has more clearly challenged the attribution to Howard, most notably in Paul Remley’s work, though Murray also questions the assignment. Murray’s suggestion is simply that some other courtier entered the poems after Howard’s death; Remley more specifically proposes Mary Shelton as the transcriber of the poems assigned to TH2. Though she avoids a full endorsement of any single candidate, Heale proposes a more comprehensive vision of the contributions made by this hand—including work on several other leaves, following Raymond Southall’s similarly broad reading of the hand.

In fact, Southall’s was one of the earliest extensive analyses of the work to assign this work to Mary Shelton. Southall assigned this exchange, among dozens of others, to the then-young poet. Harrier, however, challenged this analysis in his subsequent research, and his “diminution of Shelton’s contribution continues to exert an influence on critical opinion” (Remley 42). The hand is notably distinct from the hand most definitely assigned to Shelton; however, the common practice of multiple hands was a basic tenet of Early Modern literacy. As Remley convincingly argues, “Shelton’s signatures show incontrovertibly that her handwriting was not restricted to a ‘scrawl’ and that, in fact, she was capable of practicing any one of several distinct scripts on different occasions” (Remley 49). While it is true that this hand is remarkable partly for its neatness, a characteristic not shared by those works viewed as more certainly Shelton’s,

the appearance of neatness in this section of the manuscript may reflect the previously unrecorded fact that the leaves containing the Douglas-Howard items are ruled (albeit somewhat haphazardly) in pencil and may thus be distinguished from the preceding leaves, which lack ruling or any other sort of enhanced layout. (Remley 54)

That is, the copying hand can be seen taking certain measures to ensure neatness in this section; reasonably, then, a writer who also possesses one hand which is elsewhere looser could be taking active measures here to write in a neater script. Additionally, “very strong evidence to indicate that Shelton was in fact the copyist who preserved the Douglas-Howard exchange is found in a hastily written sequence of characters that appear at the foot of...26v...” (Remley 54).<sup>34</sup> Remley argues that “the characters reveal a sequence of strokes and ligatures that bear close comparison with those seen in Mary Shelton’s three certain signatures” (Remley 54). The hand of this signature more closely resembles Shelton’s looser hand; notably, her signature on some of those other entries resembles the more careful hand of these poems. Remley calls the reading of this signature as “Mary Sh–It–” “almost certain” (Remley 54), and I would add that the weight of evidence seems to support the reading of this signature as a mark of the transcriber on these pages, as will be discussed in greater detail in the analysis of each entry.

However, Remley’s further conclusions about the nature of the manuscript necessitate additional consideration. He first addresses the courtly nature of the manuscript, arguing that

[i]n view of the furor caused by the impolitic betrothal of Douglas and Howard, it is perhaps surprising that their personal exchange circulated at all in a contemporary document such as the Devonshire manuscript, particularly if received critical judgments are upheld that would characterize the volume as a publicly maintained ‘courtly anthology’ or a frequently exhibited family guest book. (Remley 53)

As an explanation for this apparent paradox, Remley suggests that, instead, “[t]he inclusion of the Douglas-Howard exchange is hardly surprising if the volume is viewed as a private document in which some of Henry’s disillusioned subjects were able to give voice to their dissent” (54). I

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<sup>34</sup> I have removed, for clarity’s sake, Remley’s system of double citation, in which he incorporates numbering for the blank pages of the manuscript. Here, for example, the page mentioned is both 26v (the standard notation) and 29v, to reflect the blank pages. While I see the potential usefulness of a system which incorporates both forms, the simpler notation is sufficient for my work in these chapters.

argue, however, that the manuscript is both a space for dissent and a (relatively) public document. The nature of poetry makes public resistance possible, partly by limiting its scope, yes, but also, as outlined in the last chapter, by limiting accountability.

Further, I suggest that the very neatness of the lines suggests a shift in Shelton's strategies that nonetheless indicate the utility of applying the broad strategies of transcription to these exchanges. Where in other poems Shelton uses irregular spelling and difficult cursive to cloud and complicate her meaning, these exchanges are carefully, neatly recorded. First, this suggests greater importance in context; Shelton records the exchange with more care to signal that it should be treated as precious, in some sense. Second, this neatness may be meant to signal that there is less authorial action on the part of the transcriber than in other entries in the manuscript; if her contemporaries associated the particular messiness of her more usual hand with her original or manipulated compositions, the shift in hand may also signal a shift in style of transcription. Third, then, to return to Remley's point, I would suggest that this neatness is meant to create greater audience accessibility. The previous chapter established the ways that Shelton used difficult formations and spellings as a subversive strategy; if she chooses to avoid such strategies, she is aware of her choice to make these poems more readable and more easily interpretable. This choice does not decrease the subversive energies of the exchange, but instead increases the element of resistance by more openly reflecting a narrative of disagreement with Henry's policies and sympathy for his victims.

Murray points out that the transcription of this exchange "offers material evidence not only of Thomas and Margaret's communication within the prison, but also of the cooperation and collaboration of courtiers outside its walls" (27). The communal nature of the manuscript serves, then, to mask its writers. Murray continues to the point that

Given the complicity among friends and relatives in the surreptitious progress of the affair at court, it seems entirely likely that Shelton, or one of her associates, would have helped Thomas and Margaret exchange verse letters in the Tower, and moreover have ensured that these letters earned a permanent place that would preserve their shared literary efforts for posterity. (Murray 27)

Remley advances a similar argument, claiming that “Mary embraced the opportunity to preserve the controversial Douglas-Howard exchange for posterity—or for some other purpose which, at this distance, must remain unfathomable” (54). But posterity is not, I think, the point—rather the most important thing is the energy these poems have in their moment. These poems are recorded to be shared immediately, not only with future readers. The recorded exchange between Douglas and Howard, and the verses which seem to comment on the affair, masquerade as relatively harmless comment after the fact, toothless because the more immediate threat has already been neutralized through Howard’s death. At the same time, these verses gain force because of the very real consequences which followed from the events memorialized. Remley observes of the court context that “Mary Shelton and her companions...were subject to a peculiar blurring of the distinction between the traditional ideals of the Chaucerian and Petrarchan love-poetry and the social and political exigencies of life at court” (62). However, these poems show Douglas, Howard, and Shelton controlling and appropriating these blurred terms, subjects of, rather than to, the narratives they construct.

The first poem establishes the themes on which the poets base the argument formed by the exchange—and so, by extension, the message of the transcriber who chooses to preserve and re-contextualize their words. The first stanza establishes that “force” has separated the two lovers, whose situation is then outlined in greater detail in the subsequent stanza:

Alas that euer pryson stronge  
sholde such too louers separte  
yet thowgh ower bodys suffereth wronge  
ower harts shalbe off one estate (26r)



The dramatic situation of the poem is quite literal to the poets' situation; the poet here then references the difference between the two lovers in his or her assertion that their hearts will be of the same estate—that is, though they themselves are not. The trope of unity—and of that unity as overcoming social difference—is repeated throughout the poems. The poet seems to answer, also, the charge that Howard has made this match for material gain; the poet assures the lover that “I wyll not swerue I yow Insure / for gold nor yet for worldly fere.”

The poem also invests itself, in the final two stanzas, in a discussion essentially on the power of thought and the importance of positive thought.<sup>35</sup> The speaker exhorts the beloved to think of his or her lover and to maintain a positive outlook; the speaker, in return, will do the same:

I pray yow be off ryght good chere  
and thynke on me that louys yow best

and I wyll promyse yow agayne  
to thynke off yow I wyll not lett  
for nothyng cowlde relese my payne  
but to thynke on yow my loue swete (26r)

Irish, proceeding from the assumption that Howard is both speaker and poet, argues of this remonstrance that

while some of his poetic energy is directed externally, Lord Thomas seems far more comfortable turning inward, adopting in many poems a kind of stoic consolation anchored in two related notions: the rightness of his cause and the conviction that he and his beloved will be eternally reunited. (Irish 93)

Although some of the later poems take a more condemnatory approach to the others who have imprisoned and separated the lovers, the speakers most consistently suggest this kind of stoicism and reflection as the surest route to preservation. The logic extends to the correlation between

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<sup>35</sup> The theme may, then, influence the poems written by Shelton and Douglas discussed in the previous chapter, which represent entries in an argument on the value of performed gaiety or equilibrium in the face of tragedy.

courtly love poetry and the role of the courtier, as well: having taken a risk that has incurred royal wrath, the courtly maker now retreats into a more cautious position, but one which performs his or her own self-support and self-validation, dramatizing the rightness of his actions while claiming not to offer explicit resistance or defense.

Another possibility is raised by the lack of clearly gendered language in the poem. Heale points out this poem shares a line with a later entry set in the verse epistle section, on 29r (16). Though she contests this may be simply an indication that Howard is reusing a phrase or thought, she also questions whether the poem could “have been contained in, or be one of the “gentyll letters” sent to Howard from Douglas” (Heale 16). In either case, she surmises “[w]hat is clear is that the lyric expression of amorous fidelity is not considered gender specific” (Heale 16). The verse, then,

makes it clear that the language of passionate fidelity could be attributed to female speakers as well as to male speakers, making it at least probable that on occasion women able to write and playing an active part in the collection and enjoyment of courtly balets, might feel free to appropriate that language and the subject positions it implies for their own compositions. (Heale 17)

If the speaker is instead a woman—and a woman who then contextually is likely meant to be read as Margaret Douglas—the speaker’s position becomes both more limited and more resistant. The female speaker may, in fact, be limited to thoughts as defense; she is less likely to be able to directly respond to the charges against her. However, Douglas’s and Howard’s relative positions in the court also complicate these usual alignments; Douglas’s position has protected her from an explicit charge of treason, and she has been able to petition the king directly. That protection and favor, however, are simultaneously contingent on a kind of self-silencing, wherein Douglas may *think* that she has been unjustly charged, that her contracted marriage is valid, and that her position is right, but she must *say* that she submits to the king’s will and begs his pardon for her error. While a male courtier must also practice this kind of self-abnegation, the very fact that

such a position is often dramatized as a kind of feminization by male poets emphasizes the additional constraints implied by the use of a female speaker.

The sequence then continues with a more plaintive and dramatic entry, and one which, in a reference to “her...whom I loue best” seems to more definitely situate Howard as its poet/speaker. While the previous entry exhorts cheer and strength through fond remembrance, the poem here begins with a clear statement of the lover’s despairing state:

Wyth sorowful syghes and wondes smart  
my hart ys persed sodaynly  
to morne off ryght yt ys my part  
to wepe to wayle full greuously (26v)

The first lines of the following stanza continues the complaint, as “the bytter tears doth me co[n]strayne,” in spite of the speaker’s aims to “eschew” “to wyte off them that dothe dysdayne / faythfull louers that be so trew.” The speaker’s feelings force the writing, thus offering a justification in the face of the admonishments of the first poem. While the first poem in the sequence establishes that to take comfort in thoughts and to perform good cheer is the best strategy, this second poem answers that this performance is impossible in the current conditions. Moreover, as the poem continues, the resistance to those that “dysdayne” the “faythfull louers” becomes sharper. The speaker continues with his plaint that “The one off us from *the* other they do absent/ wych unto us ys a dedly wond.” While the resistant tone is obvious, the wording is also strikingly careful. The speaker does not complain that these “they” actively wound the lovers intentionally. Rather, the “they” are held responsible directly only for the separation; the separation is itself a wound, but the “wych unto us ys” offers a distance between the actors and the effect. Irish has already observed that the identity of this “they” seems self-evident, acknowledging that “the presence of what one must assume to be King Henry and his ministers

casts a long shadow over the sequence” (91). In this fairly entry, though, the “they” may be construed as more mistaken than actively malevolent.

The speaker appeals for the rightness of the lovers’ claims take on two further aspects, here: both a religious argument and an appeal to the larger public are added to the lovers’ defense. Howard moves clearly into a specifically religious argument for his rights as the poem progresses. The lovers are in the right, “seyng we loue in thys yntent / yn godes laws for to be bownd.” This religious defense is a key characteristic of the sequence, and it is both bolstered and complicated by the unique religious atmosphere of the 1530s in England. The speaker needs both to appeal to the law of God, which he likely believes to be universal, and to negotiate the complication of that threatening “they,” who have changed the terms of that universal law. The knot of complication is dense: Henry VIII claims he is representing God’s law, and so the speaker cannot appear to say that Henry’s will has become God’s law; however, God’s law must not disagree with Henry’s will, lest the speaker appear to question the king’s claims. The appeal, then, is both religious and politic. If the lovers have been joined by the religious law that Henry aims to advance, then the king cannot actually fully condemn the contracted marriage. The speaker mitigates his criticism by casting the contract in terms of “intent.” The lovers have intended to follow God’s law, so the king should validate the planned marriage. However, if he chooses not to do so, the poem leaves open the possibility that this is not because the king is wrong, but because the lovers have failed in this intent.

Remley makes the points regarding Howard’s poetic voice that “its vocabulary is traditional, and, in many cases, specifically medieval in origin” (52-53), and he uses “terms drawn from the conventional vocabulary” (53). In this traditional vocabulary, Howard evokes the system of court service of which courtly love has become a part and a mirror. In doing so,

Howard partly engages with the charge against him, but he also emphasizes the newness of this charge. He is accused of violating this system—and in some of the poems, as we will see, Howard admits to some part of the charges, acknowledging that he has loved above his station. However, this is itself another essential part of the lore of courtly love. And there are two important factors that distinguish and validate Howard: his love is not adulterous and his love has been ratified by religious solemnization. In appealing to these traditions, Howard attempts to justify himself and to indict the failure of those who should be acknowledging his service by protecting him. The fealty of the courtier creates an obligation in his lord; throughout the sequence, Howard suggests that these obligations have not been met. If he has violated the terms of service, his crime is nonetheless demonstrably new—the crime has been created in order to charge Howard. The terms of obligation that he sees as not being met are more traditional—Henry has violated the terms of courtly relationships even as he appropriates that vocabulary for his courtly propaganda, and the speaker in these verses implicitly appeals to him to meet his end of their bargain.

Simultaneously, however, the speaker also moves into an appeal to the larger public; this strain, I suggest, may partly compel the transcriber's act of recording. Howard and Douglas are successful, that is, in appealing to the larger sympathy of the courtly audience; at least one member of that audience, then, seeks to preserve their complaint. Such preservation is inherently an act of resistance, because such sympathy is counter to the king's actions and aims. However, the poem again covers that resistance by implicitly including the king in that sympathetic audience. The final stanza appeals that

Ther doth not lyue no lovyng hart  
but wyll lament ower greuous woo  
and pray to god to ease owre smart  
and shortly togyther that we ~~my~~ may goo (26v)

The audience, in this final stanza, is inherently comprehensive. Unlike other verses, this one does not limit this claim to those who hear or read the poem or story; rather, “no lovyng hart” can fail to support the lovers. In this case, those hearts include both the powerless members of the audience, who can only pray to God; the councilors and powerful allies who can appeal to Henry, now proclaimed the country’s immediate intermediary with God; and Henry himself, who must pray to God for advice as to his own actions and plans in this case.

The bottom of this page preserves one of the marks whose interpretation is so difficult in Devonshire, but whose presence has necessarily influenced the reception of these entries. The mark “fynis ma r h” (26v) has been read in a wide variety of ways, though usually as a signature, however a given critic has interpreted the various ligatures. As stated above, and implied by my own transcription here, I agree that the mark is likely Mary Shelton’s. The context of the poem also makes it unlikely that this is meant to refer to the poem’s speaker or subject. The speaker is almost certainly male, given the female pronouns assigned to the beloved and their explicitly marital relationship, and the critical consensus that these verses apply to the imprisonment following the Douglas-Howard affair precludes Shelton as the intended recipient.<sup>36</sup> As such, I agree with Remley’s claim that reading Shelton as the transcriptionist of the exchange, authored by Howard and Douglas, is a reasonable and helpful approach. Proceeding from this interpretation, however, raises a question about the placement of this particular mark. First, I think this signature is an implicit response to the final stanza of the poem, marking Shelton as both transcriber and respondent. To the claim that no one with a heart can help but pity the lovers, Shelton offers herself as witness. She then also marks herself as the transcriber who

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<sup>36</sup> This consensus is sufficiently widespread that significant new evidence would be necessary to overturn the verdict that these verses do, indeed, reference this affair.

proves her sympathy through complicity. Although the vagueness of the shapes does recall Shelton's use of complex spellings to cloud her own culpability, the act of making any mark at all in the context of these verses acknowledges an assumption of some measure of risk. The implication, then, is that the injustice is grave enough to demand some kind of response and to warrant this act of preservation—Shelton's signature draws attention to the act of transcribing, its risks, and the reason she feels she must take on these risks.

