

**Representing Parliament: Poets, MPs,
and the Rhetoric of Public Reason, 1640-1660**

Rory Tanner

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Department of English
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

Abstract

Much recent scholarship celebrates the early modern period for its development of broader public political engagement through printed media and coffeehouse culture. It is the argument of this study that the formation in England under Charles II of a public sphere may be shown to have followed a reassessment of political discourse that began at Westminster during the troubled reign of that king's father, Charles I. The narrative of parliament's growth in this era from an "event to an institution," as one historian describes it, tells of more than opposition to the King on the battlefields of the English Civil War. Parliament-work in the early years of England's revolutionary decade also set new expectations for rhetorical deliberation as a means of directing policy in the House of Commons. The ideals of discursive politics that were voiced in the Short Parliament (May 1640), and more fully put into practice in the opening session of the Long Parliament (November 1640), were soon also accepted by politically-minded authors and readers outside Westminster. Prose controversy published in print and political poetry that circulated in manuscript both demonstrate that the burgeoning culture of debate outside parliament could still issue "in a parliamentary way." Such promotion of productive textual engagements eventually constituted a wider, notional assembly, whose participants – citizen readers – were as much a product of deliberate education and fashioning as they were of the "conjuring," "interpellation," or "summoning" that recent scholarly vocabulary suggests. Following the spirit of reform in the English parliament, and subsequently developing through the years of

partisan political writing that followed, public opinion, like the Commons, established itself in this era as an institution in its own right. These public and private assemblies disseminated the unprecedented amount of parliamentary writing and record-keeping that distinguishes the period under review, and this rich archive provides the literary and historical context for this study.

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Conventions

Outdated spellings encountered in the seventeenth-century texts (excluding titles) quoted here have been modernized where necessary to improve accessibility to the text in view. Old-style dates have also been modernized. Unless otherwise stated, biblical quotations are from the Authorized version (King James), and the place of publication for early printed documents is London. All reproductions of seventeenth-century printed publications included here originate from document scans made available through Early English Books Online (EEBO). Quotations from John Milton's prose are drawn from *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82), which is cited here in abbreviated form as *YP*.

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Introduction: Coming to Terms with Dissent

This is a study of the ways that public political discussions gained legitimacy, sophistication, and participants in mid-seventeenth century England. This advancement will be considered here in relation to two political developments that help define the early modern period, each of which in turn tested the merit and potential of deliberative discourse. First, the English parliament's protracted but ultimately successful shift in these years from "an event to an institution"¹ reflects increasing expectations for deliberative discourse in that "quintessentially public"² but also ostensibly private forum. Second, the notable sophistication of the engagements between political authors and readers within the broader public forum of discussion outside Westminster comes during the revolutionary decade increasingly to justify that external deliberative assembly's later constitution as a "public sphere." The establishment of these two forums follows in order as the later developments in public political discourse are shown in this study to depend in many ways upon parliamentary achievements in the years that led to the English Civil War. Examination of the rhetorical and literary work that supported these developments – including the reform of parliamentary process and the circulation of political writing – reveals the crucial

¹ Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 56. See also Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 3.

² Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, "Rethinking the public sphere," in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 5.

connections between reading practices and public political activity in the period under review.

It has become a commonplace in studies of this period that literature can be found at or at least somewhere near the “epicenter” of the English Revolution.³ But the active exchange between literature and revolution, where “the art of politics was becoming what we would call the art of spin”⁴ and readers might thereby determine their allegiance, was only one aspect of what I suggest was a more basic, more pervasive, and perhaps also more unsettled relationship existing in this period: that between revolution and political discourse. This was an era in which England was fully “intoxicated with language,”⁵ and where politicians, preachers, and authors all strove variously to determine and prove its capabilities, shortcomings, and failures. If the main front of the “war of words”⁶ said to have accompanied the English civil wars was that between textual representations promoting the authority either of the king or of the parliament, then the second front was that which saw the dispute over the capacities of discourse, whether as it issued among MPs in the Commons, or as encountered in writing through scribal or print publication. The body of literature dating to the English Civil War invites its study not only as an arena for testing competing political identities, but also as a means also of testing the productive powers of the language used in political discussion.

This study is divided in two sections, each responding to a line of questioning that arose during England’s revolutionary decade (1640-1650). The first section, comprising

³ Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1994), 1.

⁴ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars : promoting kings and commonwealths in England, 1603- 1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xvi.

⁵ Thomas Kranidas, *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005), 1.

⁶ Elizabeth Sauer, *'Paper-contestations' and Textual Communities in England, 1640-1675* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 10.

chapters one and two, responds to a question posed at the outset of this period: what role should the national assembly at Westminster play in directing affairs of state? (or, in short, *what is a parliament?*) The roles and capabilities of parliament were debated throughout Charles I's reign, but they were seldom more extensively examined than they were during the years that led up to the Civil War. And even though the war ended in victory for parliament, it did not provide lasting stability in the Commons. Questioning of the form and function of England's parliament persisted in the Interregnum and through to the Restoration. Some representations that issued during the upheavals at Westminster – which was effectively London's political centre – cast parliament properly as a deliberative assembly, and one whose dissent from the Crown was legitimated by its members' debate and deliberation. Others reinforced its role as that which had been established under recent monarchs, as an instrument for the furthering – through funding – of the royal will.⁷ Central to this debate were questions of parliament's credibility as a deliberative institution, as critics within and without assessed the reliability of rhetorical debates in returning profitable results in the Commons. Some MPs sought to protect their freedom to express opposition to the king in the Commons' debates. They also sought wider, public approval of the resulting parliamentary decisions.

A rich archive of parliamentary records provides ample material for the first section of this study, which focuses on activity at Westminster during the lead-up to the English Civil War (roughly 1640-1642). Many parliamentary diaries from this period are available in modern editions, and others have been collected in comprehensive volumes of proceedings.

⁷ Chris Kyle, *Theater of State: Parliament and Political Culture in Early Stuart England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 27, cites “the government agenda of pushing through legislation and supply without distraction.”

In particular, the meticulous editorial work of Esther Cope and Maija Jansson has opened up this archive to much fuller study.⁸ The often bewildering complexity of the available parliamentary records is made more navigable by supporting scholarship issuing from the History of Parliament Trust, which supplies member biographies and contextual information pertaining to elections and parliamentary procedures. Recent scholarship has begun the academic work of combining this expanding range of parliamentary materials with literary and rhetorical analysis, although it has tended as yet to address either the early Stuart (1600-1630) or later Stuart (1660-1680) parliaments.⁹ An equivalent study of the intervening years has yet to be published. Absent too is the relevant History of Parliament Trust reference work for this period (1630-1660), which is still in preparation. That this should be one of only two volumes not yet completed in the Trust's survey of English parliaments¹⁰ proves no coincidence, but reflects the period's inherent complexity as England proceeded through personal rule, revolution, republic, and Restoration. This dissertation offers an exploratory account of some significant intersections between parliamentary and literary cultures that occurred during this complex period.

The second section of this study, comprising chapters three and four, responds to a question that follows the first: *what is a public?*¹¹ This second-generation question of political discourse was inspired by the reassessments at Westminster of parliamentary

⁸ See Esther Cope, ed., *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977); Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000).

⁹ For the early period, see Kyle, *Theater of State*, and David Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For the late period, see Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Annabel Patterson, *The Long Parliament of Charles II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ The only other period without coverage in the History of Parliament Trust series (which ranges from 1386 to 1832) is 1421-1509.

¹¹ The question has been posed in as many words also by modern scholars. See Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 8. See also *Criticism* 46 (2004), which issue addresses this topic.

rhetoric, but revised and applied new expectations for political discourse also to broader engagements in print and manuscript between politically-minded authors and readers. If political authority may derive from discourse in the Commons, might it not also derive from similar discourse outside that assembly? Before it could be taken seriously, this broader culture of textually-mediated political debate would need to prove its beneficial effect on London politics. Many of its early critics claimed that it had none. In their own attempts to validate these more public political proceedings in print and manuscript, contemporary authors attended also to the *who* and to the *how* of a public. They voiced new expectations for politically-minded readers as a group capable of judging political affairs, and undertook new efforts to fit them for the fray of political representation and misrepresentation. Extant manuscript miscellanies from this period attest to the great reach of these efforts. The distinct forms of composition, methods of circulation, and ways of recording on display in these documents reflect authors' and readers' preoccupations with the same concerns about language that were aired within the parliaments that ended Charles I's personal rule and began the Civil War. Some miscellany-making practices demonstrate that individual political identity could be shaped meaningfully and thoughtfully through forms of private reading (and sometimes also private writing) that were undertaken within view of a wider literary political culture. In this way, these documents constitute textual supports to their compilers' participation in an early "public sphere" – an entity whose emergence and characteristics have been much debated in modern scholarship.