The next poem in the sequence, then, moves into a quite different tone, but one which underscores the reasons the lovers' cause can be approached with sympathy. Before moving into a discussion that valorizes the lovers' merit and the worthiness of their love, the poem begins with a valediction of the joys to be found in love. In contrast to the desperation that characterizes the entry on (26v), this first stanza opens

What thyng shold cawse me to be sad  
as longe ye reyoyce wyth hart  
my part yt ys for to be glad  
syns yow haue takyn me to yowr part (27r)

This first stanza seems almost a direct repudiation of the despair of the preceding entry; indeed, the poem might be read as a response from Douglas to Howard's apparent decline.

The second stanza then emphasizes the mutual fidelity of the lovers,

yff I shuld wryte and make report  
what faythfulnes in yow I fynd  
the terme off lyfe yt were to short  
wyth penne yn letters yt to bynd  
wherefor wher as ye be so kynd  
as for my part yt ys but dewe  
lyke case to yow to be as true (27r)

The speaker here uses an echo of the Thynne Chaucer, which this same hand will transcribe later in the Manuscript, in the first four lines' acknowledgement of the limitations of writing to preserve the worth of the beloved. From this insufficiency, then, the poem moves into one of the

many presentations of the fidelity as a reciprocal obligation between the two lovers; offered loyalty and service which exceed description, the lover's "part" is necessarily to return that love. The metaphorical connection between the lovers' service to each other and their courtly service then once more reaches out to suggest the failure of those in power to fulfill their part and offer the lovers their "dewe"—protection in exchanged for loving service.

The placement of "for let them thynke and let them say" in the third line of the third stanza then allows the line a double meaning. In one sense, it continues the discussion of methods of coercion established in the first two lines of the stanza: "My loue truly shall not decay/ for thretnyng nor for punysment." Whatever "they" may think, say, threaten, or punish, the lover remains true. The line also, however, invites in a "they" who will also "thynke...and say/ toward yow alone I am full bent," as the fourth and fifth lines follow. This technique then collapses the two "them" referents, as well; the "them" of the first reading becomes the same as that of the second, and those who threaten and punish will ultimately be forced to admit the lovers' fealty and honesty. This strategy is repeated throughout the sequence and offers particularly fruitful evidence of the kind of protected subversion practice in the manuscript. The writers leave themselves various "outs," but they also tend to offer an "out" from their critique. Here, that out implies that the threatening "they" can be reunited into the larger, communal "they" which affirms the couple's love, once "their" false suspicions have been put to rest.

Following a further religious appeal, "desyryng god that off hys grace/ to send no tyme hys wyll and plesor/ and shortly to get hus owt off thys place," the poem closes with an image that emphasizes the lovers' fealty to, and dependence on, each other.



then shal I be yn as good case  
as a hawke that getes<sup>37</sup> owt off hys mue  
and strayt doth seke hys trust so trwe (27r)

Remley has pointed out that this “striking simile...is arguably Chaucerian in derivation” (53); as such, the image reinforces the claims of precedence and tradition. The simile also strengthens the connection between the courtly lover and the courtier. If freed, the lover will “strayt...seke” his or her beloved, leaving one prison for a more voluntary bondage. The established metaphorical connection between love and courtly service, though, also implies that if free, the lover will return to his or her service to the king, proving desert of freedom by, in real terms, largely surrendering it. When the lover promises to stay “trusty and trewe,” those qualities speak directly to the charges of treason. The lover’s suit is true, both in terms of contracting the marriage for the “right” reasons, not solely for political power, and in terms of not stemming from any treasonous intent. Indeed, the relationship is not just poetic: for either Douglas or Howard, the investment in the engagement is, truly, trustworthy only if made without an eye on deposing Henry.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> This is one of the few instances where the recording hand demonstrates any of the linguistic markers which Nevalainen associates with women writers of the period, as discussed in the last chapter. The writer also uses “yow” in one single subject position in the poem, though she is usually more inclined to “ye.” Shelton herself is not overly disposed to such markers, but the absences of such markers may also indicate that this section preserves some of the purest “transcription” in the Manuscript. The neatness of the transcription and the attributions throughout emphasize the implication that these poems are meant to preserve Douglas and Howard’s exchange, and that Shelton accordingly treats the originals with more veneration than is usual in the larger project.

<sup>38</sup> Some inherent complications of Early Modern marriage must be addressed, here: neither Douglas nor Howard was naive that either would make a “love” match without considering political power. However, an interest in shoring up one’s position is quite separate from an actual, treasonous bid for the throne. I would argue that while mutually advantageous interest in political power would have been part of a love match for either courtier, either lover, though Douglas particularly, would have to understand a match based on such an explicit bid as an inherently exploitative one, since it came with much greater danger than advantage. I see, in short, no historical or poetic evidence to suggest that either of the lovers entered the match

The repetition of “my part” and “your part” within this poem and across the sequence suggests both the manipulation of roles and the claiming of certain rights. Because most critics have read these divisions as portraying the speaker as the lower of the two, the poem is generally assigned to Howard. I think, however, that an argument can be made for reading the poem in Douglas’s voice, as well. First, no gendered language demands that the speaker be understood as male; the final figure does use male pronouns, but all of these refer explicitly to the hawk. Second, the poem does seem to offer a response to the laments of the previous poem—and that response aligns strongly with the advice of the first, also ungendered, entry in this set. Thematically, at least, there is an argument for at minimum a reconsideration of these poems that views the entries on 26r and 27r as written by or in the voice of Margaret Douglas, sandwiching the quite different entry more explicitly in Thomas Howard’s voice. The reading makes a certain amount of historic sense, as well, as Margaret’s relative equanimity could be influenced by her much more comfortable position: she was relatively assured of forgiveness and she was moved out of the Tower after only a few months of imprisonment. In contrast, Howard’s whole case rested on proving his desperate love, and his situation generally was much more dire, as his eventual death would prove.

If the first three poems are indeed an exchange between Douglas and Howard, rather than a sustained sequence by Howard alone, then in the fourth poem Howard may take some heart from Douglas’s advice, though the tone still slides, occasionally, into notes of his earlier despair. While the first stanza is a lament “that men be so vngent/ [t]o order me so creuely,” the second stanza moves into a more assertive and resistant stance:

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intending the kind of treason that Henry so instantly suspected, nor has any other critic or historian unearthed such evidence, to my knowledge.

They kno my hart ys set so sure  
*that* all ther wordes can not prevayle  
Tho that the thynke me to allure  
wyth doubyll tonge and flatteryng taylor (27v)

The third stanza then combines the element of lamentation with the stronger claims of fealty and right, as the speaker decries that

alas me thynke the do me wronge  
That they wold haue me to resyne  
my ~~tylly~~ tyle wych ys good and stronge  
*that* I am yowrs and yow ar myne (27v)

While the first line of the stanza echoes the (well earned) self-pity of the second poem, the final lines of the stanza are particularly confident. The speaker offers a clear appeal, in legal language, to the rights implicit in the act of marriage. The unnamed “they” then become usurpers of the speaker’s title. The title itself, further, is then delineated in terms of reciprocity; although the third line of the stanza refers only to speaker’s title, he then goes on to describe the terms: “that I am yowrs and yow ar myne.” Further, the line balances against itself, emphasizing the theme of concordance. Although “I am yowrs” comes first, its position after “that” means that the metrically and visually matched “myne” has more emphasis, at the end of the line. Thus, the two phrases share the markers of importance and emphasis, as much as possible.

The two lovers—the “I” and “yow”—are then countered against that third, outside pronoun referent, “they.” In the next lines, the balancing continues, but this time the speaker’s agency is set against the outsider’s will, as “they would” strikes an internal rhyme with “I should:”

I thynke the wold that I shold swere  
your company for to forsake  
but ons ther ys no worldly fere  
shal cawse me such anothe to make (27v)

Here, I suggest, either Shelton as a transcriber chooses to introduce her strategy of complex spellings, or the original author has used a similar strategy: “I thynke the wold that I should

swere/ your company for to forsake” is just difficult enough to open up a possible alternative. The initial reading, of course, is “I think *they would* have me swear to forsake your company.” Alternatively, though, the spelling “the wold” allows “I think *thee would* have me swear to forsake your company”—that is, perhaps the beloved suggests a measure of self-preservation. The lover’s response, though, works neatly for both interpretations: there is no worldly fear that could cause him to make such an oath. The doubled interpretation may allow Howard a moment of communication with his bride without fracturing the united front which they have presented to their accusers thus far; he can acknowledge her fears for his safety and return his own redoubled loyalty, without explicitly allowing their accusers to see any possible weaknesses in a defense that rests largely on unity and arguments of the sacramental and legal bonds of marriage.

Following the establishment of legal claim, the speaker moves into a stanza that emphasizes the claims of affection; from here, though, he moves back to appeals to larger systems and powers. The fifth stanza is one of the many where the speakers specifically appeal their case to God,

ffor I do trust ere yt be longe  
that god off hys benyngnyte  
wyll send us ryght where we haue wrong  
for servyng hym thus faythfulye (27v)

Irish sees this stanza in terms of stark complaint, saying that “in the face of their increasingly dire circumstances it also becomes increasingly likely that the restoration of their union will be mediated, not by Henry’s earthly authority, but by divine mandate” (93). Certainly, the religious appeal is central to the lovers’ claims regarding the rights of their contracted marriage. However, while the language here is clearly religious, the language of service may also make an implicit appeal to Henry, himself. That is, rather than an explicit condemnation of the king that abandons hope of help from that quarter, the savvy courtiers may make use of Henry’s new role as head of

the church to offer yet another appeal. The conflation of God and King is not a markedly unusual one, and the language here could be used both to petition to Henry and to offer him a more comfortable or laudable role as an out from his place in this unpopular situation. Howard and Douglas, in this formulation, affirm their unity through the use of the “we” pronoun, but simultaneously affirm that they are united in service to a beneficent Lord who will both emerge on the side of “right”—morally and legally—and whose actions are motivated by his “benyngnyte.” Whatever Howard’s opinions of the king’s actual character, he would almost certainly have known that such a description and such a parallel would appeal hugely to Henry’s ego and his frank need to be liked, or, more aptly, adored.

The next entry is one of the most structured in the sequence, and I suggest that its structure must be related, in some way, to Douglas’s preference throughout the manuscript for poetic structures based in repetition. Defining the exact relationship may be impossible; perhaps Howard writes the poem using a preferred strategy of his lover’s as a tribute to her, or possibly her later preference for this style was because of memories of her would-be-husband’s use. The implication, in either case, draws the poem more clearly into the strategies of the manuscript as a whole—if Howard is intentionally echoing the structure for Douglas, the poem emphasizes their unity; if Douglas later gravitates towards the style in memory of Howard, then her entries throughout the manuscript may constitute, to some degree, implicit eulogies for her almost-husband. Further, of course, the two possibilities are not mutually exclusive—if Howard echoed Douglas’s favorite style in his compositions to her, she could also well associated that style with him after the traumatic events surrounding their brief contract and his death. The poem is here included in its entirety to show the repetitive style:

Who hath more cawse for to complayne  
or to lament hys sorow and payne

Then I wych louys and louyd agayne  
yet can not optayne

I can not optayne *that* ys my none  
Wych cawsyth me styll to make great mone  
To se thus ryght *with* wronge ouerthrowne  
as not vnknowne

It ys not vnknowen how wrongfully  
The wyll me hyr for to deny  
whom I wyll loue moste hartely  
vntyll I dye

vntyll I dye I wyll not lett  
To ~~ss~~ seke her owt in cold and het  
wych hath my hart as fermly set  
as tonge or *penne* can yt repet

finis (28r)

The repeated use of “my none” for “mine own” in the verses is also striking in contest, implying the negation of the contract even as it asserts the relationship codified therein. As his contracted wife, Douglas is Howard’s “own;” as a courtier under a charge of treason—and so a threat of attainder—Howard has nothing, and Douglas becomes a symbol of that absence, both its cause and its effect. The poem also returns to the image of writing materials, though in this case the speaker does not necessarily claim insufficiency. Where elsewhere, the image, which seems to be taken from the Thynne Chaucer, is always evoked as incapable of recording the lovers’ fealty, here the heart is as determined as can be recorded. The lines, then, may be read as reflecting a willingness to record whatever is necessary to mark the truth of the statement. Where some poems mock the writing as incapable of containing the truth of the lovers’ vows, writing here is capable of recording something of the heart’s determination. This moment, then, may also invest some power back into the resistance recorded by these verses, indicating that writing is not sufficient, but it still a true method of recording, expressing, and preserving something of the truth.

Although scholars attribute many other poems in the manuscript to Douglas, only one poem in this particular exchange is frequently treated as Douglas's, perhaps because so many critics have seen Howard as a more influential presence in the Manuscript. Even this single poem is not universally acknowledged as Douglas's composition, as various approaches have imagined the poem as a kind of created response, perhaps even written by Howard, instead. However, the assumption of a female voice is here undeniable; from the first stanza, the speaker claims a clearly gendered identity:

I may well say *with* Ioyfull harte  
as neuer woman myght say befor  
that I haue takyn to my part  
the faythfullyst loue that ever was born (28v)

Given the consensus that these poems were part of the prison exchange and my own analysis, paired with Remley's, that the entire exchange is then later transcribed by Shelton, I treat Douglas as the author of this particular poem. This argument is, of course, also influenced by my earlier point that more than just this entry may be Douglas's; the evidence could easily suggest that her role in the entries as a whole has been undersold. This entry, particularly, though, seems to show strong evidence of Douglas's composing strategies. In addition the clearly female speaker, the poem echoes the four line ABAB rhyme scheme which Douglas often uses in the poems explicitly identified as hers, as shown in "Now that ye be assembled heer," discussed later in this chapter.

The female speaker's description also certainly fits the situation of the Douglas Howard exchange, as the male beloved seems more endangered than the speaker:

great paynes he suffereth for my sake  
contynnually both nyght and day  
for all the paynes that he doth take  
from me hys loue wyll not decay

Wyth thretnyng great he hath ben sayd

off payne and yke off punnysment  
yt all fere asyde he hath layed  
to loue me best was hys yntent (28v)

The poem seems, here, to respond to the outrage of Howard's entries describing efforts to convince him to renounce the match; Douglas knows that her lover has been threatened and cajoled, but her response is that his aims were never treasonous or dishonorable. His aim was only to "loue [her] best," and so the denial which the unnamed "they" expects of him cannot be forthcoming; indeed, Douglas thus characterizes Howard's only potentially treasonable acts (the planned marriage to her and so denial of the king's will) as inherently markers of loyalty.

From this defense of her lover's nature, the speaker then moves into a bold statement of her own commitment, and her defiant insistence that everything she has belongs to the man she plans to marry. She not only expresses no regret or reservation, but goes on to declare that

yff I had more more he shold haue  
and that I kno he knowys full well  
to loue hym best vnto my graue  
off that he may both bye and sell (28v)

Douglas engages the criticism of their disparate stations only to deny its validity, and her wording mounts a significant defense in terms of the values of the day. Even as her language acknowledges the station and money which union with her could bring Howard, she casts these benefits as inherently his right *as* her husband-to-be, rather than acknowledging any possible ulterior motivation.

The poem then ends with lines that emphasize both the lovers' unity and, once more, the religious validity of their claims, as Douglas ends her apparently epistolary poem

And thus fare well my hartes desyer  
the only stay off me and myne  
onto god dayly I make my prayer  
to bryng vs shortly both in one lyne (28v)



Many critics have noted the unity of theme and voice between this poem and the other entries. Heale observes that “the phrases of gratitude and fidelity mirror, in some cases word for word, those gendered male in other poems” (16). Remley points out that Douglas “adapts entire lines of [Howard’s] poems to her own use, introducing her own echoic effects” (53). Irish writes that “the poem written in the voice of Margaret Douglas is a virtual pastiche of the lyrics presented throughout this prison sequence” (95). Irish, though, then also adds the corollary: “Douglas, in turn, incorporated his words into her own creation, literalizing the trope of oneness and indivisibility that guides the sequence as a whole” (95). Again, however, I would argue that there is a very real possibility that the echoes of theme and technique in this poem are also partially of Douglas’s own poems; the lovers together, then, echo the themes which are most central to their arguments and share those techniques which are most useful for emphasizing these themes.

As an example, the epistolary hints of the closing of Douglas’s poem on 28v are then echoed in the explicit declaration of the same letter/poem hybrid at the beginning of Howard’s next poem. By emphasizing the communicative natures of the poems, Douglas and Howard highlight not only the closeness of their own marital relationship, but also the loyalty of their friends in courtly circles, who must participate in some way in this exchange of notes. Howard opens his poem

To yowr gentyll letters an answere to resyte  
 both I and my penne there to wyll aply  
 and thowgh that I can not yo<sup>r</sup> goodnes aquyte  
 In ryme and myter elegantly  
 yet do I meane as faythfully (29r)

Once more the poem speaks to the insufficiency of words; the repetition of this trope makes more immediate the lovers’ situation, unable to communicate with each other except through this insufficient medium, as the first two lines of the poem emphasize. The element of

communication through others, then, is extended beyond this cooperative circle as the speaker continues:

And where as ye wyll contynew myne  
To reporte for me ye may be bold  
That yff I had lyves as argus had yne  
yet soner all them lyse I wold  
then to be tempte for fere or for gold  
yow to refuse or to forsake  
wych ys my faythful and louyng make (29r)

The claim that Douglas may report of Howard that he maintains his own claim may suggest that this entry dates after the amelioration of Douglas's circumstances, when she was moved from the Tower to Syon Abbey. The final line once again uses the flexible spelling of the period to offer two interpretations. The clearer sense is that Howard will not refuse his faithful and loving mate. However, on the page, "make" is much the clearer spelling; Howard, then, will not refuse or forsake Douglas because his make is faithful and loving. While the first reference may be to Douglas as his make, the alternate definition of "make" as "relating to the form or composition of something physical or immaterial" was already well-established by the time of Howard's writing. Thus, Howard's "make," his composition and character, are also faithful and loving. His fealty to his wife-to-be may, indeed, be the only way for Howard to prove his fealty to his king. While Henry would likely have accepted an abdication of Howard's rights to his contracted marriage, such a surrender might also well have been seen as confirmation of treasonous intent, particularly from a king who harped endlessly on the necessity of constancy and fealty in love, as will be explored in the next chapter. In evoking the rules of love service which Henry had used to define his court, Howard appeals to the king that his love is true and that he is a person of true character—a good courtier who will serve his king as faithfully as his wife. When the transcriber of these verses, then, records these pleas of fealty, quite likely after Howard's death but at best

during the time of his imprisonment, the indictment of the king's refusal to acknowledge these loyalties, or to play by the rules which he has established for courtly love, is inescapable.

The final entries related to this exchange shift noticeably in content, even as that shift builds a link to later entries in the Devonshire Manuscript. Apparently building from those images and lines adapted from the Thynne Chaucer, the lovers now seem to exchange adapted and excerpted verses from *Troilus and Criseyde*. Markers within the poems suggest that Howard was responsible for the changes; Irish observes that

As a tale of secret love wrenched apart by geopolitical machinations, *Troilus and Criseyde* has some obvious similarity to the real-life romance of Thomas Howard and Margaret Douglas, and it is not surprising that Lord Thomas found in Chaucer a complaint rhetoric—and, indeed, a rhetorical situation more generally—remarkably apt for the events of his own life. (Irish 97)

The first of these selections is a short entry, written as a couplet, which builds on the earlier poem's increasing tone of accusation:

And now my pen alas / wyth wyche I wryte  
quaketh for drede / off that I muste endyte (29v)<sup>39</sup>

Irish argues that using this excerpt as a preface activates an associative network in which “Lord Thomas adopts the mantle of Troilus, and implicitly aligns their respective fates” (98). Through this context, Irish approaches the importance of the word choice “endyte,” which “is flexible enough to entail both the act of composition and the act of transcription” (98); through this word choice, Howard becomes both Chaucer the poet and Troilus the lover, while the context also means that “*endyte*...slides into its morphological cousin *indict*” (Irish 99). Irish details the etymological relationship between the words, including the use of “indite” and “indyte” in the sense of “indict” in contemporary grammars and dictionaries; he concludes that, when the

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<sup>39</sup> The shorter quotation is embedded here to eliminate possible confusion over the slash marks present in the text.

couplet is read in Howard's voice, "it is hard to imagine that the couplet doesn't entail this sense of accusation, a charge against the captors who tore him from his rightful wife" (Irish 99). Thus, Howard joins the technique of slippery spelling, used throughout the manuscript, to his own more specific manipulation of tradition, both literary and courtly.

The excerpts which follow this couplet continue to manipulate that network, while Howard furthers his own use of the transcriptions through space and omission. Both Howard and the copyist who records his work leave space, throughout these excerpts, where Criseyde's name should occur, as in the very first stanza:

O very lord / o loue / o god alas  
That knowest best myn hert / & al my thowght  
What shall my sorowful lyfe donne in thys caas  
Iff I forgo that I so dere haue bought  
Syns ye [     ] / & me hau fully brought  
Into your grace / and both our ~~hau~~ hertes sealed  
howe may ye suffer alas yt be repealed (29v)

The echo of the Henry/God conflation is particularly strong in these verses; the lover's appeal is ostensibly to God, of course, but once more the more direct, worldly appeal is to his newly declared primary intermediary in England. However, the final lines show the divorce that has occurred between heavenly and earthly divine will: God has joined these two together, and Henry has put them asunder. When Howard omits Criseyde's name, he also omits Margaret's, even as he invites the substitution. Irish calls this omission "an act of symbolic defiance, in which Lord Thomas, whose body belonged increasingly to the crown, chose actively to inscribe his wife's name, not into the pages of the manuscript, but into the book of his heart" (100):

Murray sees in the spaces "the very rooms of the Tower itself: indiscriminate spaces waiting—with implacable blankness—for their next unwitting inmates" (35). I would add, though, that the spaces can encompass both of these resistant interpretations while also echoing Howard's use of "my none" for "mine own"—Margaret is absent from him because of their bond, and the

relationship that calls the exchange which preserves Howard's voice into existence is simultaneously the relationship that incarcerates and ultimately erases his body. The failures of the "they" who threaten the lovers have made the bonds which should define courtly relationships into traps which erase personhood.

The Douglas-Howard exchange shades practically the entire manuscript; it seems likely that the actual affair shaded Henry's court for some time. Particularly, Douglas's choices throughout the manuscript seem influenced by her contemporary struggles. While the exchange between Shelton and Douglas discussed in the previous chapter is one such example, the entry which precedes the next set of poems entered by the hand TH2 is perhaps an even clearer one. In the poem, which may be an original composition, Douglas's speaker dramatizes a kind of vocal will, a speech in which she justifies her life and records her final wishes:

now that ye be assemblled heer  
all ye my ffrynds at my request  
specyally you my ffather Dere  
that off my blud ar the nerest  
thys vnto you ys my request  
that ye woll pacyenlly hyre  
by thys my last words exprest  
my testement Intyer

and thynk nat to Interrupte me  
ffor syche wyse provyded hawe I  
that thoght ye welldyt woll nat be  
thys touer ys hy ye se ys strong and hye  
[] and the dooris fast barred hawe I  
that no wyhght my purpose [ne] let shold  
for to be quen off all Italy  
nat on day lengere leve I wold

wherffor swet father I I you pray Pray  
ber thys my deth *with* pacyence  
and tourment nat your herys gray  
but frely pardonn myn offence  
sythe yt presedeth off lowers ffervence  
and off my harts constancy

let me nat ffrom the sweat presence  
off hym that I haw case yt to dy (88r)

Heale says of these lines that “[u]nless, or even if, we imagine her reciting these lines to her father, the Earl of Angus and assembled friends, the poem already represents a version of any real events mediated through the discourse of romance and shaped in verse” (17); she says this makes it “impossible to separate the private and the public, the factual and the fictional.” (17) In fact, though, real and imagined events can be separated—by this date, Margaret’s mother and father were firmly separated, and Margaret had been living in London with her mother and royal uncle for at least a decade. A more interesting suggestion, by Harrier, is that Douglas intends “ffather Dere” to refer to, and perhaps to appeal to, Henry. If this is the case, I suggest that a doubled reading of the phrase is almost inevitable. On the one hand, Douglas—desperate and out of favor—needs Henry to understand her appeal sincerely. She does need his favor; she is not, in fact, dying, and only with his approval can she regain any kind of power or agency. On the other hand, however, the situation demands a more ironic reading if the “Dere” and “swet” father is also the one responsible for the tragedy at hand. In fact, this ironic reading may well be strengthened by the necessity of the “sincere” mask. Douglas’s contemporaries would read, simultaneously, her dependence on Henry and her resentment and fear of him; they would understand the terms by which Douglas, and essentially all courtiers, existed, bound to the King regardless of his cruelties, and even more aware of those cruelties because of the impossibility of escaping the system.

Following this imagined, recriminatory “will,” the hand which transcribed the Douglas/Howard poems picks up once more. These verses are separated from Douglas’s complaint by several blank pages, then entered, like the Douglas/Howard exchange, apparently all at once or at least in a consistent style—the hand is regular, the ink and spacing fairly

consistent, and several pages show evidence of pencil ruling. Irish records the general consensus that “the identical handwriting and the usage of Thynne’s 1532 Chaucer suggest that the two sequences could emerge from the same period of inscription” (103); because Irish believes Howard to be the transcriber, he suggests Howard’s imprisonment as potentially providing the dates of entry. While I find Shelton a more compelling candidate for the copyist, the connection between the two sections is still relevant.

While some critics have read the transcriptions, many from Thynne, as “typical” entries in any commonplace book, Remley’s “reading...suggests that the transcription of these medieval borrowings was undertaken in a less convivial spirit” (55). He argues that, “rather than participating in some sort of courtly amusement, Shelton...finds a voice for her indignation at the treatment of women of her time by hypocritical lovers” (Remley 56). However, I think the indignation is farther reaching than Remley suggests, and I think this possibility is reinforced by the copyist’s selective use of this hand—or, if the copyist is not Shelton, then his or her generally selective entries in the Devonshire. By suggesting connections to the Douglas-Howard affair, through placement, style, and source material, the writer suggests that this indignation is directed at the king whose own love life was so far from the courtly ideal, and yet who exerted such judgment and control over those around him who strayed from those ideals; this, in fact, is more “typical” of the writings in the Devonshire manuscript than less meaningful copy work would be.

Many of these verses “read as miniature volleys in the medieval defense-of-women tradition” (Irish 102), whether through manipulation of the original or simply through selective transcription. The first excerpt is a carefully punctuated verse; alternate punctuation allows for alternate, less laudatory readings of the lines.

Womans harte vnto no creweltye  
enclynynd ys /. but they be charytable

pytuous deuoute ful off humylyte  
shamefast debonayre / a and amyable  
dredeful / and off wordes measurable  
what women these haue not parauenture  
folowyth not the way off her nature (89v)

A series of flourishes on the page then separates this poem from the following, longer poem,  
which begins

ys thys afayre avaunte / ys thys honor  
a man hymselfe accuse thus and diffame  
ys yt good to confesse hymself a traytour  
and bryng a woman to sclaudrous name  
and tell how he her body hath *don* shame  
no worshyppe may he thus to hym conquer  
but great dysclaunder vnto hym and her (89v)

In the context of Henry's court, the transcription may at first seem to have a significant number of referents; in fact, drawing attention to that field may be part of the purpose of the transcription. While the poem may use "traytour" metaphorically, in the sense of a betrayal of the terms of a love affair, many men in Henry's court were branded traitors much more literally for their confession of affairs. The insistence on the dishonor this brings upon the men seems to emphasize this element of the transcriber's cultural context. However, even as the initial reading may seem to encompass any number of affairs at the court, a closer reading begins to eliminate those possible references, one by one. In the case of the Anne Boleyn affair, perhaps the most notable and most immediately destructive of the scandals at Henry's court, not one of the noblemen accused did "confess;" only Mark Smeaton, the musician, offered anything like a confession, and not only had this confession come only after an outside accusation, a circumstance not implied in the dramatic situation of the poem, but it also has often fallen under suspicion of being produced under coercion or torture. Further possible references to disastrous love affairs—the Douglas/Howard exchange or perhaps, to a lesser degree, the more successful marriage between Charles Brandon and Mary Tudor—are negated by the man's accusation of the



woman, when in most of the marriage scandals at Henry's court the lovers stayed remarkably steadfast in their loyalties to one another. The affairs of Henry's fifth queen, Katherine Howard, do fit this description quite nicely—the men involved almost all confessed, and the affairs may partly have been brought to light due to breathtakingly misguided braggadocio—but most study of the Devonshire Manuscript concludes that the bulk of the writing was entered in the 1530s, slightly before Katherine Howard's short marriage to the king.

The point, then, may not actually be that the lyric can refer to so many people, but rather that the lyric refers to essentially no one who has actually been punished for this kind of conduct at Henry's court. Indeed, the only person who has publicly accused women of misconduct which also involved himself is Henry. Further, this reading opens up a new interpretation of the lyric, which does not, explicitly, refer to the cause of the shame as an affair outside of marriage. I suggest that one reading available to the contemporary audience would have understood this verse as referring to the very public trial of Katherine of Aragon, through which friends of Katherine could well have interpreted Henry as admitting that he was, figuratively speaking, a traitor to her, to his fraternal obligations, and, in the view of many, to the Catholic Church. Connected to the first poem, this second emphasizes the importance of perspective—of remembering who is controlling the narrative.

This reading, then, introduces a much greater logic for the stanza that follows:

To her nay / yet was yt no reprefe  
for all for vertue was that she wrowght  
but he that brwed hath all thys myschefe  
that spake so fayre / & falsely inward thought  
hys be the sclawnder as yt by reason ought  
and vnto her thanke perpatuel  
that in suche a nede helpe can so well ♫(89v)

In another context, the claim that the female lover is blameless because “all for vertue was that she had wrought” would be practically nonsensical. The writer could argue in the woman's

defense that she acted from love, that she acted naively, or that she acted with good intentions, but none of those would erase the inherent sin, for the Early Modern mind, of an affair outside of marriage, whether the woman in question was married or not. The poem could, in a contrasting interpretation, be read as implying that the accused woman is innocent, and the man is spreading a false tale, thus absolving the woman of blame. The poem does not, however, explicitly exonerate the woman; it only explicitly condemns the bragging man. Still, then, in the case of Katherine and Henry the lines take on their clearest and most reasonable rhetorical shape. The lines charge the general hypocrisy of men, certainly, but they also code a charge of singularly catastrophic hypocrisy against the man who would control the system.

The poems which are entered next, on 90r, have already been discussed in the opening to this work, and I wish here only to add the final entry on the page to that context and discussion:

Alas what shuld yt be to yow preiudyce  
yff that a man do loue yow faythfully  
to yowr worshyp eschewyng euery vyce  
so am I yowrs and wylbe ueryly  
I chalenge nowght of ryght / and reason why  
for I am hole submyt vnto yowr service  
ryght as ye lyst yt be ryght so wyll I  
to bynd myself were I was at lyberty (90r)

While most courtly love lyrics also act as poetry on courtly service, in this case there is particularly “little...that strictly necessitates an eroticized reading of the stanza in isolation...if one temporarily disassociates the language of service from its figurative, eroticized form...the lines sound equally as a profession of political loyalty” (Irish 105). The entry, then, may serve two distinct purposes in the context of the accompanying lines of female virtue and the larger subversive context of the manuscript. First, the poem defuses some of the resistant energy of the earlier verses. In this way, it both appeals to Henry’s vanity and protects the less acceptable energies preserved in the poem. Second, though, the poem may, to the informed reader, offer an

even further criticism of Henry, who has condemned faithful women who were also faithful to him, in service.

That these entries are made following several blank pages further emphasizes that this grouping on the page is more than economy or necessity; the transcriber wants the three poems read together, but also maintains their separation through the use of a single flourish between each set of lines. The flourish, it is worth noting, looks at times not unlike the hands digraph “Th.” While our own understanding would hold flourish and initial as largely separate symbols, the Early Modern system of signifiers was more fluid and more flexible. The consistency of the form of this flourish encourages interpretation of the symbol as both a mark of separation and as a potential initial. Perhaps the writer aims to attribute the lines to the edition of Thynne from which they are consistently taken, or perhaps, if earlier analysis has correctly supposed that this hand copies work which had already been transcribed/composed by Thomas Howard in the Tower, the hand instead aims to record that attribution. In either case, the flourish provides an important key to these sections, strengthening their connection to the earlier Douglas-Howard exchange.

Several more blank pages then separate these entries from the next set of lines entered by TH2, but the scribal hand, the theme, and the source material all construct connections between the entries, as, indeed, does their position which, though separate from each other, is more extremely divorced from the rest of the text.