Later questioning of the public sphere necessarily follows the influential study by German sociologist Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1961, trans. 1989). In a passage cited often by subsequent critics, Habermas articulates a "basic blueprint" of "the bourgeois public sphere," wherein it is considered as a collective

of private people come together as a public... [who] claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason.¹²

These terms – bourgeoisie, commodity exchange, social labour – attest to their author's writing from within a Marxist tradition. But subsequent scholarship maintains that the “bourgeois” public sphere may be interpreted in a “less exclusively economic” sense of the word, connoting an urban, post-feudal citizen.¹³ Consideration of such citizens' literary and rhetorical, as well as their economic, conditions shows the channels of communication through which the exercise of reason was made public. As his English translator notes, Habermas himself distinguishes between two types of public sphere (or, *Öffentlichkeit*): the political public sphere (*politische Öffentlichkeit*) and the literary public sphere (*literarische Öffentlichkeit*).¹⁴

The term “public sphere” has been well worn in circulation since its original coinage. The definition that informs this study derives from scholarly commentary that has followed Habermas's initial discussion of the concept. David Zaret's definition of the term as “a public body of citizens conferring in an unrestricted manner about public issues”¹⁵ provides a starting point, with the verb “conferring” open to particular exposition. Craig Calhoun

¹² Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 27.

¹³ Craig Calhoun, “Introduction,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 42.

¹⁴ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, xv.

¹⁵ David Zaret, “Religion, Science, and Printing in the Public Spheres in Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Calhoun, 212.

adds further qualification in his claim that “a public sphere adequate to a democratic polity depends upon both quality of discourse and quantity of participation.”¹⁶ Michael Warner identifies the form of such participation in the answer he offers to that key question – *what is a public?* – in book *Publics and Counterpublics*.¹⁷ Warner’s description of the formation and constitution of publics applies strikingly to the consideration in this study of the circulation in manuscript of political poetry. This dispersed but strongly and persistently interconnected body of text plainly demonstrates how reading practices shaped political identity and participation. Influences on Habermas’s developing thought cited by Paul Yachnin and Bronwen Wilson in their *Making Publics* project¹⁸ add further complexity to the composite definition sketched here. In particular, Hannah Arendt’s early discussion of *Vita Activa* identifies rhetoric as the medium for the public sphere: “to be political,” she writes, or “to live in a *polis*, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence.”¹⁹ The more detailed description after Habermas of an ideal public – one that is contingent upon a specific quality of state-centered discourse, and whose participants actively participate in the networks through which such discourse circulated – provides an enriching context for that earlier sense of a “people’s public use of their reason.”

But despite increasing awareness in modern scholarship of the qualities of a public sphere, the circumstances of its formation remain unclear. The phenomenon has been described, but its early mechanisms have yet to be fully identified, and their operation understood. Many modern studies resort to superstitious or supernatural terms when describing the making of an early modern public sphere: publics are by various accounts

¹⁶ Calhoun, “Introduction,” 2.

¹⁷ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*.

¹⁸ Paul Yachnin and Bronwen Wilson, eds., *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe : People, Things, Forms of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 26.

“conjured,”²⁰ “invoked,”²¹ or “summoned”²² by the writings of authors who, like “sorcerers,”²³ “call into being”²⁴ the audience they imagine. Through its exploration of the popular political literature that circulated in the period under review, this study uncovers a more complex and more deliberate formative process, whereby authors wrote to promote their audiences’ capabilities through media literacy rather than assuming the pre-existence of an ideal reading public. This approach may be observed in the work of numerous contemporary authors, in writings that cross various genres and audiences. Just as importantly for this study, it may be identified also in the activities of their readers, whose handling and recording of political literature in many cases reflects the “active uptake” crucial to the process of making publics.²⁵ The specific attention to the relationship between author and reader in this period shows the kinds of literary processes that supported wider responses to political media during the English Civil War.

Before public discourse was established and legitimated as a component part of English politics,²⁶ the authority of the discourse among MPs in the House of Commons required a vetting of its own: how could the proceedings of that unruly assembly, tellingly

²⁰ Ann Hughes, “Areopagitica and the Parliamentary Cause,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 212; also Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 105.

²¹ Mark Knights, “How rational was the later Stuart public sphere”, in Lake and Pincus, eds., *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, 263.

²² Wes Folkert, “Pietro Aretino, Thomas Nashe, and Rhetorics of Public Address,” in *Making Publics*, eds. Yachnin and Wilson, 68.

²³ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 106.

²⁴ Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, “Rethinking the public sphere,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. Lake and Pincus, 6.

²⁵ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 88-89.

²⁶ Scholars have posited various early outlier or precursor publics, these confirming an “ebb and flow” to the development of the early modern public sphere. By the late 1670s, however, political events strongly suggest a wider acceptance of “the normative value of the public sphere;” see Steven Pincus, “The State and Civil Society in Early Modern England: Capitalism, Causation and Habermas’s bourgeois public sphere,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere*, ed. Lake and Pincus, 217.

characterized by Archbishop Laud as “that noise,”²⁷ be thought to result dependably in legislative progress? In the parliaments of the early 1640s, legal questions of the constitutional authority of the Commons to check the king were often overtaken by questions of in-House procedure as MPs tested decisions through rhetorical debate. This medium had for years been in a state of transition: “parliamentary speech changed from Elizabethan Parliaments, dominated in large part by rhetoric and eloquent orality, to the short and sharp-witted speeches of the ‘vipers’ that Charles complained about in his closing address to the 1628-29 Parliament.”²⁸ His resentment was so deep that he did not call another parliament for over ten years. MPs’ deliberations again elicited the King’s complaint in the next parliamentary session, the “Short Parliament” (April – May 1640). This assembly’s debates were perceived by Charles as unnecessary “delay” of his requested supply, which was in his eyes as good as “denial,” and thus sufficient cause to dissolve parliament. Quick to learn, the MPs who assembled soon afterwards in the Long Parliament (beginning November 1640) moved for procedural reforms that would promote, and thereby also legitimate, the process of the debates in the Commons. These efforts reflect the belief among Short-Parliament MPs that they could serve a much greater purpose than that for which they had been ushered into Westminster that spring. The first chapter of this study identifies the great extent and the lasting significance of these MPs’ attention to the medium in which their political gains were achieved and maintained: the language of parliamentary debate.

²⁷ Quoted in Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Religion, The Reformation and Social Change* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 346.

²⁸ Kyle, *Theater of State*, 5.

A renewed interest in parliamentary poetry followed the return to parliament after Charles's personal rule (1629-1640). The work of representing parliament was undertaken by poets whose verses were "dropped in the Parliament house,"²⁹ "affixed"³⁰ in public places, and circulated through other forms of scribal publication. Readers encountered satiric "speeches" in verse, ballads mocking parliamentary decision, and cautionary verses to MPs. Such parliamentary writing granted significant access to citizens curious of the goings-on within the Commons. Whether it actively supported or questioned MPs' efforts to establish the legitimacy of parliamentary process, this body of parliamentary writing demonstrated that issues arising in the Commons were disseminated more widely within an emerging literary culture on the periphery of Westminster.

Although protected from publication by longstanding parliamentary privilege, the walls of Westminster proved porous as Londoners' interest in the Commons' proceedings increased along with the tension between that assembly and the King. For citizens outside, a growing number of texts attested to the activity at London's political centre (although not always accurately). For politicians inside, this same group of texts gave unmistakable expression to wider public expectations for the Commons. The visibility of public opinion demanded new responses from political authorities who sought to manage and to influence it. Such was the challenge Charles faced after dissolving the Short Parliament. *His Majesty's Declaration: to All His Loving Subjects, of the Causes Which Moved Him to Dissolve the Last Parliament* (1640) deliberately offered an authoritative public record of the late parliamentary session: this attests to the rise in public political dissemination, which,

²⁹ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 212. See also "A copy of verses dropt in Westminster Hall," Worcester College MS WC 216, fol. 4^{r-v}, 5^r.