How frendly was medea to Iason  
In conqueryng off the flece off gold  
howe falsely quyt he her trewe affection  
by whom vycorye he gate a~~h~~ he wold  
how may thys man for shame be so bolde  
to dysceve her that *from* hys deth and shame  
hym kepte and gate hym so great pryce and name (91r)

The criticism of the unfaithful lover is both typical and topical, particularly when that lover is a famous, but compromised, hero who has tarnished his reputation by failing to value his wife appropriately. Indeed, so long as these entries were made after the Douglas-Howard affair, the implicit criticism of Henry already has two strong referents. The mention of the conquered fleece of gold may be seen as a sidelong allusion to the triumphs of the Field of Cloth of Gold, where Katherine of Aragon was Henry's celebrated consort. Further, Katherine was acting as regent during the English victory at the Battle of Flodden; Henry quite literally "got victory" from her. However, Medea is not herself an uncompromisingly virtuous character, and the murmured charges of witchcraft against Anne Boleyn make her an equally likely candidate for the readers' recollection as they engage with this verse. Both women could also be viewed as having gotten Henry "great pryce and name": Katherine through her diplomatic connections and the humanist strengths for which the court became renowned under her co-reign, Anne through her role in establishing Henry as Head of the Church in England and for furthering that same humanist reputation. The poem implicitly participates in the traditions the king himself had established, which claimed that only the true lover was truly noble, but it turns those conventions against both the mocked Jason and the king who has abandoned the ideals he once created.

From the mythical, heroic generalized plaint on Medea and Jason, though, the transcriber moves into a first-person quotation from Chaucer, and one of the few which does not require any manipulation to serve the thematic ends of the grouping. The complaint is originally spoken by a woman, and the complaint is against men, rather than women.

for thowgh I had yow to morow agayne  
I myght as well hold apryl from rayne  
as holde yow to maken stedfast  
all myghty god off treuthe the souerayne  
wher ys the truthe off man who hath yt slayne  
she that them loueth shall them fynde as fast

as in a tempest ys a rotten maste  
ys that a tame beest / that ys aye fayne  
to renne away whan he ys lefte agaste (91r)

Changeability becomes here a masculine trait, rather than a feminine—or, at minimum, it becomes a trait that is true of men, and women become the party victimized by men’s fickleness. The subject, in an immediate sense, is more clearly love than in some of the other entries, though the larger criticism of men’s fickleness and breaches of truth still seems, thematically, to relate to Henry, as well. The poem that follows, then, maintains the speaking “I,” but also moves into critiques that are less definitely posed in terms of love and, if not about love, are also more threatening and more immediate:

yff yt be so that ye so creuel be  
that off my death yow lysteth nowght to retch  
that ys so trewe and worthy / as ye se  
no more than off a mocker or a wretch  
yff ye be suche yowr beaute may not stretch  
to make amendes off ss so crewel a dede  
Auysement ys good before the nede (91r)

The first lines clearly establish the speaker’s fealty and desert; he or she is “trewe and worthy.” However, the unperceptive and ungrateful object of the speaker’s complaint does not demonstrate appropriate value, instead thinking no more of the speaker than of some “lower” person. Certainly, the language of courtly love and courtly service overlap here; further, the poem reflects some of the tensions which caused courtiers to push back against Henry’s increasing centralization of power, particularly the sense that this placed their value down among the other subjects, rather than granting them greater scope. The fifth line then may imply a gendered subject that counters the usual slant of this section of entries, since the “beaute” that fails to cover these failings may seem likely to be intended as a feminine attribute. However, the larger context of the poetry has established a female voice for this hand, and no explicit language here reverses that attribution.

The passage then continues onto 91v, but in the entries on 91v the writer changes the separating and distinguishing flourishes used in the earlier sections. Instead, the writer shifts to a series of less-formed dashes as flourishes—some hook, and one includes a loop at its left end, but the formation that resembled the digraph is now gone from the hand's marks. Perhaps mimicking Howard's alteration of Chaucer to strengthen the associations between the two sections, "Shelton alters the pronouns in Pandarus's conversation with Criseyde to turn the application of the lines to her own circumstances" (Remley 56-57). If Shelton earlier copies the Douglas/Howard exchange, with its many references from the 1532 Thynne Chaucer, as an act of resistance against Henry, then these later transcriptions from the Thynne may operate in a similar vein. Drawing on the same themes and the same lovers, Shelton may also use the shift in her writing hand to signal the connection. The attributive marks between these stanzas further the link, whether the "Th" digraph reinforces the connection to Thynne or to Thomas Howard. In these poems, though, Shelton also makes great use of her established strategy of slippage in spelling and meaning:

Wo worthe the fayre *gemme* vertulesse  
 wo worthe that herbe also that dothe no bote  
 wo worthe the beaute that ys routhlesse  
 wo worth that wyght that trede eche vnder fote  
 and ye that ben off beauty croppe and rote  
 Iff therwythall in yow be no routh  
 than ys yt harme *that* ye lyuen by my trouthe (91v)

The woe/woo slippage is particularly noticeable in this passage, especially following a page full of excerpts on the untrustworthiness of men. Once more, the "I" and "you" of the poem remain ungendered, and the context may offer the only indication as to a speaker. The poem which shares this page, then, builds off of these themes and techniques.

for loue ys yet the moste stormy lyfe  
 ryght off hymself / that euer was begonne  
 for euer some mystrust / or nyce stryfe

there ys in loue / some cloude ouer the sonne  
thereto we wetched women nothyng conne  
whan to vs ys wo / but wepe and syt and thyngke  
our wreake ys thys / our owne wo to ~~de~~ drynke (91v)

If the reader has assumed “woo” for “wo” in the preceding verse, then this poem revises that impression—here, the more obvious sense is woe. However, the more subversive sense may be “woo”—that is, that this poem may point out the lie of courtly love. Under the terms of the system, wooing is offered to a woman as a tribute; however, in fact, the woman has little power in the relationship, and her reactions may be determined by any number of factors far outside of her emotions or even her control. Certainly, the trail of Anne Boleyn and the accusation of Margaret Douglas made quite clear that courtly gestures of love, offered to a woman, could easily become the source of weeping and “wreake.”

This defense of women throughout this section is based in a traditional understanding of certain valuations of privilege and of religious right. The poems’ defenses of love offer strong echoes of many of Henry VIII’s own verses, composed largely at the beginning of his reign and examined in the next chapter. While I will next explore the purpose to which the young king put such poetry, the echo here I think emphasizes the note of indictment that hand TH2 has integrated throughout her selections. In echoing Henry’s own sentiment, the courtiers coopt his subversive resistance and make it their own, and they imply that this appropriation is necessary precisely because the king has failed his own standards. Henry has supplanted the traditional rights of both the church and the aristocracy, and the verses that seem to bear clearest relation to the events of the Douglas-Howard affair frequently express resistance to this usurpation. In the focus on claiming the primary of a vowed marriage, the writers reinstate certain religious “truths” as beyond the reach of the king—significantly, the same category of “truth” which has driven the king to redefine the religion of the kingdom. In a focus on the obligations of courtly

service, the writers express both resistance to newly imposed norms and resentment at the exploitation and abandonment of a supposedly reciprocal arrangement.



## VI. The Court of the King Writ by the King Himself

In January 1510, Henry VIII surprised his new queen and her ladies, “appearing unannounced in her Chamber at Westminster with ten of his companions dressed as Robin Hood’s men” (Streitberger 67). Detailing the innovations of the surprise performance, Streitberger notes the “elements of breaching ordinary decorum, concealed identity, and surprise” (69). Henry’s increasingly personal participation in the masque reflected the larger influence of his personality on all elements of court life—and, ultimately, on England. Henry was changing the particular investment of interest reflected in the masque; as Streitberger argues, speaking specifically about the revels of 1510, “the interests of prestige diplomacy were being served, but the manner of their presentation, emphasizing participation by the king and his friends, personalized diplomacy *in a manner calculated to overwhelm*” (69, emphasis mine). Henry’s revels were designed, like all court entertainments under all kings, “to signal two separate yet related functions, for the royal household was at the same time a domestic and an administrative organization” (Streitberger 5). Thus, in these early masques, Henry set the tone of his new administration through the performance that would come to be seen as an essential characteristic of Tudor monarchy.

On one hand, such entertainments “expressed the character of the king—his religious preference, social ideals, athletic ability, cultural refinement, wealth, and generosity” (Streitberger 5). Henry emphasized, through his early masques, his spontaneity, youth, and ostensible accessibility. However, as Streitgber adds, “as the head of a household that governed the realm, his ceremonies, spectacles, and revels were public and so expressed the character of the state itself” (5). Through this lens, the king’s control of the masque emphasizes his aims to expand his control more generally. The changes which Henry VIII wrought to the masque

entertainments reflect the tension of law and social code that characterized the Henrician era: Henry aimed to expand his control through every possible avenue. However, in response, his courtiers would find themselves confronted by constraining and conflicting interpretations of the legality of Henry's aspirations and of their own obligations to the court and the country.

That Henry was already planning a character of state that centered more thoroughly on him, personally, and through which he planned to overwhelm his opposition, is apparent even as early as his coronation oath, which he tried to alter "to emphasize the primacy of regal authority" (Herman *Poetrie* 23). Alice Hunt has usefully discussed the complex dual ideation of coronation to the late Medieval and Early Modern governors, summarizing that "the doctrine of divine right...pledged the already-sacred nature of the king and the legitimacy of his rule but...did not alter the ceremony's insistence on transformation throughout anointing or its political and cultural prominence." (Hunt 12-13). Because of the rules of hereditary monarchy, that is, "the king was king before the coronation...the Church now had to signify, rather than render; its function was to make visible and tangible the divine power that had already been granted" (Hunt 13-14). This complicated interplay of divine right and symbolic act were at work in every country whose monarchy rested on hereditary monarch; in England, though, a third factor was also in play: "at the coronation the king's oath was sworn and thus the constitutional purpose of the ceremony remained paramount" (Hunt 14). However, in his first thoroughly public performance, Henry attempted to change that oath, making even the constitutional element instead a marker of his rights and his divine power.

The oath which Henry attempted to avoid swearing was a 300 year old contract between the king and those he governed, written during the reign of Edward I and used for his son's

coronation. Hunt outlines the purpose and the importance of this oath for England's constitutional, hereditary monarchy, as it

defines, and limits, the king's powers in relation to past and present laws, and his power over laws that shall be made subsequently during his reign. It is the contract between king and clergy, king and people, king and law, and ties him to promises for which he can subsequently be held accountable. (Hunt 26)

By the coronation oath, the king acknowledged his place as below the law and his purpose as serving the people. The oaths he swore in the coronation meant that he "was placed, by this wording, below Parliament and its law-making capacities. He promised to strengthen and defend laws that his people had already made and will make" (Hunt 27). From our modern, retrospective position, Henry's resistance to such an oath is hardly surprising, given his basic megalomania. In this case, his alterations were, in fact, much in line with the basis he would use for essentially every major change he would bring to England during his reign: they focused on his conscience and his power. He added to the promise to "mayntene the lawfull right and the libertees of old tyme" that he would do this insofar as such were "nott preiudyciall to hys Jurysdiction and dignite ryall;" he would "kepe all the londes honours and dignytes" which were "nott preiudiciall to hys Jurysdiction and dygnite ryall and fredommes of the crowne of Englund" (Legg 240).

However, at the beginning of his reign, Henry often found his more extreme efforts, including this attempted change, thwarted (Herman *Poetrie* 23-26). Perhaps because of these limitations, or perhaps because his strategies of control were more successful when aimed at altering social codes (Herman *Poetrie* 26), Henry still "ascended the throne as the darling of the humanists" (Walker 5). Admittedly, the grandiose claims of perfection made by diplomats, courtiers and poets "were...stylized and conventional[;]... [a]scribing to a new prince the sum of all intellectual and physical excellence was a commonplace of political eulogy" (Walker 9-10). The particular energy with which the people accepted Henry, though, and with which he

responded to them, indicates that at least some of those initial hopes were seen as fulfilled in the new king.

The fruits of the first ten years of Henry's reign, certainly, reflect a culture whose participants believed themselves in possession of a fairly "good" king, particularly in light of the common wisdom that "good kings did not need to be perfect, only to be willing to listen to the criticism that would reveal and correct their shortcomings" (Walker 11). In the early years, Henry was careful to at least perform the model of the young ruler, advised by sage, more experienced councilors. Even in 1517, Erasmus's praise of the king is particularly effusive, and so particularly poignant with the hindsight of history:

what chiefly commands my approbation is this, that whereas, being gifted with an extraordinary clearness of mind, you have no lack of wisdom yourself, you still delight in familiar converse with men of prudence and learning, and most of all with those who do not know how to flatter. (Erasmus "Henry VIII")

The idea of good counsel was central to the tenets of good kingship, as Erasmus's letter and Walker's analysis emphasize. Particularly pleased with Henry's advancement, this same year, of his friend Thomas More, as Erasmus expresses in another letter to Ulrich von Hutten (Erasmus "von Hutten"), Erasmus closes his letter to Henry VIII by calling Henry "the most intelligent, the most unspoiled, and the most successful of all living monarchs" ("Henry VIII"). While such effusiveness was part and parcel of interactions with royalty, Erasmus's letter seems devoid of disingenuity or distancing techniques. Further, Walker attributes to exactly such positive perceptions the fact that, in the early sixteenth century, "a generation of politically active individuals grew to maturity secure in the knowledge that England was indeed a stable polity in safe royal hands" (13). The widespread acceptance of the king as a "good" king was, in fact, essential to the discontent that would follow as that perception changed.

The long tradition of interpreting courtly love lyrics in terms of political resentment emphasizes that courtier-poets chafed at social as well as legal restrictions. Returning to the masque as a site of practiced power, a relevant addition is Skiles Howard's analysis of dancing and festivity in the Henrician court as "a privileged site for the production of hierarchy and gender difference" (17), placed "at the center of the constellation of nonverbal practices that consolidated political power in the sovereign by performing the work of social stratification" (17). Howard, though, approaches this technique from the perspective of the courtiers upon whom it is imposed, rather than interrogating the motivations of the imposing sovereign. Henry was shifting the social code to privilege his own power, and "behaviour became a new heraldry by which the courtier created his nobility and signaled his allegiance" (Howard 19). Brian Lockey emphasizes this point, acknowledging that "traditional blood links were replaced by a new chivalric code of virtuous service to the sovereign and kingdom" (34). Educated poets, then, found themselves in the impossible position of believing that service to the kingdom, under Henry's increasing despotism, necessitated displeasing the king, even as the shifting social code emphasized service to the king as the primary site of privilege.

Henry's understanding of law as dependent on his conscience and subject to royal interpretation seems evident from even his earliest actions, even if initially manageable. Henry VIII's own early lyrics reveal similar aims to his early revisions to the masque, and to that first, failed attempt to alter the English legal tradition in his own interest. Like the bridges of preserved practice Henry used in his masque, his early poems "directly respond to the anxieties caused by the crowning of a new king whose policies and personality differ radically from the previous monarch's" (Herman & Siemens "Introduction" 6-7); they served as an outlet, "establishing his independence from Henry VII's policies...[and] articulating as forcefully as

possible that he, and only he, rules the land” (Herman & Siemens “Introduction” 7). Through his verse and performance—and verse as performance—Henry used enough tradition to establish his reign as a continuity within a larger historical arc, while introducing innovations and manipulations always designed to privilege not only all royal power, but specifically Henry’s power. Herman and Siemens explicitly make this connection, as well: “Like Henry’s masques and disguisings, his lyrics also constitute vehicles for depicting the hierarchy of the court and for both defending and reinforcing the power of his monarchy” (“Henry VIII” 15). From early in his reign, Henry uses every element of royal performance at his disposal to respond to the limitations of the law upon his power and to manipulate social and legal codes in his own favor.

This manipulation is subversive in its modes and in its aims. Henry wishes to manipulate the current system, working with the established tools of poetic expression, to overthrow that system, reestablishing power according to his design. In several works, Peter C. Herman analyzes Henry’s various poetic strategies, contextualizing each choice politically. Herman, together with Ray Seimens, argues that, in most of his love lyrics of the 1510s, “Henry is drawing upon and manipulating the generic conventions of the courtly love lyric to provide an acceptable face for marital relations, which themselves are suggestive of national political strength, stability, and Henry’s ability to deal with political discord” (“Henry VIII” 21). Such a strategy combines the conventional equation of marital stability with national stability with a reworking of the privilege generally afforded the speaker of Petrarchan love lyrics to accommodate royal authority. However, even claims of national stability can be deployed subversively, as Henry aims to supplant the extant, constitutional system with a more absolute monarchy.