³⁰ Bodleian Library MS Tanner 52, fol. 13^r: "Verses affixed to a picture of Cromwell set up on the Exchange."

reaching such great pace after the dissolution of 1640, now warranted a royally-approved corrective. Never before had Charles in his printed declarations acknowledged public opinion in this way.

MPs could resort to the same means to establish their political authority. Within a year of Charles's *Declaration*, parliamentary publication began in earnest.³¹ Some early examples of printed parliamentary speeches intended to emphasize the good order and outcome of the members' debates. These efforts promoted more widely MPs' coming to terms with dissent, whereby they demonstrated that oppositional voices – their own, in this case, in dissent from the Crown – were a necessary part of productive political discourse. This conviction might equally support the parliament's transition from “event” to an “institution.”³² Parliamentary publication also served a secondary purpose relevant to the present study. In recording the flights of high oratory and the peculiarities of parliamentary procedure and address, printed speeches evoked the Commons chamber in their readers' imaginations. These publications familiarized their readers with parliamentary idioms, and – more importantly – with the range of political questioning that could emerge from parliamentary debates. They served as important conduits for the more radical forms of parliamentary politics that influenced discussions in the literary public sphere that took shape in the early 1640s.

From this context emerged one of the most prominent public debates in this period, the exchange of pamphlets known as the Smectymnuan controversy.³³ Their lively response to parliamentary upheaval and church reform – prominent issues both – ensured their

³¹ Sheila Lambert, *Printing for Parliament, 1641-1700* (London: List and Index Society, 1984), i.

³² See Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629*, 3.

³³ See “Smectymnuus (act. 1641),” Vivienne Larminie in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: Oxford University Press, January 2013.

readership, just as the lasting relevance of their claims did their place in the memory of contemporary readers. Formally addressed to Parliament, these pamphlets centred initially on the issue of episcopacy and the participation of bishops in the political process at Westminster. But they came also to range much more widely. Whatever the authority granted to Westminster by the political activities of bishops – who were appointments of the king and, as some maintained, an even higher power – the Smectymnuan authors sought to establish the Commons’ own credit as a deliberative assembly. To some, this authority came from a higher power. John Milton’s contributions to the controversy, such as his pamphlet *Animadversions upon the Remonstrant’s Defence* (1641), answer those of his chief opponent in the exchange,³⁴ and take part in the wider construction of an ideal, “sacred parliament.”³⁵ This view encouraged apocalyptic expectations of the legislature and cast it as an assembly with a unified, and even prophetic voice. These positive representations of parliamentary authority supported the assembly’s ascendancy at the outset of England’s revolutionary decade.

The Smectymnuan pamphlets also demonstrate that MPs’ preoccupations with parliamentary speech could influence public political debates in print. Beyond their respective approaches to “episcopacy and liturgy,”³⁶ the Smectymnuan authors disagreed over their own use of rhetoric in addressing parliament. That they came to judge each other in the same terms and spirit as they used when judging the Commons suggests the wider relevance of a higher parliamentary standard. In this way, advice to parliament might apply also more widely to the participants in some other political forum. Among the participants in

³⁴ See Joseph Hall, *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament* (1641).

³⁵ Milton, *Animadversions Upon the Remonstrants Defence Against Smectymnuus* (1641); YP 1.61.

³⁶ Joseph Hall, *A Defence of the Humble Remonstrance against the Frivolous and False Exceptions of Smectymnuus* (1641), 9.

the Smectymnuan controversy, Milton in particular pays special attention to the use of rhetoric in the cause of productive debate. The developing claims against sophistry in his early anti-prelatical writings anticipate his fuller arguments against censorship that issued in his now best-known prose work, *Areopagitica* (1644). The later political context in which this pamphlet appeared, once the Long Parliament's opposition to the King had turned to war, required much broader application of the rhetorical practices than Milton and his fellow polemicists had encouraged in their writings to parliament. Milton's own shift in attention from parliamentary rhetoric to public reason corresponds with the spreading influence of the parliamentary moment in 1640. In the years that followed, the models of (and expectations for) deliberative discourse that were shaped – or “forged” as some MPs' vocabulary suggests³⁷ – in parliament were applied increasingly to other settings.

The speed with which parliament established itself as an institution capable of dissenting from the Crown was not equaled by its ability to accommodate dissent within its own ranks. Whatever the reformative energy in the Commons during the early 1640s, Westminster politics did not always turn on rhetorical persuasion. Coercive force supplanted discourse when the latter was seen to fail, from Charles's attempted arrest of dissenting MPs in 1642, which provided a spark to begin the Civil War, to the purge of selected MPs in 1648, which cleared the way for the regicide and thus an end to the conflict between parliament and king. A series of protectorate parliaments would meet a similar fate.

Even if they were not achieved immediately at Westminster, the discursive ideals imagined by revolutionary MPs would seem to have found more sure-footed application

³⁷ John Suckling: “This house is the forge & the Irons are in the fire”; see Thomas Aston, *The Short Parliament Diary of Sir Thomas Aston*, ed. Judith Maltby (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1988), 124. Andrew Marvell referred much later to issues being “upon the Anvil;” see Andrew Marvell, *An Account of the Growth of Popery*, ed. Nicholas von Maltzahn, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 2.280.

among public readers in the 1640s. As one historian describes, at this time “the streets of London became a Parliament of Paper.”³⁸ This external deliberative assembly thus followed its model’s construction upon a “foundation of paper,” even though it was not yet “staffed,” as the Commons was, “by professional scribblers.”³⁹ According to examples extant in manuscript, the rudimentary libels and advices in verse that marked the return of parliament in 1640 were gradually sophisticated by political poets. Some poetic forms and genres that emerged began deliberately to construct a framework for political discussion that linked authors and readers; in this way their debate could proceed “in a parliamentary way.”⁴⁰ The genre of elections advice writing developed along this line, even though its proper establishment was delayed until an era of regular and frequent elections.⁴¹ But already by 1642, which saw recruiter elections to replace the MPs loyal to Charles who had absented themselves, political observers had established the connection between right reading and sound voting. Some imagined the reader as a parliament of one, who might balance and test the claims he encountered in various media – sometimes even in what may be considered early forms of mass media. Whereas in parliament the work of coming to terms with dissent required MPs to legitimate their oppositional discourse in the Commons, in the wider forum of public political discourse it required readers to judge an expanding number of competing claims that circulated in print and manuscript.

Much more issued from Westminster than accounts of speeches, satiric poems, and printed royal declarations: specific concerns about political discourse also crossed over to

³⁸ Leo Hollis, *London Rising: the Men Who Made Modern London* (New York: Walker, 2008), 16

³⁹ Kyle, *Theater of State*, 60: “Parliament was built on a foundation of paper and staffed by professional scribblers.”

⁴⁰ Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire*, 176.

⁴¹ Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, 5: “although the genre of printed electoral advice literature had emerged in the 1640s, it is a reflection of the later development of mid-century innovations that such literature flourished only when electioneering became frequent and routine after the 1670s.”

the reading public. As some in “the Renaissance valued rhetoric because it could move people to thought or action, whether they wanted to or not, by mobilizing the will,”⁴² others were wary of rhetoric for the very same reason. Opposition to public media in the mid-1640s resembles earlier opposition to parliamentary discussion upon the dissolution of the Short Parliament. As public reading began to resemble parliamentary practice, royalist critics of the Commons’ deliberations turned their attention to the growing quantity of public political writing that issued in the period. Claims against the efficacy of parliamentary discourse shifted to disqualify extra-parliamentary discourse in the same terms. Just as critics of the Short and Long Parliaments characterized these assemblies’ failures as failures in speech, such complaints were soon made of public political authors and their readers. For some, the unruly Commons much resembled the “tumultuous assemblies of people”⁴³ who gathered outside that House. In the eyes of these critics, policy resulted best from the private, particular decision of the king and his appointees.