The bulk of Henry’s surviving poetry is recorded in BL Additional 31922, which “dates from c. 1515, when Henry VIII was twenty-four years old.” (Stemmler 98). Aside from the

physical evidence that the manuscript was bound by 1522, from earlier works (Siemens “Lyricist” 147), the dating is also reinforced by “the topicality of some songs which are related to specific events of this period, a time of frenetic festive activity” (Rupp 106). In this manuscript, for those verses which Henry composed, “attribution to ‘The Kynge H. VIII.’ ...is centered at the top of the leaf on which each piece begins” (Siemens “Lyricist” 139). Siemens observes that this attention-grabbing style “sets Henry’s works apart from that of others collected in the manuscript” (Siemens “Lyricist” 139); the style also distinguishes Henry’s works by highlighting their separation from the more communal nature of wider manuscript production. His texts are set apart from “the tradition of adaptation and re-adaptation out of which many of the lyrics in Henry VIII MS have come”; they are more specific to the moment, the court, and the author (Siemens “Lyricist 141). This aggrandizing style also, though, distinguishes Henry from other kings and from his predecessors on the English throne; Rupp observes that, of the Humanist kings of the sixteenth century, only Henry was actively “promoted as a composer” (Rupp 107). In addition to emphasizing his status above other English composers and the talents as a composer that set him above other kings, Henry’s choices in his poetry emphasized the shift from his father’s court; his lyrics reflect the style he designed to show that he “would have a distinctive, novel cultural style...that he would prefer younger persons, generally of a less austere and sober demeanour, and different kinds of recreation” (Carlson 241).

All of Henry’s poems in the manuscript emphasize courtly love, youth, or the pastimes associated with each. When joined to Henry’s frustrated attempts to explicitly redefine kingship, what emerges is a manipulation of these tropes to work his redefinition through other ends. Rupp observes that the manuscript is “embedded in a courtly world, participating in and at the same time producing this world.” (108); Jeffrey outlines the process by which “Henry’s courtly

theatrics effectively strip the earlier French literary conventions [of courtly love] of their irony, play out polite and public flirtations as private fantasy, then legislatively normalize the consequences” (527). That is, Henry’s masques and poems use the subversive, resistant privileging of love and youth—and the often martial themes associated with their intersection—“to define a certain social group, its practices and codes of behaviour and allow...its members to perform their community” (Rupp 109). Because Henry’s definitions are not yet the dominant ones, “Henry’s songs not only figured as instruments producing community, intimacy, or as a way of asserting the King’s competence and power, but they also functioned as media of social criticism and expressions of discontent” (Rupp 111). Thus, Henry not only participated in but also partly created the system of poetic subversion which would later be used to express resistance to his ideas—or at least, codified the form it took during his reign.

In “Thow that Men Do Call It Dotage,” Henry, by assuming the position of the lover and thus imbuing it with that royal authority, asserts that “[t]he person who disdains love (and by implication the chivalric activities of the lover) has lost his place in the aristocracy: his disdain marks him as a peasant” (Herman *Poetrie* 29). Since the king has privileged the conventions of the courtly love lyric, to refuse participation in the chivalric expectations of the court is to refute one’s own nobility; Henry supplants the older advisers of his court by reworking tradition to privilege his own youthful activities. The poem opens with by supplanting the common definition of an action with the king’s own: “Thow that men do call it dotage. / who louyth not wantith corage” (1-2). The traditions of courtly love are both altered and made central to the definitions of courtly masculinity; twice in the short lyric, the speaker emphasizes that love is necessary to courage, and vice versa, adding to the first line a reassertion that “loue maynteynyth all noble courage” (13). Courage is a necessary element of contemporary views of masculine



performance as bound with martial prowess; Henry then narrows the definition of the true lover and the true courtier by claiming that “who loue dysdaynyth ys all of the village” (14). The effect is doubled—the courtier who disdains love is no true courtier, and so love is ennobling. Further, though, love can be read as disdaining those of the village, and to be of the village is to disdain love, reciprocally. Thus, the rhetoric of courtly love is inherently inaccessible to those of lower rank.

The first line of the poem, then, necessitates that those who “call it dotage” are inferior to the courtier who affirms the king’s system of courtly love; those who disagree with Henry’s definitions of roles and power are undermined and excluded from the power system. They prove their unworthiness as counselors when they disagree with Henry, rather neatly eliminating the necessity of listening to dissenting voices. Stemmler has analyzed a similar thread in “Whoso that wyll for grace sew,” where “[t]he speaker sues for the lady’s grace...[but] this sterile commonplace...is followed by a lively attack on the detractors of love whom Henry denounces as envious hypocrites” (Stemmler 98). This process of discrediting those who do not fit into the system of courtly love is more than rhetorical posturing when the composer is a king, as is emphasized when Henry asserts his own will in the final line, “Chaunge who so wyll I wyll be none” (20). While his performance of power may not face some constraints, Henry shows his resistance in his verses, and clearly indicates that, as he grows into his power, he has no intention of becoming more biddable or more complacent.

Henry then furthers the extension of royal power by not only defining nobility in terms of successful service by also subtly asserting his own omnipresence and omnipotence in “Hey Nony Nony Nony Nony No!” In this early poem, Henry carefully limits the uses of his power to relatively benign observation and commiseration: he hears his lamenting subject, but “She had

nott said./ but at abrayde./ her dere hart was full nere” (46-48). The king/ speaker then observes the lovers’ reunion even though he claims that “They day thay spent./ to ther in tent. /In wyldernes alone” (55-57). In the poem, the male lover’s sudden appearance to comfort his despondent female counterpart offers “a sense that the royal speaker can observe his desiring subject(s) without revealing his presence, and then, through an act of will, of power, suddenly make things better” (Herman & Siemens “Henry VIII” 24). In keeping with his investment in always expanding such power, though, Herman and Siemens also show how, in later lyrics, “[t]he underlying implication...[becomes] that this power can be used for other, less benign purposes as well” (“Henry VIII” 24). In these early manuscript poems, though, Henry more subtly outlines the terms of his power, always returning to tropes of youthful love in his resistance to his more mature, cautious advisors. The king is an observer of all things, even of those who are alone, but his observation leads, at most, to the happy reconciliation of a disordered relationship—his expression of power is limited and benevolent, but it is power, nonetheless.

Henry’s expressions of power are, also, not always so subtly approached, even though he uses the tropes and traditions of youth to code some of his most resistant themes. Pairing the two lyrics “The Tyme of Youthe Is to Be Spent” and “Whoso that Wyll All Feattes Optayne” reveals the strong thematic connections between his lyrics on youth and those on love, each of which privileges the energies and courtly recreation which separate Henry VIII’s new court from that of his father. In “The Tyme of Youthe,” Henry asserts his own good judgment even as he makes apparent concessions to the wisdom of his elders. He asserts that “The tyme of youthe is to be spent/ but vice in it shuld be forfent” (1-2). However, his next lines do not bow to the outside judgment of his anxious counselors. Rather, he continues that “Pastymes ther be I nought

trewlye/ Whych one may use. and uice denye./ And they be plesant to god and man” (3-5).

Henry himself, not some outside figure, notes those pastimes which are suitable; further, he already asserts, by association, his knowledge of God’s will, as he knows what is pleasant to Him. These acts also include some behaviors about which his counselors had expressed reservations; one of these pastimes is explicitly “featys of armys” (7); he includes, more generally, “actyuenesss” (8). Ultimately, the royal speaker ends his poem with the declaration that “Vertue it is, then youth for to spend./ In goode dysporttys whych it dothe fend” (11-12). Thus, Henry asserts his royal power to declare what is virtuous, regardless of others’ arguments; he also, however, is still acknowledging the importance of avoiding vice and seeking that virtue. The poem demonstrates a fine balance between increasing assertions of royal prerogative and still necessary assurances that the king will practice the “correct” values. Although there are plenty of acts of definition in the short poem, by which Henry determines the shape of courtly behavior, he still seems to speak as an act of justification to some other who might disapprove of his actions.

This balance continues in “Whoso That Wyll all Feattes Optayne,” where the thematic concern is more with love than with youth, insofar as the two are ever separate when the young king is the known author. As in “Thow That Men,” the speaker asserts an interdependent relationship amongst love, courage, and nobility. The opening verse announces

Whoso that wyll all feattes optayne.  
In loue he must be *withowt* dysdayne.  
For loue enforcyth all nobyle kynd.  
And dysdayne dyscorages all gentyl mynd. (1-4)

Once more, the lover who acts correctly is necessarily “gentyl,” and he who is gentle will necessarily act correctly. Further, this gentleman will then be able to act in the correct and courtly manner, obtaining “all feattes” and acting with appropriate courage. Henry tells his

audience that “loue encoragith. and makyth on bold” (7). To be bold and accomplished is to be a gentleman, and to be these things depends upon correct performance of courtly love, as well. In all of these things, the true courtier will perform the correct terms of service. Thus, in opposition to the ideals of instruction and guidance which those counselors who kept him from altering the coronation oath put forward, Henry offers a vision of service and courtly entertainment, with himself at the center defining those who surround him.

The poem continues with a particularly nuanced statement of Henry’s ideas of love and the gendered performances of love that he uses to define his court. He writes that “loue ys geuyn. to god and man. / to woman also. I thynk the same” (9-10). These two lines are particularly complicated by Henry’s use of “I tyink.” In one sense, Henry’s thinking this so may make it so—that is, the king defines the terms and speaks with God’s voice, so his belief is necessarily correct. However, the other sense of “I thynk” is one of uncertainty—that is, the speaker uses the construction to signal something that is actually less certain than a belief; it is instead a postulation or a possibility. Is Henry saying that love is the same for both men and women, and they may act by the same rules and be ennobled by the same terms? Or is he saying, with a slight but significant difference, that man and God act by the same terms, and that it is possible for those terms to apply to women as well? The woman of “Hey Nony Nony Nony Nony No” loves truly and is rewarded for her fealty, but she has little agency—she obtains no feats, that is, but only waits and is rewarded. However, these terms of service are also acceptable in some versions of masculine performance of courtly love—that is, that patience and loyalty may be rewarded over more active pursuit. This, though, may be where Henry’s definitions create the divide that will so trouble courtier poets like Wyatt and Surrey—according to the definitions provided by his poems, it seems that women and men may love the same, but the man’s part lies in action and feats while

the woman's lies in loyal, patient chastity. When, then, Henry later demands patient loyalty without action from his male courtiers, he pushes them into positions that he himself has feminized.

Together, these two poems provide clear examples of the terms by which Henry used youth and love as outlets for resistance, using these traditions as resistance against the traditions that were imposed on him. Siemens calls such work "an act of poetic self-justification, an address of the young lover that Henry really was at the time, to the aged disdainers...opposing his actions" (Siemens "Lyricist" 154). After all, "[i]n the relationship of youth and age, it is youth who is subservient; in the relationship of the lover and the disdainer who thwarts the efforts of the lover, it is the lover who is subservient." (Siemens "Lyricist" 154) However, Henry overthrows these modes of subservience; "he brings a political weight not typically available to the youth or the lover but only to the king, one who is truly in command of all subject, including the disdainers" (Siemens "Lyricist" 154). In fact, Siemens observes specifically the subversive elements of his process; he says quite explicitly that, "[a]s Henry adopts these poetic personae, he also allows himself a voice capable of subversion, a voice in an artificial though well-accepted discourse through which aspects of reality can be discussed." (Siemens "Lyricist" 154). However, Siemens ends his discussion of this early poetry with this tantalizing observation, shifting his focus without engaging the aims, effect, and results of this subversive energy. The aim is apparent enough, of course—Henry is generally interested in gaining and centralizing power. The effect, though, is to create a system of coding, wherein youth and love become themes entwined with resistance to larger, older, more established power.

Henry's "Though Sum Saith that Yough Rulyth Me" seems the least subversive and most assertive of his verses, but the likely dates of composition indicated that this vehement assertion

of personal prerogative was, in fact, subversive in some highly important ways. Despite the clear assertions of royal power and prerogative, the poem was composed early enough in his reign that these assertions on Henry's part are not reflective of courtly practice, yet. Indeed, the so-called "minion crisis"—in which several of Henry's close, boisterous friends were effectively banished from court to attempt in an effort to coerce the young king to "better," calmer council—did not occur until after the supposed date of composition for most of Henry's lyrics. Thus, the proud declarations with which Henry opens "Though Sum Saith that Yough Rulyth Me" must be optimistic projections, efforts at resisting the control asserted over him.

Nonetheless, this poem does represent some of Henry's least subtle reminders that the speaker of these verses is also the king. The first lines establish both resistance and the royal voice:

Though sum saith that yough rulyth me  
I trust *in* age to tarry.  
god and my ryght *and* my dewtye  
frome them shall I *neuer* vary,  
thow sum say *that* yough rulyth me. (1-5)

Henry's insertion of his own royal motto in the third line makes the speaker unmistakable, and aligns that speaker with the established systems of power markers in the invocation of a "motto." However, Henry both makes a mitigating addition and sets that addition off in a way that minimizes the effect. By adding "my dewtye" to the translated "Dei et mon droit," Henry suggests his obligations to systems outside his own conscience. However, he simultaneously minimizes that claim, setting it apart from the more important "god and my ryght" by a comma that makes his obligation to "dewtye" appear as a kind of afterthought, perhaps an obligation he will pursue so long as it is not prejudicial to his jurisdiction and dignity. Thus, even as he makes mitigatory gesture towards recognition of those limitations imposed on his will by the coronation

oath and the traditions therein represented, he also offers indications that this limitation is not of real concern.

The resistant tone becomes more pronounced in the second stanza, as the royal speaker levels a clear challenge at those who would limit him, asking:

I pray you all that aged be.  
How well dyd ye yor yough carry.  
I thynk *sum* wars of ych degre.  
Ther in a wager. lay dar I.  
Though *sum* sayth, *that yough rulyth me.* (6-10)

Some of Henry's counselors, of course, could not honestly claim any particularly virtuous youth; this question would be particularly fraught for those advisors who discouraged Henry's military ambitions when they themselves were young men during Henry VII's military campaigns. At best, they become hypocrites who deny the young king the glory they themselves accrued; at worst, the line offers threatening rebuke to those pardoned for fighting against the establishment of the Tudor dynasty. However, the question and wager are also fundamentally unanswerable. Even the most virtuous advisor cannot actually respond by laying claim to greater virtue than the king—the answer *must* be that they were worse in degree, because any other answer claims power and precedence over Henry. This, then, echoes the undermining effect of “Thow that Men”—the councilors only possible response is to declare themselves subordinate to the king, and thus to acknowledge his greater authority. As a response to those who would council him to greater caution, the poem rhetorically establishes the innate superiority of kingly judgment, even as it pretends to acknowledge the subordinate position of youth.

The final stanza is perhaps the strongest, in the context of a series of verses which assert Henry's rights in forceful terms. The king, essentially, prays for those who would oppose him

after he has declared an end to this debate; he then asserts his own identity and primacy, adding a sneer to his final line at the idea that something else could claim the position of rule:

Pray we to god and seynt mary.  
That all amend *and* here an end.  
Thus sayth the king the .viii.*th* harry.  
though sum *sayth that yough rulyth me*. (17-20)

The marked egotism of Henry's careful, repeated references to his own position mark the incaution of disagreeing with him too strongly. However, the very fact that he feels the need to make this assertion so often—and that he finds verse a useful outlet for these assertions—marks the relative weakness of his power at the opening of his reign. He asserts his title because others are attempting to control him *despite* that title. And he makes these assertions through the social force of verse rather than through the legal and governing outlets in which he has thus far been overruled. In his verse, Henry makes the politically savvy decision to rewrite the social rules in order to be able to rewrite the rules of his own position, once his more over efforts have been thwarted.

A natural companion to “Though Sum Saith that Yough Rulyth Me,” reflecting a great deal of the same sort of thematic concern with well-spent youth, is perhaps Henry's most studied composition: the poem/ song “Pastyme with Good Companye.” In general, this poem has been understood as one of Henry's most assertive; Stemmler characteristically remarks on Henry's “intransigence and uncompromising egotism” (101), concluding that “[t]he intimidating question “Who shall me lett?” might have been the motto of his life” (102). Rupp, however, provides interesting counterevidence for this interpretation. Based on the extant versions of the composition, she counters that “Pastyme” “appears to be one of Henry VIII's ‘childhood exercises,’ conducted under the severe eyes of a severe tutor” (Rupp 110). As such, the song is an act of king-fashioning by his councilors, not an act of self-fashioning by Henry VIII—or at



least not entirely or initially. If these more controlling tutors and counselors were indeed involved in the composition of the poem, Rupp argues that they may have thought that “[b]y providing the young King with this material, his innate drive to commit excess would be kept under control and firmly contained according to the rules given by the elders (i.e. the Council)” (Rupp 110). This argument suggests that Henry may have learned some important strategies from his early tutors, quite apart from the lessons on virtuous activity that they wished to impart. By providing a social code which dictated acceptable outlets for resistant energy, expressed in verse, the tutors aimed to control that energy while privileging and codifying their own power. When, later, these same early councilors resisted Henry’s first attempts to expand his power, he took his lessons in verse and shifted the narrative so that the privileged power became his.

Rupp points to the ways in which even this early verse, composed for a more authoritative audience, could be manipulated to express resistance. The opening lines of the poem declare:

Pastyme *with* good companye  
I loue and schall vntyll I dye  
gruche who lust but none denye  
so god be plesyd *thus* leue wyll I (1-4)

While the initial assertion of the young king’s (or perhaps, as Rupp argues, still king-to-be’s) is clear, strong, and immovable, the final line does seem to slide into a more mitigated claim. The king loves good company, so long as God is pleased. However, Rupp points out the doubled interpretation that the verse leaves available.

If a tutor is around who wants the youngster to have some socially acceptable fun, this line would probably be read as a conditional clause...If the severe tutor is absent, a more daring interpretation could be desirable, uttering a request along the lines of “God had better be pleased with the King’s actions.” (Rupp 110)

Since Henry will, eventually, come to apparently understand his own conscience as the best indicator of God’s will, the lines now read as more resistant than the original audience could

have known. From the hand of the younger, less powerful Henry, though, the poem instead reflects his neat balance of self-assertion and self-justification.

The final verse of the poem essentially summarizes many of Henry's strategies in his early compositions. He asserts the freedom of choice, his own youth and energy, and his own innate virtue—but the lines also contain self-justification and seem to indicate response to some kind of external critique. The poem ends:

Company *with* honeste  
is vertu vices to ffile.  
Company is good *and* ill  
but euery man hath hys fre wyll.  
the best ensew  
the worst eschew  
my mynde shalbe.  
vertu to vse  
vice to refuce  
thus schall I vse me. (21-30)

On the one hand, the declarative “schall” and the repeated claims to virtuous inclination are characteristic of Henry's royal voice. On the other, though, the entire final stanza has the sense of a schoolroom promise of good behavior—every man has their choice, the king is one of these men, and he promises to choose correctly. The correct delivery, though, with emphasis on the self-declarative lines, could slant the poem into greater power, even as another delivery which deemphasized those lines makes the tone more pedantic and platitudinous. This lyric, then, whose first strong lines have often led to interpretations that associate the poem with Henry's strong self-will, may instead be read as one of the earliest of his efforts at expressing subversion designed to overthrow the powers that currently limited him, where his dissent can be masked by something as small as the alteration of tone.

In summation, in his reworking of fairly traditional love lyrics and verses on youthful pastimes to incorporate a royal voice, Henry “uses the persona of Youth to pre-empt or answer

criticism of how he chooses to conduct his life, but goes against generic expectations of Youth by asserting his royal right to do exactly as he pleases” (Herman & Siemens “Henry VIII” 30). By privileging the position of Youth or of the youthful lover, Henry slowly erodes the position of his sage advisors; by casting true courtly behavior in terms of loyal service, he undermines the ability of the courtier to express dissent. By slowly altering the social codes of the early sixteenth century to suit his purposes, Henry sets the groundwork to later be able to modify English law, removing the support system for the traditional defense that would stand in his way. Henry, then, primarily uses his early verse to show the shape he will later impose on the law. Conventions are used in whatever manner is most useful to him; royal power is omnipresent; the interpretation that most privileges Henry’s specific royal authority is the most correct interpretation. The responses of Henry’s courtiers work with and through the law quite differently. However, like Henry’s reactions, the lyrics of the court poets are all shaped by their understanding of their own privileges, whether poetic or political. As these poets become increasingly aware of the threats to those privileges, they also become increasingly canny in their responsive techniques.

Even as Henry aimed to expand his control, the poet-politicians of his court responded by reinforcing their own understanding of their social role as an essential and advisory one, complicated by the contemporary debate over the role of conscience in the law. Although increasingly limited by confining definitions of treason and by Henry’s attempts to define nobility through loyal behavior, courtier poets worked to create a space in which noble behavior was instead defined through noble use of language, even in opposition to the king. At the beginning of his reign, Henry was to some extent forced to allow advising voices; by the time he tried to eradicate them, the social system he had helped shape gave them too much power to permit their complete erasure. In fact, even in Henry’s last, most desperate years, Surrey’s trial

highlights the acceptance of poetic language as privileged language, never brought before the legal court despite its clear potential as evidence. Nonetheless, canny courtiers aimed to cloak their dissent with some reasonable deniability, using genre, the distancing claim of “translation,” and doubled language to protect poetry of protest.

In 1533, as he finally succeeded in ending his first marriage and simultaneously redefined the English church and monarchy, Henry ultimately did revise the coronation oath, using the terms he had attempted to insert over two decades before. In addition to this revision, he “commissioned a new coronation painting for the palace at Whitehall,” painting over the past with his new terms and definitions and redefining his role even as he tried to overwrite his first marriage (Hunt 19) When Henry first attempted to revise his coronation oath and was thwarted, he turned to subversive expressions to privilege his own power, gradually accumulating power by revising the terms of the social contract. In 1533, when he revised the oath, the King Henry no longer needed outlets for subversive expression. His courtiers took on that system and used it for criticism of their king and his court, but he himself had become, in word at least, a theoretically absolute power in the land, and subversive self-expression no longer served his performance of that power.

## VII. Traditions of Resistance and Subversion

The change of perception of Henry's reign over in the twenty-five years after he apparently stopped writing poetry was such that the opinion that he "had degenerated into tyranny was, by 1547, a commonplace of opinion both at home and abroad" (Walker 5). These perceptions "had as much to do with the character of the sovereign and the processes of political participation he favored as with the operation of his judicial system" (Walker 6). In his original performance as king, Henry emphasized spontaneity, implying accessibility; although the element of power was always present, it was also carefully contained. Perhaps what followed was merely the inevitable course of his original ambition, perhaps it was the result of several various disappointments, not least in his search for an heir and the decline in his personal health. Whatever the case, in the 1530s,

[w]hen Henry, by launching his Great Matter, embarked upon a political journey a sizeable proportion...of his advisers did not approve of, and which was evidently against the wishes of the mass of his people, he was forced to abandon...those models of behaviour that gave his rule cultural legitimacy. (Walker 13)

In fact, in light of this public resistance, Henry tried to reemphasize his willingness to accept and follow good counsel; Walker notes, for example, that "[t]he proclamation proscribing erroneous books and biblical translation, issued on 22 June 1530 stressed that the King was acting, not on his own initiative but after widespread consultation" (13). However, such stress was only necessary in light of his subjects' increasing anxiety that the king was acting in his own interests and on his own initiatives.

This popular anxiety was in some ways a particularly English problem; Sir John Fortescue's seminal and widely known *On the Laws and Governance of England* (1468-71) takes care to emphasize that "the king of England is not able to change the laws of his kingdom at pleasure, for he rules his people with a government not only royal but also political" (17).

Foucault's more generally European focus emphasizes the royal prerogative and privilege, explaining the Early Modern view that "crime attacks the sovereign: it attacks him personally, since the law represents the will of the sovereign; it attacks him physically, since the force of the law is the force of the prince" (47). This latter approach was the more typically Henrician view; whether because of paranoia or simple ego, Henry, later in his reign, tended to see any dissent as a direct attack on his authority and so on himself specifically. This is highlighted by the statutes and legal apparatus of the second half of his reign:

The various Acts of Succession of the 1530s, and the 1534 Treason Act...combined to make it an offence merely to suggest that the King was a tyrant, usurper, or heretic; while the inquisitorial apparatus of the Privy Council and Thomas Cromwell's secretariat investigated any hint that reached them of sedition gossip or case-putting. (Walker 24)

Further, the oaths attached to the Acts of Succession "specifically stated that outward subscription to his claims was not enough: English men and women must swear the oaths without inward grudge or scruple" (Walker 24). The general inclination towards such control is also evident in the attainder against Thomas Howard, as outlined in other chapters. That English subjects saw these acts as indeed reaching beyond the bounds of royal authority is reflected not only in the literature of the time, but almost certainly in the 1547 Treason Act, as well. One of the first pieces of work Edward VI's government privileges is a return to a less comprehensive definition of treason, one resting thoroughly on the older traditions of English law.

The response of the aristocratic court poets to these repressive measures was shaped by their understanding of their social roles. In keeping with Humanist tradition as expressed by Erasmus, Castiglione, and More, educated nobles "believed themselves to be educated for public service, believed that they could persuade princes, in Church and state, to reform" (Bridgen 4). As a result, learned aristocrats "used their writings, and the various forms of license that their culture allowed them...to influence government policy through the medium of eloquence"

(Walker 15). In fact, Henry's early approach to government and privileging of Humanist education had only reinforced these social tropes, and "the habit of speaking boldly on issues of principle and practice and the capacity to cite hypothetical cases and apply biblical and classical examples to illuminate contemporary politics were ingrained in elite English culture" (Walker 23). True, texts like More's *Utopia* and Castiglione's *Courtier* emphasized the inherent conflict wherein "Humanist ideals...present an impossible choice: the impulse towards the active, political life will lead to excessive compromise while the ideals of radical rationalism seem impossibly remote" (Norbrook 23). In Henry's court specifically, though, councilors had felt some security in their ability to level reasonable critique. The legislation of the 1530s suddenly made different claims; "with the coming of the Supremacy...the bulk of Henry's law-abiding subjects ha[d] to learn that his wrath might be turned upon them for merely speaking their mind or exercising their conscience" (Walker 21). The abstract conflict of Humanist thought crystallized in a real conflict between self-interest and social interest. Suddenly, law restricted the ability of the male poet to shape social change and offer critique, at the time that social codes and long-engrained practice seemed most to demand that he exercise precisely those abilities.

Complicating this tension of law and social expectation was the contemporary conflict between the several English courts of law. Though difficult to apply in each specific analysis of English court verse, the debate is nonetheless relevant to contemporary understanding of what the law meant, how it functioned, and why it should be respected. Based on the sheer age and widespread acceptance of the customs of English common law, Fortescue states simply that "there is no gainsaying nor legitimate doubt but that the customs of the English are not only good but the best" (27); best because they have not required alteration and so must be nearest to "natural" law. This understanding was widespread amongst an English populace that tended to

take a great deal of pride in the function of their legal system. The relationship, though, of common law to “natural” law was quite complicated:

While common lawyers sometimes spoke of natural law or the law of reason as the basis of positive law, they more often viewed English custom as its primary foundation ... Civilians saw equity, the civil law, and the canon law as direct derivations from a universal natural or divine law. (Lockey 148)

This resulted in different ideas, then, of how law should be considered and evaluated in terms of personal conscience or absolute right and wrong (Lockey 149). For example, the common-law jurist Christopher St. German argued in a 1528 tract “that conscience, the personal expression of conformity with natural law, should depart from positive law and defer to natural and divine law in cases where the positive law contravened the latter two laws” (Lockey 154). This left the disturbed courtier in a complicated legal and social space—convinced, in most cases, of the validity of the king’s rule and of English law, but conflicted by the King’s own alteration of English law, partially enabled by his frequent claims to pangs of conscience. Thus, the subversive energies of the poetry created by these courtly makers was sometimes quite intentional—aiming to overthrow restrictions imposed by authority—and at other times may not have seemed subversive to the original author at all, who instead saw himself as grounded within a long-established tradition of speaking truth to power.

Wyatt’s and Surrey’s expressions of their expectations of tradition are particularly useful in understanding the response of the courtier-poet to the changing atmosphere of the late Henrician court. Wyatt’s poetry reflects a relatively successful negotiation of his own tenuous position, while still expressing strong political dissent. Surrey’s verse and history combine to offer a portrait of personal, political failure combined with the literary success that preserves both Wyatt’s and his own voices of dissent. Both men, however, also owe a debt to an earlier courtly poet: John Skelton. Skelton’s early work offers a clear contextual precedent for the



privileging of poetic power which has more generally been assigned to Surrey's project. Further, Skelton's early work was, in some ways, bolstered by the king's own poetic efforts, even though Skelton's attempts to remain in royal favor were ultimately unsuccessful. Together, the three men's work provides a map of the role of poetry in Henry's court: first, openly resistant but functioning in an approved space, then, denied power and rejected, and so moving underground into more subversive expressions before, finally, making an open statement of resistance against the king that was contemporarily limited in success but ultimately worked to preserve resistant voices for modern audiences.

In the introduction to their edited collection of Renaissance letters, Robert J. Clements and Lorna Levant include the almost warning note that, in reading the collection as a whole, the "servility imposed by patrons on their greatest Humanists, writers, artists, and musicians emerges in a disturbing dimension" (Clements & Levant xii). Indeed, though the collection engages more with the political servility of Henrician artists, specifically, than with their artistic obligations, the comment nonetheless forewarns the reader of the shock of seeing, for example, Wyatt's groveling, self-serving letter to Henry VIII, apparently written immediately after Anne Boleyn's execution. In the letter, Wyatt claims to have warned the king that Anne was "a bad woman" whom the king should not marry (Wyatt "Henry VIII"). More shockingly, he then goes on to accuse Anne of likely sleeping with a groom, after leaving her bed mid-tryst with Wyatt himself, and claims that within the same week he "had [his] way with her, and, if your Majesty, when you banished me, had permitted me to speak, I should have told you what I now write" (Wyatt "Henry VIII"). The surprise of the letter, of course, depends entirely on the accepted content of Wyatt's poetry. Setting aside the general modern exoneration of Anne Boleyn, how to reconcile this damning letter with the content of critical poetry like "Who List His Wealth and Ease

Retain” or even the less political, but still far from servile, “Whoso List to Hunt”? The answer lies in a complex negotiation of simultaneously separating and relating political, personal, and poetic strategies as understood and used by the Henrician court poet.

Norbrook emphasizes the importance of starting from the precept that Renaissance artists were aware of, and resistant to, the problems of too much or too strict a structure; in response, “they developed elaborate strategies to try to preserve a degree of independence for their writing” (5). Repression is, of course, often the ground for creativity; drawing on Foucault, Butler articulates clearly the essential claim that “the culturally contradictory enterprise of the mechanism of repression is prohibitive and generative at once and makes the problematic of ‘liberation’ especially acute” (126). The conditions of repression, of “servility,” imposed by the patron system and by royal authority create the conditions necessary for the artist to imagine a privileging of his or her work. Further, as the example of Wyatt makes clear, the structure of authority makes room for such privilege. As a poet, Wyatt can, with at least a measured sense of security, voice uncomfortable ideas; as a subject in the Tower, he cannot. As Bakhtinian and Foucauldian theories both emphasize, this creation of a privileged creative space is designed to create a protectiveness of that space in the otherwise oppositional subject: the court poet’s position is also necessarily entwined with the social structure he or she critiques. Thus, the Early Modern court poet tends to emphasize a desire for a “purer” social order, rather than one entirely new, and to portray his or her desires for a different order not as subversive, but as restorative; there is, in the poet’s understanding, a natural order, and the work calls for a return to that order. The thought is revolutionary, then, in the original rather than the modern sense—a turning that brings the culture back to the ideal beginning, rather than to a new order entirely.

However, such a perspective does not lessen the subversive drive of the work; the poet claims that the divisions or circumstances that exist around the court are not “natural,” and the push for a return to the natural order necessarily calls to destabilize the artificial order which has taken its place. In Bakhtin’s thought, the Carnavalesque energy cannot be wholly contained, and loses its energy when official outlets attempt to co-opt it in order to control it; these energies resist control both in that they are outside of official containment and in that they cannot be effectively used by official power. In Foucault’s model, authority fails to fully acknowledge that discipline of unauthorized voices creates solidarity among the repressed rather than respect for the oppressor (63). In either case, however, the space that Henrician authority tried to leave as an outlet for criticism worked only so long as Henry VIII himself could be trusted to respect that outlet—and, even then, likely never as fully as Henry would have desired. As the king became more repressive, though, these energies began to solidify against him and to seek, by necessity, more subversive outlets.

Poetic subversion in Henrician England is cultural subversion, then, but both of a highly particular and of several broad types. Specifically, this cultural subversion exists within and because of a structure that necessarily mixes the personal, cultural, and political: the court poet’s home and primary household is often also the seat of cultural and political power. As Norbrook puts it, “English poets who are now normally thought of as the authors of courtly love lyrics were interested in Petrarch as a political poet;” the courtly love lyric was naturally a political creation as well, because the world of the courtier poets was one that combined the personal and political as a matter of course (Norbrook 40). Generally, though, the complications of this social-structural position for the poet create very diverse responses, determined by each poet’s goals, but then filtered through his strategies, social position, and audience.