But once the revolutionary engine in parliament had started, it was not easily stopped. Habermas’s own quotation of Karl Marx’s comment on a much later revolutionary moment proves instructive in this earlier English context:

The parliamentary regime lives by discussion; how shall it forbid discussion? Every interest, every social institution, is here transformed into general ideas, debated as ideas; how shall

⁴² Brian Vickers, “On the Practicalities of Renaissance Rhetoric,” in *Rhetoric Revalued: Papers from the International Study for the History of Rhetoric*, ed. Brian Vickers (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1982), 135.

⁴³ Quoted in Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire*, 130.

any interest, any institution, sustain itself above thought and
impose itself as an article of faith?⁴⁴

Already in the early 1640s was there a growing sense that very little proved “beyond thought” or discussion. One poet writing of “the Parliamentary Occurrents” voices his fears of unrestrained, unlimited debate:

Is there no Church? We'll put it to the vote.

Is there no God? Some fools say so by rote...

No Church? No God? No King? t'were very well;

Could they but make an Act, there were no Hell. ⁴⁵

This imagined scene is but one of many in the political poems dating to this period that represent the results of failed, aimless, or even destructive discourse. But such reactionary thought as it was expressed in the Commons and in the public sphere was matched – overmatched, even – by the opposing impulse, revolutionary as it would prove.

The outbreak of the English Civil War was accompanied by a growing sense of political uncertainty – which looked to some like possibility – as England was turned upside down. Results of this social upheaval were evident, from the New Model Army's dramatic repurposing of St Paul's church in London as a barn,⁴⁶ to the newly common practice of citizens declining to remove their hats before figures of authority – even before kings. Amid such questioning of long-established social, religious, and political norms, the art of rhetoric

⁴⁴ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 126. From Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), 66.

⁴⁵ Bodleian MS. Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 132^r.

⁴⁶ Hollis, *London Rising*, 31: “St Paul's ... had been requisitioned by the New Model Army. To add to the insult, the cathedral choir had been converted into a stable. One surprised visitor even witnessed a foal's birth; it was then promptly baptised.”

proved newly practical as a means of influencing political change.⁴⁷ In this culture whose previously held truths were subject to debate, the field was open in a way that it had perhaps not been before for discourse to influence political activity and even the reformation of state structures. This sense of immeasurable possibility certainly contributed to the “intoxication” with language evident in the political writing of this period.⁴⁸ Inasmuch as the process of fostering the public exercise of reason depended upon the promotion (and adoption) of specific kinds of writing and reading, then a consideration of rhetoric and of the rhetorical aspects of political poetry is essential to an understanding of the detailed textual work of actually “making publics.” The third chapter of this study identifies the efforts of poets who worked to achieve this end and the distinct reading practices of an audience who proved itself ready to listen and to respond. Literary responses to the political culture of the Civil War period reflect a growing awareness that the duty of a citizen was different from the duty of a subject.

Writings on affairs of state served as aids to public reason through their specific content – whether hortatory, critical, or satiric – and also through the ways in which they circulated. To some of its critics, Habermas’s own account of the formation of the public sphere overlooks the full extent that forms of media could themselves influence the literary public sphere. Print media, for example, is considered there only “narrowly as a means for disseminating and sharing ideas and not as an independent causal factor that shaped new modes of thought.”⁴⁹ The effect of print may be considered in more complex terms than as a

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution, 1642-1660* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 3: “The task of the writer who would change society ... is therefore to manipulate the conventions of that society, the genres of its public discourse, so that they accommodate his arguments ... To have one’s rhetoric accepted as reality is to change society at its most fundamental level.”

⁴⁸ Kranidas, *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal*, 1.

⁴⁹ Zaret, “Religion, Science, and Printing in the Public Spheres in Seventeenth-Century England,” 214.

simple, linear increase in dissemination over the previous mode of circulating a document – it consists of more than a change of scale, whereby one now measures by the thousands a print audience that was previously, as a manuscript audience, measured by tens or perhaps by hundreds. The reception of a printed document may be complicated by its reader’s awareness of its status as a printed document; the sense of its “printedness”⁵⁰ calls to mind the existence of other readers who will encounter the same text. Wide reception of shared texts – which popular print promotes – contributes significantly to the making of a public by fostering more tangible “relationships between strangers”⁵¹ within “imagined communities.”⁵² The activity in the literary public sphere that developed in the seventeenth-century England exceeded that of an earlier era, in which “readers were ... tiny literate reefs on top of vast illiterate oceans.”⁵³

Whatever the prominence of print in an early modern public sphere (and in the modern historical imagination), England’s politically-minded readers were connected also through other forms of media. Contemporary manuscript miscellanies reflect alternative routes of publication and dissemination beyond print, and detailed comparison of items in this body of texts permits some reconstruction of the habits of early-modern readers. Harold Love has described the value of these documents as “trace bearing artifacts of a site or community,”⁵⁴ but this claim proves an understatement – miscellanies are determined in

⁵⁰ See Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 110: “the printedness of the Constitution not only underwrites, so to speak, the popular authorship of the Constitution – it summons the readership of the print audience to recertify it continually and universally.”

⁵¹ See Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 74-76.

⁵² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6: political community “is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁴ Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 230

almost every respect by the intention of their composers. Granted, these intentions might be difficult or impossible for a modern reader to deduce: “newsworthiness (a complex idea in itself), an interest in controversy, or a desire to keep track of what the ‘opposition’ was up to could all be reasons for taking down a text.”⁵⁵ Nevertheless, these materials can reveal much about the ways that early-modern readers encountered, handled, and recorded poetry on affairs of state. Identification of the poems that gained popularity in miscellanies permits some description of these readers’ prevailing attentions and interests. That certain pairs of poems came to be associated with one another suggests the way that these texts could gain meaning through their dissemination. The active circulation and reception of poetry on affairs of state came not only to “legitimize public opinion”⁵⁶ but also to shape it through readers’ encounters with poets and with other readers.

The composition of manuscript miscellanies demonstrates the ways that citizen readers could explore parliamentary-style discourse in a public, textual forum. Certain patterns of association give greater order to this external assembly in verse, where readers base their collocation of poems on a particular event (such as the dissolution of the Short Parliament, or the assembly of the Long Parliament) or on a shared idiom (such as the poetic advices to a gamester). Some poets wrote in such a way as to ensure that their verses were considered within the most active critical discussions. These habits of reception fashioned lasting connections between the various items in what proves a disparate group texts. Yet they do not always manifest the partisan political divisions of the English civil war: some volumes notably include material spanning the parliamentarian and royalist divide. These

⁵⁵ Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England*, 202. He grants that “when studying manuscript miscellanies, it is not always easy – or even possible – to be certain why a compiler has copied a text.”

⁵⁶ Sauer, ‘*Paper Contestations*,’ 7.

examples may reflect the deliberations of an unsure reader, whose compositional practice could take on a distinctly reflective quality: “how we collate is how we think.”⁵⁷ Textual arrangements could permit the reader to balance competing political views by setting partisan verses against one another on the page. Some poets wrote deliberately to present such juxtapositions, drawing the reader into the middle space between opposing political claims. As political writing itself became a topic for discussion, readers too became contributors in their own right. Some miscellanies record readers’ responses to the verses they encountered, whether offering their own rebuttals to the poet’s argument, the promotion of their preferred party, or even their frustration with the culture of literary-political debate that grew ever more tempestuous during England’s revolutionary decade.

The conclusion of the Civil War demanded reconsideration of the entrenched opposition between Charles and his parliament that had structured much of the partisan political writing of the 1640s. Changing attitudes towards the publication of political opinion in the Protectorate, the controversy surrounding the Engagement oath, and the defeat and exile of royalist authors all altered the literary public sphere that had taken shape in the 1640s. Although these circumstances closed avenues for active participation in partisan literary culture, some political observers during the Interregnum reconsidered the format and conventions of the previous decade’s revolutionary writing. Instead of resorting to adversarial rhetoric further to vindicate or vilify the victors after the regicide, these authors critiqued the literary activity that had generated these representations.

⁵⁷ Jeffrey Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 184. Knight “[calls] attention ultimately to ‘collating’ - in the wider, nontechnical sense of ‘bringing together’ -- as a habit of mind, not just of the book;” see *Ibid.*, 181.

The final chapter of this study identifies in the work of two such authors a strain of post-partisan reflection that aimed at moderate representations of political authority. The first, Sir Thomas, third Lord Fairfax, did so within the context of a retreat from public political poetry into more personal, devotional writing – “the employments of his solitude” – undertaken in retirement. But this project, which culminated in a translation into verse of the entire book of Psalms, may be shown to have had a distinct political purpose. Fairfax’s translations demonstrate the kind of political thinking that was supported by the “concomitant” processes of writing and reading.⁵⁸ His emendations to biblical sources expand the theodicy already present in the Psalms to include the quest for political settlement of the Civil War. New documentary evidence reveals that Fairfax’s literary interests in the 1640s supported the later reconsideration of partisanship in his retirement writings. A prominent supporter of parliament’s army who later turned his back on the cause, Fairfax’s personal experience invites special consideration of his literary career as an indicator of his developing political thought.

Other texts that were published more widely during the Interregnum encouraged broader post-partisan reflection among political readers. In his writing dating to this period,⁵⁹ the clergyman and schoolmaster Thomas Hall aimed to counter the ill effect of the adversarial literary culture that developed during the Civil War. In this period the “presses were never more oppressed with frivolous filthy Pamphlets, to the great dishonour of our Nation.”⁶⁰ But Hall distinguishes himself from the royalist critics who dismissed these publications in similar terms. Even as he targets the expressions of partisanship found in

⁵⁸ Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution*, 4.

⁵⁹ Thomas Hall, *Wisdoms Conquest, or, an Explanation and Grammatical Translation of the Thirteenth Book of Ovids Metamorphoses, etc.* (1651), *Phaetons Folly, or, the Downfall of Pride, Being a Transl. of the 2nd Book of Ovids Metamorphosis Paraphrastically and Grammatically* (1655).

⁶⁰ Hall, *Wisdoms Conquest*, sig. A2^{r-v}.

polemical print, Hall does not abandon the medium entirely. Rather, in his translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* he acknowledges the productive possibilities of readers' participation in an active literary public sphere. Hall's reassessment of Ovid's tale of Phaeton and Phoebus, itself one of the most politically charged texts of the 1640s, models an ideal political reading practice undertaken in view (and even in defiance) of partisan rage. Hall's pamphlets and Fairfax's poetry demonstrate the kinds of literary work that took place in view of the political "quest for settlement" that followed the regicide.

The texts under review in the final chapter of this study attest to the growing confidence of England's reading public. Its establishment depended in part upon citizen readers' and authors' accomplishment of political work that contributed meaningfully to the political centre at Westminster. A later critic observes the similarity between political and literary activity, where "the struggle of the orators on the platform evokes the struggle of the scribblers of the press." The relationship between them constitutes much more than simple resemblance, however, for in this view "the debating club in the parliament is necessarily supplemented by debating clubs in the salons and the pothouses."⁶¹ By acknowledging the "necessity" of supplementary debates outside the political centre – wherever they might take place – these authors signal a key early modern development. In this, the writings of Fairfax and Hall suggest a more complete realization of the discursive politics that were attempted by MPs in the 1640s, transferred outside the Commons soon thereafter, and further deployed in political poetry that circulated during the Civil War.

These later achievements were the end result of a longer change in popular expectations of political language in mid-seventeenth century England. The great extent that

⁶¹ Qtd. in Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 126.

political speech was a subject of debate in revolutionary writing recalls the efforts of MPs in the early 1640s to establish a place at Westminster for dissenting political voices. The rhetorical practices developed there, through their application also in political writing that disseminated through print and manuscript, came to support the formation of a framework for broader public political discussion. Poets, MPs, and readers alike sought proceedings that were accountable to multiple political voices, with the expectation that political progress might arise from such deliberation and discussion – even between opposing political parties. This study traces the longer process of coming to terms with dissent through its analysis of literary and rhetorical activity based at Westminster, as well as the material aspects of available texts that circulated among contemporary readers.

The establishment of public opinion as an institution in its own right had a lasting influence on Westminster politics, and its effects are evident in the decades that followed. The nascent literary public sphere of the 1640s and 50s came in the Restoration to characterize the kind of political discourse that authors like Andrew Marvell promoted in and around “the Long Parliament” of Charles II. And preserve it they had to: the shift to popular politics in this century was by no means certain, and “the Restoration period, of course, did not always exhibit the feverish levels of public discussion characteristic of the 1640s and 1650s. The public sphere continued to ebb and flow,”⁶² and was not entirely resolved even in the eighteenth century. Moreover, Charles II, although initially seen by some as “toleration’s friend,”⁶³ soon proved as skeptical as his father had been of the exercise of public reason. But the advances made in the earlier decades were deemed

⁶² Lake and Pincus, “Rethinking the public sphere,” 11.

⁶³ Blair Worden, “Double tongued,” *London Review of Books*, 18 November 2010.

valuable enough to merit their safeguarding after the Restoration. And as the threat of “arbitrary government” grew worse, critics exhorted politicians and citizen readers to remember their recent revolutionary past. That England’s parliamentary spring was seen as particularly instructive at that later political moment reflects that the early modern public sphere owed much to the MPs whose reformatory work in the Commons sought to redefine that assembly under Charles I, and to the politically-minded authors who brought greater order and purpose to the political writing during the Civil War and its aftermath. The scope and results of their efforts are described here.

Part I: Parliaments

1. Schism of state, burgeoning debate: 1640-1642

[Charles I] ... made a short speech... And when he had done he bade my LORD KEEPER speak which was no more but this. This Parliament is dissolved.

Diary of Lord Montague, 5 May 1640¹

With these few words the long-awaited parliamentary session of spring 1640 came to an abrupt close. To many of the MPs and lords assembled there, as well as to their observers outside of Westminster, “the content of the [king’s] speech” on that occasion “was of little interest. It was not what Charles said, but what his Majesty did that was most important. On 5 May he had dissolved the Parliament.”² The dissolution was unexpected: who imagined that the first meeting of England’s parliament in over ten years would end thus after scarcely three weeks? But for Charles, the session already seemed too long. Another diarist, Bishop Lee Warner, records the King’s complaint of a “delay” in the parliamentary debates that was “worse than denial.”³ Warner closes his diary of the proceedings with the brief comment “*Parl. Infeliciter.*” The Latin phrase aptly characterizes the brief session, which properly

¹ Esther Cope, ed, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977), 105.

² *Ibid.*, 318.

³ *Ibid.*, 114.

earned its later name: “the Short Parliament.” This parliament did not resolve the public grievances that had accumulated during Charles’s period of personal rule (1629-1640), and its impasse with the King foreshadowed the civil war that engulfed England two years later.

The long-awaited parliamentary session soon thrust into popular view questions about the balance of political power at Westminster. These questions were not soon, nor easily, settled. The literary activity on the periphery of the Short Parliament reveals a threefold struggle between MPs, King, and attendant political commentators to promote their own representations of parliament amid calls for reform and appeals to traditional parliamentary precedent. The terms of this struggle appear in the texts under review in this chapter: parliamentary journals, royal speeches, and poetic responses to the Short Parliament that were published in print and manuscript. These writings reveal the rising importance of public opinion in English parliamentary politics. Charles’s own attempts at public relations – even if unsuccessful⁴ – show him acknowledging the need to control the political narrative. This necessity motivated his printed *Declaration* upon the dissolution in 1640, in which can be marked a distinct departure in tone and scope from the *Declaration* that followed the dissolution of parliament in 1629. In general, public political writing – and parliamentary poetry in particular – appears more predominantly in 1640 than it had during the 1620s, when Charles last assembled his parliaments.⁵ As is evident in the manuscript record, such writing increased in anticipation of the assembly of parliament in spring 1640, and proliferated further after its dissolution.

⁴ See Esther Cope, “The King’s Declaration Concerning the Dissolution of the Short Parliament of 1640: An Unsuccessful Attempt at Public Relations,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 40 (1977): 325-331.