Surrey and Wyatt, in their later works, are both building from a framework that had been extensively shaped much earlier in Henry's reign: partially by the king's own insistence on courtly love rhetoric, wrapped in poetry, as discussed in the previous chapter—but also partially by John Skelton. Greg Walker convincingly argues that John Skelton's sometimes subversive, often explicitly critical poetic voice is actually in service of his own personal advancement (53), but W. Scott Blanchard usefully points out the real, radical energies that nonetheless exist in Skelton's works (126). The most useful criticism likely combines both approaches: Skelton's personal motivation is best articulated as creation of a privileged space for poetic authority, specifically in the interest of gaining a more privileged position himself. However, his miscalculations in anticipating royal opinion in these attempts actually imbue his work with much more effective critical power, both subversive and overt. Particularly later in his career, Skelton's voice is partially aligned with the commons—albeit only partially—"despite his conservative understanding of class structure" (Blanchard 128-129); as such, his works become potential agents for social change beyond the scope of the poet's intentions. At the same time, as Walker claims, Skelton "is perhaps unique among poets in the depth of his concern for his own status and reputation" (53). The validity of the claim rests on that "depth;" certainly other poets cared a great deal about their social status, particularly in terms of power and privilege, but Walker makes a fair argument in his articulation that perhaps no other courtier poet cared so deeply about their personal authority as vested in their poetry, specifically.

As Blanchard articulates, Skelton's "traditional understanding of class structure urged him to anchor himself in the clerical estate, while the very threats to that class moved him in a more radical direction toward the autonomous and secular institution of 'authorship'" (136). This problem of social identification was complicated by the fact that, particularly after his dismissal

from his post as Henry's tutor, "Skelton was not a regular contributor to Court events, nor a fixture of the social life of the Court" (Walker 51). As a result of his frustrations at this exclusion,

Skelton pursued in his poetry both directly and indirectly his own conflicting attitude toward dissent, a theme which lies beneath his specific complaints against a clergy reticent to enforce its traditional privileges, a nobility which had neglected its responsibilities, and a commons which was experiencing repressive measures under Wolsey. (Blanchard 126)

His own dissent was naturally privileged in Skelton's work and thought; he saw his own struggles with the ruling class as resulting, generally, from their lack of appreciation for his poetic authority. This personal dissent, though, may have also enabled Skelton to seriously view complaints and problems from other factions which he might have more easily dismissed had he ever gained the privileged position for which he aimed. This complicated balance of complete investment in and deep suspicion towards the class and social structures of Henrician England led Skelton to "[t]he various strategies he deemed necessary to empower himself as a dissenting member of the clerical class and to distance himself from his utterances through the construction of provisional authorial personae [, which] show him struggling to define his social role" (Blanchard 126). Blanchard's argument, then, ultimately leads back to Walker's central claim: Skelton's struggles with authority are all essentially about his own desire for authority.

This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the complicated and diverse positions from which Skelton criticizes and praises Wolsey, which Walker characterizes as a complete, but also completely explicable, reversal of argument (1-3). These apparent incompatibilities are explained by Blanchard in terms of technique and strategy: Skelton's "poetry is reactive, responsive to specific historical situations which demanded idiosyncratic strategies" (127). Both Walker and Blanchard agree, then, that Skelton's "Speke, Parott" is best read through a more complex lens than afforded if the work is considered straight critique. Walker explicitly argues that "Speke,

Parott” is a bid for royal attention (60), an example of Skelton “indulging in the politician’s art of telling his intended audience what he believes that they want to hear” (82). In this situation, the satirist “would have to be extremely careful in treading a path across the minefield which lay between fruitless obscurity and the sort of overconfident iconoclasm which would provoke a disastrous official reaction should he overstep propriety” (Walker 68). As a result, Skelton assumes the extra distancing measure of the Parrot as narrator, spending several lines through the poem on the complex characterization of this poetic voice. The resulting voice is, indeed, clear in its condemnations. However, the strong invective that the modern reader sees in the lyric should be mitigated, in Walker’s analysis, by the understanding that Skelton is primarily aiming to please Henry through a critique of a counselor who Skelton believes to be out of favor (Walker 67). Even with that belief, Skelton’s position is tenuous enough that he finds it safer to criticize power from the additional remove of the assumed narrative voice.

Jane Griffiths, however, complicates Walker’s assessment of the essentially self-serving nature of “Speke, Parrot,” claiming that “although [Skelton] supported the traditional faction, a close examination...indicates that his purposes in doing so were radical, rather than conservative” (13). While I would counter that Skelton’s primary investment in self-interest mitigates the radicalism of his positions, Griffiths’s points about his work in shoring up poetic language are nonetheless central to understanding the sense in which Skelton’s work was subversive, even if his understanding of his aims was not always as radical. As she argues, the critique of Wolsey is less important than the critique of the pedagogical methods he favors: “the new methods of language teaching championed by Skelton’s opponents—with an emphasis on imitation rather than grammar—is treated as analogous to Wolsey’s appropriation of royal authority: both are viewed as attacks on the poet’s traditional freedoms” (Griffiths 13). The poet

resists such methods in favor of an argument that “to teach by grammatical precept [is] the path to the fluent and interpretative reading necessary for a full understanding of the poet’s apocalyptic warnings, and thus for the possibility of political change” (Griffiths 13). In such a reading, the use of the Parrot’s voice becomes a more straight parody, a distancing choice only insofar as it distances Skelton from those he opposes. Like Blanchard’s arguments, though, this disagreement with Walker works best when instead reconciled: Skelton does want a particular kind of political change, but that desired change largely focuses on a more central role for and greater recognition of his poetic voice, and he attempts to enact that change without abandoning the few protections still afforded his precarious position.

Skelton’s aim may also have seemed less subversive from his own perspective, in the early court and knowing the king had been educated in the worth of the courtly poet. Carlson describes Skelton’s effort as one which aimed “to define what it meant to be a poet, or what it ought to mean: the poet was parrhesiast, or truth-teller, no matter the circumstantial difficulties.” (Carlson “Skelton” 240). That role, though, was meant to be accepted and traditional, rather than subversive. In fact, Skelton was part of Henry’s early poetic project; however, elements of Henry’s own early subversion countered the aims of the older poet. The tension between the two may be captured in the contest memorialized in “Against Garnesche,” wherein Skelton was “called upon by his king...to take part in a public slanging match at court....against a person who stood distinctly high in the sovereign’s favour, and who represented his sovereign’s own revelrous social proclivities in ways that Skelton could not” (Carlson “Skelton” 240).<sup>40</sup> Skelton is typically vitriolic, and his most overt and outrageous criticisms are certainly leveled at his poetic

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<sup>40</sup> The form and details of the original exchange are unclear. Carlson characterizes the works as a public flyting (240), but further detail is difficult as Garnesche’s half of the exchange did not survive and Skelton is not always the most reliable self-reporter.

competitor. However, the characteristics of Garnesche attacked by Skelton, and the values he assigns to, and uses to bolster, his own merit, reflect a tension between Humanistic ideals and Henrician performance.

Carlson links Skelton's particular concern with Garnesche not only to the man's personal traits, but more importantly to the worth which Henry conferred upon the young courtier. To some extent, this is a function of Skelton's ego, and the performance itself demands a voice which positions itself as superior to the competitor. However, criticism of Garnesche is also criticism of the man who values him, in the older tradition of speaking truth to power:

Garnesche's knighthood may be taken to represent the ascendance of the culture of revelry that characterized Henry's kingship: what the king valued (and so rewarded) was costly, lavish distraction, of the sort that Garnesche helped to supply with his various associates, rather than the martial valour, say, that had ordinarily been recognized with battlefield dubbings to knighthood, or the financial prudence that had characterized Henry's father's regime. (Carlson "Skelton" 247)

Garnesche was knighted and rewarded partly for his work on entertainment during Henry's early French campaigns, none of which were very successful and all of which seemed more targeted at presentation than actual martial action. Thus, even as Henry claimed to prioritize a kind of martial manliness, the holes in his conception were already being revealed and, Skelton implies, exploited by courtiers like Garnesche. While Henry's verse rebelled against the advisers who would keep him at home, his actions suggested that the performance of the martial was more important than the result. Skelton, then, critiques the king's investment in performance in a show of resistance to power, but his aims are encoded in the power system as he understands it. While Henry may understand Skelton's subversion as resistant or, in Griffith's phrase, radical, Skelton himself may instead present his work as the traditional and natural voice of the critical poet-courtier.



Skelton's first entry in the series opens with mockery of faux-martial aims and, it seems, of the entire system of allusion and performance based in Arthurian tradition. After addressing his challenger, he follows with a series of allusions to ignoble or apparently invented knights:

Sith ye have me challenged, Master Garnesche,  
Rudely reviling me in the king's noble hall,  
Such another challenger could no man wish,  
But if it were Sir Termagant that tourneyed without nall;  
For Sir Frolo de Franko was never half so tall.  
But say me now, Sir Satrapas, what authority ye have  
In your challenge, Sir Chesten, to call me a knave? (I.1-7)

The mocking allusive names continue throughout the first poem; Skelton uses the final two lines as a refrain,<sup>41</sup> suggesting the particular importance of his reference to Satrapas and Chesten.

However, the knights also seem to be Skelton's invention, implying the fictive nature of Garnesche's own nobility. "Satrapas" may also have the sense of deriving from *satrap*, perhaps indicating that Garnesche's worth is only in his toadying to Henry. Again, then, this name may also call into question the merit of the figure to whom Garnesche pays court, even if the greater criticism is levied on the subservient.

In the next entry, the structure is essentially maintained; here, the refrain is "Ye capped Caiaphas copious, your paltock on your pate,/ Though ye prate like proud Pilate, beware of checkmate." (II.6-7). In this entry, however, the refrain does not shift in the final stanza. Instead, the poem is followed by a short couplet: "Myrres vous y, / Look not too high" (II. 43-44). While the comparisons to Caiaphas and Pilate certainly escalate the criticism, in an Early Modern court, these references seem also to reinforce the Satrapas/ *satrap* correlation. Further, the implicit extension beyond these figureheads is even more ambiguous in this case. The ruler who controls a satrap may be good or bad; the ruler who controlled Caiaphas and Pilate must be either

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<sup>41</sup> In the final stanza, this refrain is replaced with "Boldly bend you to battle, and busk yourself to save: / Challenge yourself for a fool, call me no more knave!" (I. 41-42)

Tiberius—a great military mind and competent ruler, albeit outshined by his predecessors—or the infamous Caligula. Although this early in Henry’s reign the comparison would not have been necessarily fair, there is also the possibility that Skelton, as Henry’s former tutor, knew enough of his pupil’s temperament to fear the potential aptness of the comparison. However, Skelton only opens up the possibility of this comparison, limiting his overt resistance to the choices that have led to advancement for persons such as Garnesche. Throughout, then, he prioritizes the choices a king makes as the target for poetic criticism.

The third poem maintains Skelton’s more general strategy—he continues to mock Garnesche as a faux-knight and dwells, characteristically, on highly physical imagery and insult. At one point, Skelton diverts into eleven lines of invective containing fourteen epithets against Garnesche:

Thou toad, thou scorpion,  
Thou bawdy babion,  
Thou bear, thou bristled boar,  
Thou Moorish manticore,  
Thou rammish stinking goat,  
Thou foul churlish parrot,  
Thou grisly Gorgon gleimy,  
Thou sweaty sloven seamy,  
Thou morrion, thou maument,  
Thou false stinking serpent,  
Thou mockish marmoset[...] (III. 162-172)

The poem also, though, levels some more specific insults against Garnesche. Whether the young man was as unattractive and unhygienic as Skelton suggests is difficult to ascertain, though it does seem unlikely that Henry, with his mania for cleanliness and glamour, would have favored such a figure. However, Carlson’s history confirms that the less overt insults Skelton lays against his rival are accurate. Skelton includes the biographical detail that:

When ye were younger of age  
Ye were a kitchen-page,  
A dish-washer, a drivell,

...  
Ye sluffered up sauce  
In my Lady Bruce's house. (III. 24-33)

He also references Garnesche's poor appearance at "Guines" and his attempts to seduce a married lady, one "Mistress Andelby" (III. 40 & 56). Carlson confirms the essentials of the biography—that is, that Garnesche was where Skelton says, that such people were also present, and that Garnesche did indeed begin his service as a kitchen page—albeit likely not quite in the terms that Skelton suggests, and rather in the more traditional role of a server in a fairly high-ranking household.

Skelton then avoids the issue of his own heritage, because "he had other claims to esteem...When Skelton develops such indications as he can of knavery on Garnesche's part...these turn out to be matters not of birth so much as of character" (Carlson "Skelton" 248). In contrast to Garnesche's low behavior—dressing inappropriately and seducing married women—Skelton offers his own achievements as evidence of his worth:

What aileth thee, ribald, on me to rave?  
A king to me mine habit gave:  
At Oxford, the university,  
Advanced I was to that degree;  
By whole consent of their senate,  
I was made poet laureate. (IV. 79-84)

In opposition to Garnesche's "threadbare" gentleness (IV.70), Skelton offers his "habit"—earned by merit. "Skelton's alternative to the Thopas-like fancy-dress foolery that he ridicules in Garnesche and Henry's chamber—medievalistic, violent and dissolute—is classical erudition." (Carlson "Skelton" 254). He is, self-proclaimedly, "advanced" to his position, but that advancement is based on talent recognized by "whole consent" *and* by a king. Skelton bases his worth both on popular consensus and on the judgment of a ruler appointed by divine right.

Skelton also opens the poem by saying that he has received the second of Garnesche's "hyime[s]" (IV.2); the detail is interesting not only in terms of simply offering some indication of the proportion of output—Skelton has written four rhymes to Garnesche's two—but also because of the implications thereof. First, the numbers would seem to indicate that Skelton entered the first volley in the challenge, at a minimum. Skelton's first mention of Garnesche's writing is in his third poem; combined with the highly similar structures of the first two entries, this may indicate that Garnesche's first response came between Skelton's second and third poems. Second, and most obviously, the numbering indicates that Garnesche is writing less than his opponent. Finally, Skelton wants to note this disparity; he writes it into his verse and opens with it. Thus, he privileges both his masculine performance as challenger and his performance as poet laureate, capable of greater production than his opponent. He uses the terms of Henry's valuation even as he critiques their application, because his goal is to advance within the space that he understands as already existing for his voice. Skelton understands his position as provided by the kind, but he also implicitly argues that his position could be furthered. He argues for desert of greater power and for a system in which the rational king acknowledges and rewards desert.

Where Skelton's primary concern is establishing respect for poetic voices in the context of respect for his poetic voice, specifically, Wyatt's attempts to privilege poetic voice are less personally motivated. This may seem at first a disingenuous claim; after all, if Skelton could be characterized as the most vitriolic court poet, surely Wyatt would have some claim as the most bitter, and that bitterness often seems to stem from a deep sense of being wronged. In fact, though, when used in service of personal fortune or safety, as his 1536 letter to Henry indicates, Wyatt's writing voice loses much of its irony and wit. This is not the case for most of his

ambassadorial letters, but that only highlights the purpose to which Wyatt most often bent his sharper wit: his bitterness is a tool for social change, to be used in political situations. This characterization should not be taken to mean that Wyatt was not, personally, bitter about the situation at court or his personal fortunes therein. However, unlike Skelton, Wyatt's poetry is motivated less by his social aspirations and more by the problems he sees as a result of his social position—and these problems are largely *not* personal, or, when personal, have implications that affect the country entire. This partially derives from the dissimilarity of the two poets' positions: though both had at best a tenuous hold on continued royal favor, Wyatt's employment was only ever in doubt when his life was, as well. Where Skelton found himself an outsider after a few short years as Henry's tutor, called on only occasionally at the king's pleasure, Wyatt was appointed to a rigorous schedule of diplomatic missions and ambassadorships. Where Skelton commented on major political events with an eye to personal advancement, then, as a matter of necessity, Wyatt comments from within the court circle, on events that affect him personally, in the service of creating a political critique.