⁵ This claim is based on an analysis of records in the Folger Library’s first-line index of poetry. This resource aggregates records of manuscript holdings at several research libraries, but chief among these for the purposes of this study is Margaret Crum, *First-Line Index of English Poetry, 1500-1800, in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library*, Oxford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

The proceedings of the Short Parliament and the literary activity that surrounded the assembly influenced later political efforts to expand the scope of representative government. Although the full range of opinion held and expressed in the Commons during the Short Parliament remains difficult to gauge based on extant records, MPs who sought political reforms evidently had sufficient influence to attempt an early, if faltering, step toward positioning their assembly in opposition to Charles's prerogative rule. The dissolution stalled their progress but could not prevent it. Only one year later, the re-assembled parliament had sufficient political power to take executive action against Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, a trusted friend and advisor of Charles. Although it centred on a desired response to public grievances, the prospect of redress that welcomed the Short Parliament also evoked an earlier sense of that then much-used word: to restore, or to rebuild a building or structure.⁶ Such redress motivated the MPs who saw at that moment that "it lies in us to restore parliaments."⁷

Representations of the Short Parliament in print and manuscript attest to the great public interest in that assembly. Some authors responded to political writing, as well as to politics itself, so although public interest centred on Westminster it also included the literary culture that surrounded it. This strain of political commentary stood to play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of parliament in a time when these perceptions meant ever more to those in power. As a result, representations in public poetry of political figures and procedures could become sites of contest. These contests brought authors and their writings into opposition. They also fuelled authors' self-consciousness as participants in the

⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary*, online ed., s. v. "redress" #10.

⁷ Thomas Aston, *The Short Parliament Diary of Sir Thomas Aston*, ed. Judith Maltby (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1988), 4.

ostensibly public forum where political writing circulated. In some cases, specific pieces of poetry written in advance of the Short Parliament were amplified or subverted through rewriting after the dissolution. These texts, and the interactions between them, attest to broader popular interest in political language and discourse, not only in events at Westminster and their outcome.

Inside the Commons chamber, discourse stands out as a topic of particular attention even more so than in writings on the periphery of London's political centre. Comparison of the many journal accounts of parliamentary proceedings highlights their authors' differing interpretations of the role at Westminster of discourse and debate, and the acute self-awareness among those MPs whose voices were recorded. What scope might these debates have? How could parliamentary process be altered to facilitate greater range and efficiency? That debate was often associated with dissent from the crown further heightened attention to (and suspicion of) "parliament men." Even the most loyal MPs might face restrictions on their speech, in addition to whatever self-censorship they might also observe. Representations in contemporary journal accounts of parliamentary activity reveal MPs' attempts to test what it meant to proceed "in a parliamentary way."⁸

The Short Parliament offers a prelude of the grand political contest that was to come in the years that followed. It insisted upon a reconsideration of political debate, demonstrated the permeability of Westminster through crossings-over of political rhetoric from the Commons chamber to public audience, and proved the impasse that existed between parliament and crown. That parliamentary spring, 1640, witnessed early forms of political practice that later came into much wider use during the revolutionary period,

⁸ Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 176.

beginning the process whereby parliamentary concerns regarding dissent and discourse found expression in political writing and so became public concerns. This literary activity foreshadows later attempts to bypass or at least supplement parliament by lobbying for redress or voicing dissenting opinion beyond the walls of Westminster.

I ANTICIPATING AND REPRESENTING THE SHORT PARLIAMENT

Publications that surrounded the assembly of the Short Parliament attest to the significant popular interest in that assembly. Inside Westminster, the King made clear his own expectations for the parliamentary session at its outset. So too did the assembled MPs in the weeks that followed. Consideration of these diverse perspectives reveals what was imagined to be at stake at the return of parliament in spring 1640. The conflict that arose in the session between Charles and his parliament exceeded the formal, legislative issues of approving the “supply” for war against the Scots, and redressing popular grievances. The differences owed in large part to the purpose shared by several prominent, vocal MPs to restore a balance of power that had been unsettled in Charles’s reign. This work depended upon accommodating free debate – even if dissenting from the crown – in parliament. Contemporary political writing also addressed this issue. One strain of publication claimed popular, parliamentary politics to be at odds with the preservation of royal power. Against this view, other works proclaimed and celebrated new opportunities for MPs to oppose Charles. The political concerns that arise in these texts address matters of discourse as much as those of policy.

Since the mid twentieth century a rich historiography has described – and debated – the causes of the English civil war. In 1990, a reviewer tasked with surveying this field of study observed that “there has not been a time since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries in which so many radically irreconcilable views of the seventeenth century have been competing for acceptance.”⁹ This spectrum of opinion includes grand narratives set down by Whig and Marxist scholars, and the claims of “revisionist” historians who questioned the teleology others had observed in the seventeenth century (whether that of “constitutional progress” or of “social change producing social conflict”¹⁰). In the same year, Conrad Russell’s *The Causes of the English Civil War*¹¹ advanced what have since been “broadly accepted as the decisive ‘long-term causes of instability’ within the Stuart kingdoms:”¹² the difficulty of managing three kingdoms, the increasing conflict caused by religious divisions, and the financial weakness of the state. Russell’s contentions were not themselves new. They echoed the Victorian-era historiography that had fallen out of fashion in the first half of the 20th century. Moreover, the “relatively broad” consensus these ideas “have come to enjoy” is not absolute.¹³ Revisionist historians aim further to clarify the “nature” of revolutionary England so that its political “origins” may be more fully understood.¹⁴ The present study does not range so widely, but instead centres on developments in modes of political discussion rather than developments in politics *per se*.¹⁵ The analysis of this chapter focuses in particular on contemporary media surrounding the Short Parliament and the discursive practices within the House of Commons itself. Whatever the prominence of concerns over ruling three kingdoms, financing a war, and responding to

⁹ Glenn Burgess, “On Revisionism: an Analysis of Early Stuart Historiography in the 1970s and 1980s,” *Historical Journal* 33 (1990): 609.

¹⁰ John Adamson, “Introduction: The Civil War and its Historiography,” in *The English Civil War: Problems in Focus*, ed. John Adamson (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2009), 22.

¹¹ Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War: the Ford lectures delivered in the University of Oxford, 1987-1988* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

¹² Adamson, “Introduction,” 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁵ Some recent studies of England’s early modern public sphere equate political discussion and political action. See Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 4.

religious divisions, a great number of pamphleteers, poets, and MPs at this time paid considerable attention to another issue: political speech.

The publications that welcomed the parliament in spring 1640 reflect widespread optimism about the assembly's success. Most of these are to be found in manuscript. However, one notable example exists in print. The assembly of the Short Parliament was celebrated by Martin Parker, a well-known ballad writer who enjoyed particular success in the 1630s.¹⁶ With an ear for rhyme and an eye for spectacle, Parker in his earlier publications produced popular records of such sights as “two inseparable brothers,”¹⁷ and “a strange and monstrous fish.”¹⁸ Owing in part to the Short Parliament's novelty, it too was received with special attention. The scene of the Lords, the Commons, and the King gathering at Westminster is pictured both in woodcuts and in verse in Parker's broadsheet *An exact description of the manner how His Majesty and his nobles went to Parliament* (1640).



(fig. 1)

¹⁶ “Parker, Martin (fl. 1624–1647),” Joad Raymond in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP.

¹⁷ Martin Parker, *The Two Inseparable Brothers. Or A true and strange description of a gentleman (an Italian by birth) about seventeen years of age who hath an imperfect (yet living) brother, growing out of his side, having a head, two arms, and one leg, all perfectly to be seen* (London, 1637).

¹⁸ Parker, *A description of a strange (and miraculous) fish cast upon the sands in the meads, in the hundred of Worwell, in the county Palatine of Chester* (London, 1635).

The assembly saw England's MPs gathered "to the comfortable expectation of all loyal subjects,"¹⁹ but not necessarily to that of Charles. His reason for assembling Parliament – without which he had been content to govern for over a decade – was simple: to raise money for the "Bishops War" against Scotland.²⁰ And even though pressed by fiscal need, Charles was reluctant to resort to Parliament. Previously, his parliaments had sought to exchange parliamentary-approved financial supply in exchange for the removal of taxation and revenues based only on royal prerogative.²¹ However, Charles's advisors had convinced him in 1640 that Parliament's approved supply was necessary if the war effort were to continue.²²

In contrast to Charles's reluctance to call parliament, many Londoners showed wholehearted support for that assembly. They wanted redress of the grievances that had accumulated over a decade of personal rule. Such expectations are recorded in many contemporary representations of the newly-assembled Parliament. *An Exact Description* reflects the popular mood in verse:

This happy April will, I trust,
Give all true subjects reason just
Of joy to feel a pleasant gust,
To yield them hearts content:
For we may be assur'd of this,
If any thing hath been amiss,

¹⁹ Parker, *An Exact Description of the manner how His Majesty and his nobles went to Parliament* (London, 1640).