Even in claiming a certain privilege for the authority of the poet, Wyatt acknowledges that the voice that tries to subvert the system functions from within, benefits from, and is tainted by that same system. The frustrations and anxiety of that complicity then largely shape Wyatt's work with translation and Petrarchan tropes. By now, the idea that "Wyatt adapted Petrarch's love poems in order to voice his criticisms of the insecure atmosphere of Henry VIII's court" is commonplace (Norbrook 40). However, Wyatt's criticisms have a wider aim than Skelton's, an aim that can be obscured by the differences in the strategies of the two poets. Skelton's subversive energies were largely unintentional; the poet's primary aim was personal advancement, but his poems gained momentum from their larger cultural subjects. Wyatt's

subversive energies are absolutely intentional, but those energies may not always be perceived as cultural forces by the entirety of the audience he wished to reach. In short, the necessity of subversive techniques clouds their success, even as that necessity is reinforced by the response to even these more coded criticisms. Barbara Estrin usefully identifies the inherent subversive energies of Wyatt's work: "*Genre* trouble, the subversions of society, sexuality, and form inherent to the lyric, might ...be connected to the critical presence of the woman in certain poems that critique the hierarchical binarisms of the Petrarchan dyad" (219, emphasis in original). However, in places, Estrin seems almost to argue that this criticism is unintentional or aimed at the Petrarchan woman as female; she explicitly claims that Wyatt moves to silence such female voices (226). Instead, I hope to show that Wyatt was attracted to the genre because of this trouble, and, if his poems sometimes work to contain female voices, the failure of that work is certainly notable and not likely an indictment of his abilities.

Estrin's most useful analysis is of "They Flee From Me," in which she clearly enunciates the woman's assumption of power (220), even comparing the situation to a reversal of 2 Genesis (237). The speaker imagines the woman/women addressed by the speaker as a fickle, wild creature, then remembers an encounter in which his object was more accommodating, before ending with a remonstrance of her "newfangleness." Wyatt's insertion of the female voice is admittedly brief in the poem, but the woman's presence and control are necessarily disruptive to the usual Petrarchan approach. Further, as Estrin analyzes, the central question of the poem focuses the attention on the lady: what is the "this" with which she invites or even challenges the speaker (221-222)? Though Wyatt ends the poem with a more characteristic bitterness, the challenge of the work belongs to the woman. The closing couplet, in its sarcasm, seems childishly limited in its power and scope: "But since that I so kindly am served/ I would fain

know what she hath deserved” (Wyatt 20-21). Though far from one of Wyatt’s most political works, the poem nonetheless does serious subversive work, for a woman speaks, a woman claims some sort of sexual or cultural agency in her interaction with a man, and the male speaker is left with no retort appropriate either to a courtier or to the Petrarchan love poet.

If the opening septet of “They Flee From Me” characterizes the women as animals whom the speaker tames, through the avian imagery, that characterization also clearly indicates a limit to patriarchal order, both in the change in these women/this woman and in the speaker’s passivity. By the end of the poem, the woman is accused of “newfangledness” (Wyatt 19), a culturally specific term that could not be further removed from the earlier implications of wild nature. The speaker’s imposition of will becomes instead the woman’s acceptance of his desire, cancelable at her pleasure. The order which invests the speaker with authority is, then, not stable, but can instead be denied at any time by the “subjects” of the poem. The speaker’s frustration, here, is less that of the controlled courtier and more that of the supposed superior who fails to control. Wyatt, then, seems to be criticizing the court culture through another medium than his often expressed frustrations at the control exerted on him. Through its suggestions of control as artificial and escapable and through its allotment of power to the female subject, “They Flee From Me” highlights the subversive techniques through which Wyatt hoped to express his desire for a less despotic Henrician court and to draw attention to the inherent instability of a repressive order pushed on unwilling subjects.

Likely the most dangerous of Wyatt’s poems are so because of their context as much as their content; the clearest example may be “Who List His Wealth and Ease Retain.” The contemporary context opens up readings which are important for their plausibility to Wyatt’s original audience, even when those readings are not the simplest or most logical available.

Reading the poem in the specific context of the contemporarily recent Treason Act of 1534 highlights a more cautious tone, then, than a more generally political approach acknowledges. Speaking of what has been lost, the poetic voice laments, “My lust, my youth did them depart,/ And blind desire of estate./ Who hastes to climb seeks to revert” (Wyatt 12-14). Negative energy towards the thundering throne is not entirely dispersed in a more conservative, more general reading, but the stanza also emphasizes the injudicious haste of the climber. The speaker has lost something, but the emphasis is not clearly on injustice; there is also an implication the climber has set value on the wrong things. The quintain that most firmly places the “translation” in Wyatt’s contemporary context also further complicates the placement of blame:

The bell tower showed me such sight  
That in my head sticks day and night  
There did I learn out of a grate  
That for all favour, glory, or might,  
That yet *circa Regna tonat*. (Wyatt 16-20)

The reiteration that favor, glory, and might belong only to the monarch does partly level a charge of inconstancy, but the emphasis also serves to highlight the incautious behavior of those subjects who would attempt to claim power or privilege rather than acknowledge their dependency. In this less conventional reading, the last lines of the poem are the easiest to translate in Henry’s favor. When the speaker warns that “Wit helpeth not defence too yerne,/ Of innocence to plead or prate./ Bear low, therefore, give God the stern” (Wyatt 22-25), he does not make any reference to the validity of the pleas for defense or of innocence. In fact, dependence on wit or self-defense is set in opposition to giving control to God. Finally, by aligning the avoidance of royal displeasure with a surrender of control to God, the speaker implies a connection between royal and divine favor.



Of course, such a reading is hardly the most typical or the simplest interpretation of this particular lyric. The importance of the reading, though, is that it is possible. Wyatt's first strategic choice is to cast the lyric as a translation, however loose, of part of Seneca's *Phaedra*; he mitigates that distancing technique, though, by the fairly specific contextual atmosphere of the poem. Equivocation, then, becomes his best defense, if he wishes to create a work that speaks against tyranny without inviting any inescapable consequences. According to the Treason Act, to even imply that Henry VIII was a tyrant was to invite death. However, to imply that all subjects should stand in dread of royal power is not necessarily to level a charge of tyranny. Henry himself, after all, was working to emphasize the importance of acknowledging his absolute power. While Wyatt's fairly frequent imprisonments indicate that the energy of the less charitable reading was likely accessible to all of his audience, the harshest interpretation would almost certainly have led to a charge of treason. Enough creative negotiation exists to exonerate the poet, and even to allow him to remain in royal employ.

One further poem of Wyatt's which touches on both naval and ambassadorial themes should be mentioned: "Some tyme I fled the fyre that me brent." The poem specifically mentions the significant locations of Dover and Calais, tying itself to the contemporary geopolitical landscape in a manner that echoes the highly specific criticisms Skelton leveled against Garneshe. Although not a translation, the poem typifies some of the energies which contribute to the landscape of Henrician poetry. Domenichelli argues that "what is clear [in the verse] is the communication of some authentic experience of some strongly felt emotion linked to the self, to the fashioning of the self through self-expression, the expression of some inner part thus finding voice, and verbal shape, and its proper name" (83). This may be what is clear, but it is not necessarily what is important—particularly not with regard to this particular poem. We can trace

this process in Wyatt's works as a whole—but the creation is not of *a* self, a singular poetic voice. Rather it is of voice which can convey the concerns, anxieties, and values of a particular philosophical and sociopolitical position; yes, that position is occupied by an individual, but the individual aims to benefit by expression in a changing social context, not only by particular advancement. Advancement of one person, even by merit, as Wyatt knew, could easily be reversed; establishment of a system of advancement by merit changed the direction of things. However, as always, he balances his efforts to overturn the system with the prioritization of preserving the resistant voice he was creating.

This balancing act may explain why some of Wyatt's most leveled critique of Henry gained its authority not because of the poet's own strategies, but because of the projects of his admirers after his death. W.A. Sessions analyzes Surrey's participation in Wyatt's literary canonization as an attempt to privilege the power of poetic language; Walker's similar analysis focuses on those privileging efforts as work to create a political tool. Sessions argues that special authority for Wyatt and Surrey in the Renaissance results from the "particular interventionist act" of Surrey's publication of his elegy on Wyatt and his support of Leland's 1542 *Naeniae* (169). Sessions characterizes Surrey's and Leland's responses to Wyatt's death as attempts to articulate the recent changes in their social world (173). Specifically, Surrey wants to claim a special authority for poetic language as language that authorizes and mobilizes "noble" values (Sessions 175). That ennobling poetic language may originate in, and be centered on, the court, but it both transcends the court and moves beyond it into the wider world of England (Sessions 176). As characterized by Surrey's efforts, "Wyatt's labor is...poetic as well as courtly and political; and only the two labors of text and court, language and politics in dialectic, could build new communities, Orphean societies that will function with genuine language and truly precise

communication” (189). Through specifically contextualizing Wyatt’s work as reformatory, Surrey both privileges his own poetic voice and reaffirms the political and cultural worth of poetic voices, generally.

Walker argues that Surrey then moved from this valorization into the potential it opened up to legitimize his own projects. He advances the claim that “[l]ike Wyatt, Surrey deplored the increasing despotism of Henry’s reign and the moral and physical decline of the King himself...Unlike Wyatt, however, Surrey was in a position to do something more substantial about them” (Walker 392). A qualification is useful, here: history shows us that Surrey certainly thought he could “do something more substantial;” whether he would have met with more success had he been less driven by personal ego is an open question, but certainly he was not ultimately any more efficacious in his resistance within his work than was Wyatt. In fact, the same position that allowed Surrey to immortalize his and his fellow courtier-poets’ resistance likely contributed to his personal doom. Surrey’s proclivity to emphasize his own importance was not unlike Henry’s, and in the early to mid-1540s he embarked on a series of projects based on his own importance, including an ostentatious house emphasizing royal heraldry in the glasswork and “grand, self-glorifying portraits” (Walker 383). The result clearly reflects the dangers of straying too far into violation of Henry’s new laws and social codes; as Walker laconically states, “[s]uch ostentatious displays of personal and familial ambition would have been dangerous at any time, but in the last years of an obviously dying King they were particularly ill-judged” (383). This particular series of poor judgments would cost Surrey his life.

Surrey’s arrest and trial were an exercise in the further performance of royal power, a “symbolic humiliation” in which Surrey was pointedly subjected to public humiliation and display and denied the usual rights of the aristocracy (Walker 385). Foucault articulates the

relationship between the political/ personal body of the king and the political/ personal body of the condemned (28-29); the goal of the public trial is to eradicate the potential threat to the body politic of the diseased, traitorous, condemned body. Surrey's trial illustrates Henry's embrace of this philosophy, however he might have articulated that understanding; the trial and punishment indeed "aim[ed]...not so much to re-establish a balance as to bring in play, as its extreme point, the dissymmetry between the subject who has dared to violate the law and the all-powerful sovereign who displays his strength" (Foucault 48-49). If Surrey had aimed at treasonous levels of self-importance, the solution was to erase his aristocratic importance entirely: "The public execution did not re-establish justice; it reactivated power" (Foucault 59). In this case, however, the reactivation of power was hardly as complete as it might have otherwise been; within ten days, the king who had ordered Surrey's execution was dead himself, though Henry may well have achieved his goals in preventing Surrey's undue influence of the ascendant Edward VI.

However, the precise charges and limitations brought against Surrey again emphasize the complicated question of the privileges afforded to poetic voice in Henrician England. Despite the clearly transgressive content of much of his work and its wide availability, "in all the testimonies and all the evidence brought against Surrey at his trial in 1546, at no point did anyone allude to his poetry" (Walker 386). Walker follows this with the somewhat odd and unexplained statement that "[h]ad his accusers had access to his poetic manuscripts, or even to the printed text of his elegy for Wyatt, they would have found ample material from which to fashion charges against him" (386), offering no explanation for the apparent argument that Surrey's poems were not accessible to his accusers. Certainly, the elegy on Wyatt was published and read; further, the prevalence of Surrey's work in Tottel's Miscellany would seem to belie any particular dearth of his work or difficulty of access. Though a comprehensive list of the manuscript copies of his

work exceeds the scope of this essay, there is ample evidence that Surrey's lyrics were widely circulated. The answer to the absence of such evidence, then, may rest in the still present, if increasingly tenuous, privilege of poetic voice even in the late Henrician court.

An analysis of the extreme strategies of dissent which Surrey employed can be offered through his vitriolic "Eche Beast Can Chose His Fere According to His Mind," which a recent edition of *Tottel's* characterizes as "perhaps his most dangerously rebellious poem...certainly his angriest" (Holton & MacFaul 379). Walker likely follows the widest contemporary court reading of the poem in analyzing it as a volley in a continuing power struggle between the Howard and Seymour factions. The lion represents Surrey himself, following the Howard heraldry; the wolf represents the Lady Anne Seymour, Countess of Hertford, Anne Stanhope before her marriage (Walker 388). The wolf characterization rests both on the Stanhope's wolf badge and her Seymour husband's Wulfhall residence (Walker 388). The incident apparently recounted is Anne's refusal of a dance; because of the feud between the two families, "Surrey's invitation and Lady Anne's response were...highly politicized actions, played out in the full glare of courtly attention" (Walker 388). Surrey's response in verse is characteristic of his increasingly volatile responses to any perceived slight to his honor. As Walker characterizes Surrey's actions of the 1540s, "he seems both to have sought desperately to win back a role at the political centre and paradoxically to have signaled his resentment at that exclusion with ever more self-marginalizing acts of bravado" (381). The poem in question, though, may be an even more extreme act than Walker himself argues.

Certainly, Surrey is unlikely to have taken Lady Anne's refusal with any uncharacteristic grace. However, the poem also reaches beyond the anger of this particular noble feud. If taken in the tradition of lyrics where the lover's resentment of the lady is analogous to the courtier's

resentment of the sovereign's control, the poem matches Surrey's oft-expressed anger at his perceived devaluation within Henry's court and by Henry, specifically. Opening with the story of the wolf's rejection of the lion's chivalrous self-presentation, the speaker then characterizes the lion's reaction: "I might perceive his noble hart much moved by the same./ Yet saw I him refraine and eke his wrath aswage,/ And unto her thus he gan to say when he was past his rage." (Surrey 24-26). The lines that follow, however, do not sound like the product of assuaged wrath; instead, they are loaded with implied threats and the outrage of wounded dignity:

How can ye thus entreat a Lion of the race,  
That with his pawes a crowned king devoured in the place:  
Whose nature is to pray upon no simple food,  
As long as he may suck the flesh, and drink of noble blood. (Surrey 29-32)

If no privilege existed to protect the poet, or if Surrey abandoned either of the doubled pretenses of animal vision and lyric on rejected chivalric love, these lines would be a death warrant.

Although the "crowned king" mentioned is almost certainly the Scottish James IV (Holton and MacFaul 379), the implicit threat to Henry is strengthened by the fact that this king had been his brother-in-law, even if it was at the head of Henry's army that Surrey's grandfather gained this triumph.

The poem further ennobles the family history as the speaker recounts and romanticizes the fate of Surrey's uncle, imprisoned for his illicit betrothal to Margaret Douglas, in the lines "for love one of the race did end his in woe/ In tower strong and hie for his assured truth" (35-36). In privileging his relative's choice, Surrey does not directly confront royal authority, but the challenge is certainly implicit. Given the cultural importance of the Douglas-Howard affair to the court, as demonstrated by the Devonshire Manuscript, the challenge is likely also easily understood by most of Surrey's audience. Within this context of challenge that expands beyond Seymour to royal authority, the condemnation of much of the poem takes on a riskier aspect.

Condemning the wolf's haughty response, the lion argues that "I seke my foes: and you your friends do threaten still with warre" (48). Given the king's increasing paranoia and his violent responses to any perceived threats, the charge works far more clearly if leveled at Henry than against the wife of a member of an opposite faction, even accepting the metaphor for the keen insult to Surrey's not inconsiderable pride. Finally, in keeping with the implied threat of the poem entire, the lion ultimately tells the wolf that he "shall be glad to fede on that that would have fed on me" (68). Such invective reflects Surrey's greatest strength and weakness as a poet and politician: although he distances himself from the content with some minor strategies, he still refuses to restrain his voice in the ways demanded by Henry's increasing strict legal and social codes.

In their invocations of traditional elements, Henry's courtly makers sought to establish a precedent for their criticisms of, and reactions against, the king. These larger aims were largely shaped by the perceived decline of the King into despotism. The perception of having lost certain freedoms gave subjects, particularly educated subjects, a clear force against which to use their artistic energies. The subversive energies of a text, though, may also reach well beyond the poet's intent, as in the case of Skelton. Because of the complex interplay of strategy and reception, the most overtly critical texts may have the least intentional energy for social change, while the most subversive texts may have most successfully coded the authors' ambitions to the court milieu. While these forces may have had little immediate effect on Henry's increasing tyranny, the courtier-poets who found themselves limited to increasingly circumscribed techniques for criticism helped lay the groundwork for the ideological investment in intellectual freedom that characterized the English Renaissance.

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