²⁰ The first Bishops War "ended without a shot being fired" after Charles's army retreated from the Scottish Covenanters at the Tweed, whose reserves he believed to outnumber his own force; see John Adamson, *The Noble Revolt: the Overthrow of Charles I* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), 9.

²¹ Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 7.

²² For a description of these circumstances, see *ibid.*, 10-11.

Our King and State will all redress

In this good Parliament.²³

Widespread hope for “redress” surely contributed to the celebratory atmosphere at the Parliament’s assembly.

Charles gestured toward the prospect of redress of grievance in his initial dealings with the Commons, but in his view it could be granted only on the condition that Parliament approve his desired financial supply. And this, as Parliament soon heard, was to be done quickly: the “summer must not be lost nor any minute of time foreslowed to reduce them of Scotland lest by protraction here they gain more time and advantage to frame their projects with foreign States.”²⁴ With a mix of goodwill and intimidation, the Lord Keeper thus made the King’s case for the supply. Charles sought to demonstrate the threat presented by the covenanters in his address to the House of Lords at the start of the parliamentary session. He supported this claim with a piece of incriminating evidence. As Lord Montagu records, “The KING drew out a letter in French which was written by the Scotts to the King of France.”²⁵ The letter, allegedly written by a group of Scottish Lords, requested military support against the English. It is first shown to the gathered Lords and MPs, and then read aloud by John Lord Finch, the Lord Keeper, first “in French and After in English.” The scene of the letter’s unveiling and reading provides a study in Charles’s preferred method of parliament work. Both carefully timed (before the Commons’ speaker is appointed) and placed (the Upper House), it characterizes the King’s chief priority in the session as one already settled and one that supersedes parliamentary procedure. Supply, in this view, is a matter beyond debate,

²³ Parker, *Exact Description*, stanza 2.

²⁴ Esther Cope, ed., *Proceedings of the Short parliament of 1640* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 120.

²⁵ Lord Montagu describes the scene in his diary. See Cope, *Proceedings of the Short parliament*, 96.

where Charles desired a simple exchange of action (the approval of supply) for proof (the letter *Au Roy*). On this issue, at least, the spring Parliament was not intended as a consultative exercise.

Commentators outside Westminster echoed the Royalist model of political activity, premised on witness rather than on some more active form of participation. In his *Description*, Martin Parker sketches a similarly restricted form of engagement between citizens and the government:

For now my mind is bent
To publish what my self did see,
That thine (Loyal) hearts may be
Participants as well as wee
Ith' joy oth' Parliament.²⁶

Describing the procession of nobles, judges, and heralds, the poet suggests a richer role (beyond simple repeating the scene) for his publication of the scene in print at that political moment. He imagines his account as making his readers “Participants.” In this case, public “participation” meant observing the procession’s “noble order” and responding with affirming, “Loyal” sentiment. Perhaps those readers’ “hearts were set on fire” just as those of the onlookers who beheld firsthand the “fit accoutrement” and “rich attire” of the Earls and Viscounts.²⁷ The representation of the king to the citizens in text and image takes precedence over the representation of citizens’ interests to the king by way of their elected representatives. Parker notes his confidence in redress “if any thing hath been amisse,” yet he does not present a scene of hearing in which the “King and State” solicit grievances.

²⁶ Parker, *Exact Description*, stanza 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, stanza 9.

Framed as a spectacle, the Parliament proves its purpose in the beholding. Parker's version of political participation relies more on presentation than it does on representation.

The link Parker imagines between rhetorical or figurative representation and public political representation resembles contemporary claims to authority by prominent royalists. Early passages in Lord Keeper Finch's opening speech before the Commons and the Lords on behalf of the King offer a similarly passive version of political participation and representation. "By you," Finch addresses the Lords and Commons, "as by a select choice and abstract of the whole kingdom is presented to his majesty's royal view, and made happy in your beholding of his most excellent and sacred person."²⁸ The Lord Keeper's rhetoric casts "participation" as gazing upon, or "beholding," the royal person. His address on this opening day seeks to set the stage for subsequent relations between the Commons and the King in these terms. He later offers at least some suggestion of a properly representative government, where "even the meanest of his Majesty's subjects are graciously allowed to participate and share in the honor and in the councils that concern the great and weighty affaires of king and kingdom."²⁹ Yet his following allusions to Uzzah, who touched the ark of the covenant despite instruction otherwise and was killed by God as a result,³⁰ and to Phaeton, who took the reins of his father's chariot and so set the world on fire,³¹ both emphasize their sharing in "honor" more than sharing in "councils."³² These twin cautionary stories demand of MPs a hands-off approach to government. They may look but not touch.

That Parker so closely echoes the dominant Royalist line as it takes shape in the opening days of the Short Parliament invites questions about the circumstances of his

²⁸ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 115.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁰ See II Samuel 6.

³¹ See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Elmvile (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Books I-II.

³² Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 116.

Description. Although it describes an event immediately preceding the session, its composition and printing likely followed it. Might Parker have had access to the Lord Keeper's or the King's speeches? Even if only in hearing report of them, he could have then turned their royalist rhetoric of display to account in his own *Description*. If so, then the pamphlet may have served as a way of broadcasting an element of the opening address without transgressing restrictions on printing or otherwise publishing Parliamentary proceedings. While such restriction was not always strictly observed during the Long Parliament, no printed speeches from the Short Parliament exist in the Early English Books Online database.³³ Parker's documentary representation in print anticipates later royalist record-keeping in Charles's printed *Declaration* (1640) following the parliament's dissolution. Here, Parker frames a relationship between King and the Commons that leaves little room for dissenting voices. The task of determining what more active political participation might entail was left for others to undertake.

Early expectations for popular political representation were complicated by hopes for divine influence in civil government. From the very beginning of the session, messages issuing from the King and his chief supporters reminded the gathered MPs of Charles's divine right. Elements of the opening speech delivered to the upper and lower houses by the Lord Keeper, John Finch, emphasize such credentials, as the King is portrayed as "pleased to lay by the shining beams of Majesty"³⁴ in his assembling of Parliament. This image, alongside others in Finch's speech, casts Charles as a Phoebus figure.³⁵ Finch's later

³³ This database "contains more than 125,000 titles listed in Pollard & Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue (1475-1640)* and Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue (1641-1700)* and their revised editions, as well as the *Thomason Tracts (1640-1661)* collection and the *Early English Books Tract Supplement*." See "About EEBO," Early English Books Online, accessed March 29, 2013, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/about/about.htm>.

³⁴ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 116.

³⁵ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, II.42-44: "Then his father laid / Aside the dazzling beams that crowned his head / And bade him come and held him to his heart."

comment that “the wall of separation was thereby taken away”³⁶ strongly recalls Paul’s assertion that Christ “hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”³⁷ In references both secular and scriptural, Charles is cast as a sacred figure who grants his subjects access to his person. Parker’s *Description* presents a king similarly invested with divine authority. Having duly noted all the “Lords, burgesses, etc.,” he refers to others in the scene, raising his verse to a lofty note:

Besides all this which hath been told
(To speak the same I dare be bold)
Though corporeal eyes could not behold,
A Legion did present
Celestial service to attend
King Charles, and him from harm defend,
The King of Kings did's Angels send
T' assist our Parliament.³⁸

With these culminating lines, the *Description* emphasizes the upper reaches of Parker’s imagined “noble order.” Parker imagines “the King of Kings” sending ministering angels first to Charles, then rendering similar – but deferred – service of angels “T’assist our Parliament.”

The Short Parliament’s assembly marked a beginning to Parker’s shift to more overtly political publication. In contrast to his preferred subject matter in the 1630s, “from 1640 a sentimental pro-royalist politics emerges in his writings.”³⁹ Parker’s transition to this

³⁶ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 117.

³⁷ See Ephesians 2:14.

³⁸ Parker, *Exact Description*, stanza 15.

³⁹ “Parker, Martin (*fl.* 1624–1647),” Joad Raymond in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP.

register corresponds with a broadening audience for popular poetry that pertained to matters of “king and kingdom.” Other poets were inspired by the sense of occasion at the Parliament’s assembly, and their writings issued more visibly than had those of poets writing in response to the previous parliamentary session. Although such literary activity did not (at least initially) appear in print alongside Parker’s *Description*, some contemporary poems that circulated in manuscript offer counterpoints to the Royalist expectations that were articulated inside and outside of Westminster. These writings attest to the reach of the publicly available writings that surrounded parliament, and sometimes also intruded inside it.

The circulation of the political poem “To the Lower House of Parliament” in particular suggests that the walls of Westminster were more permeable than standing restrictions on publishing House business might suggest. These “verses were dropped in the Parliament house” on the first day of the Short Parliament.⁴⁰ Only one of the parliamentary diarists observes the poem’s appearance there, but it found wider circulation in contemporary manuscript miscellanies. A version of the poem identical to that which circulated in the Commons appears in two manuscripts,⁴¹ and an expanded version that features an additional eight-line stanza appears in two additional manuscript miscellanies.⁴² This poem, along with a later poem “On the dissolution,” is one of the more popular literary responses to the Short Parliament.

The parliamentary audience addressed in “To the Lower House” suggests a poet more interested in the procedures in the Commons than in the spectacle of its assembly.

⁴⁰ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 212.

⁴¹ This version of the poem is copied in British Library MS Add. 6411 fol. 43^r, and Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 95^r. The *Folger First-line Index* misidentifies the latter copy as the longer version.

⁴² The expanded version of this poem is copied in Bodleian MS Douce 357, fols. 6^v-7^r, and Bodleian MS Ashmole 36, 37, fol. 98^r.

Whereas when Parker describes the gathering of the Short Parliament he addresses an external audience of public spectators, the anonymous author of the poem “To the Lower House” imagines and even addresses an interior audience of gathered MPs. In his opening lines, the poet speaks directly to the assembly:

My Masters you that undertake the game,
Look to it your Countries safety, and her fame
Are now at stake. Be careful how you cut
And deal, as known occasions putt you to it.
The Cards are strangely shuffled.

That the poem itself circulated within the physical space of the House proves that the poet or an interested reader had gained access to the Commons chamber. In his address to “the Lower House” the poet demonstrates that public citizens had some awareness of these MPs’ preoccupations. Unlike Parker’s lines, which show what is on display, these show what is “now at stake”: “the Countries safety and her fame,” and her inhabitants’ “liberties.” The poet imagines a much different relationship between parliament and king than one of “beholding,” and describes the scene within the register of a gamester’s vocabulary:

‘Tis odds you never get the Ace of Hearts:
Yet the five finger and some helps besides
Lie in the pack dispersed: Bee these your guides,
That you possess. To tell you what you want.⁴³

⁴³ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 212.

Here the MPs are advised by the poet as if by a card-player. He encourages them to take advantage of the “helps” and “guides” available to them, and perhaps counts himself as offering such service.

The anonymous poet offers a much less “comfortable expectation” of the Parliament than does Parker in *An Exact Description*. The poem’s gambling imagery suggests that legislative progress is easily subject to the legerdemain of those who might alter the course of the session. Quite omitting the broadsheet’s celebration of divine influence in the affairs of state, he makes the assembly an altogether chancy enterprise. Either “a poor trick” or “foul juggling” may influence the session’s outcome. And, for the anonymous poet, this circumstance presented an opportunity as much as it did an impediment. References here to “the five fingers,” “helps,” and “the ace of hearts,” likely refer to a specific game of cards: “Maw”. The game was a favourite at James I’s court, and its play there may have inspired Sir John Harrington to comment thus:

... Maw,

A game without civility or law;

An odious play, and yet in court oft seen,

A saucy Knave to trump both King and Queen.⁴⁴

Harrington considered Maw a game of quick reversals. Perhaps the poet writing “To the Lower House” imagined a similar trumping of the royal hand. In his closing lines, at least, he maintains cautiously optimistic about the gathered MPs’ potential agency in opposing royal design for the session. With “square play”, as he writes to the Commons, “the game is yours.” Here the poem is quietly subversive. Its author represents the circumstances of

⁴⁴ Quoted in Robert Chambers, ed., *The book of days: a miscellany of popular antiquities* (London: W & R Chambers, 1888), 2.779.

Parliament's assembly as presenting MPs with an opportunity to oppose established governing practice.

Another contemporary ballad on the Short Parliament, titled "On the occasion of the Parliament" and dated "April 1640,"⁴⁵ celebrates the new possibility of political progress in advance of the parliamentary session. However, it represents discourse and collaboration between king and kingdom, not mere chance, as the likeliest means of such progress. The anonymous ballad writer suggests that the much longed for "redress" requires the comeuppance of the Lords whose misdeeds were at the root of the original grievances. The identities of these corrupt lords might be uncovered, and their actions opposed, by able politicians in the upper house:

At the council board was many a Lord,
of which some stood aloof,
None did oppose, but such as there
that were not Parly-proof

The poet's unique phrase "not Parly-proof"⁴⁶ perhaps characterizes those most able and most useful political actors as being accountable to the voices of a broader assembly as much as to the closed "council board." Their opposition leads next to the desired legislative response to the deceitful lords:

We know their names, but hide their shames
'til time reveal their facts
And the House correct each foul deceit
with several wholesome Acts.

⁴⁵ Extant only in one manuscript, British Library MS Harley 4931, fol. 39^r-40^r.

⁴⁶ This peculiar phrase does not appear in the full-text records in the EEBO database.

For this poet, the prospect of a “happy parliament” depended upon it being assembled in a spirit of collaboration between “the House” and the king.

The final stanzas of the ballad “On the occasion of the Parliament” further describe the benefit of a rapprochement between king and subject. In this the poet anticipates the vocabulary used by MPs who struggled to establish a productive relationship between themselves and the crown. Owing to the open exchange between them, the ballad claims,

The King shall see now which they be
that have abused his Grace
His subjects dare them to declare,
when they come face to face

Like the anonymous author of “To the Lower House,” this poet also frames an arrangement between king and subject (whether citizen, Lord, or MP) not limited only to “beholding.” In this case, the king’s subjects may serve by pointing out aristocratic malfeasance. Thus the airing in the House of citizens’ concerns permits the required “correction.”

Although the poet restrains himself from outright condemnation of Charles and his relationship with parliament, the parliamentary scenes he represents defy those representations that appeared in contemporary royalist writing. A strain of monarchical critique develops in the ballad through the images of subjects who “dare to declare” abuses to the King when they “come face to face.” The poet’s promotion of greater reciprocity between king and kingdom issues most clearly in his ballad’s final stanza:

God grant the king accept each thing
both houses shall present him,
No doubt is then but they again

most freely will content him!⁴⁷

Even the order specified here, where Charles answers the parliament's requests before the assembly in turn "contents" him with a financial supply, constitutes political comment. It also reflects the poet's awareness of the specific debates in the Commons. The dissolution of the Short Parliament resulted in part from MPs' desire to obtain from Charles some redress of grievance before they approved the requested subsidy. Subsequent debates in and out of the Commons show that political representation – not the King's pressing need for financial support – was foremost in the minds of many MPs. This issue featured prominently also in the work of politically-minded authors.

II DEBATE, DELIBERATION, DISSENT

The same attention to political renewal in poetry that welcomed the Short Parliament is visible also in contemporary journal accounts of the proceedings at Westminster. These records suggest that many of the assembled MPs shared a sense of opportunity at that moment. Debates in the House of Commons during the brief session record MPs' efforts to strengthen public representation at Westminster. That they returned to the Commons after so long an absence made this task most urgent. Some MPs questioned the relationship between deliberative discourse and political power. Others wrestled with constraining political precedents that the present moment seemed so to defy. But their optimism was soon tempered by the realities of the parliamentary session. The Short Parliament was marked by the failure of MPs to agree about their immediate legislative responsibilities and the

⁴⁷ British Library MS Harley 4931, fol. 40^r.

difficulty in reaching compromise or rapprochement between King and the gathered MPs: “for all it was far easier to preach compromise than to practice it.”⁴⁸ In most cases, MPs’ desire to shape an “ideal” parliament was overshadowed by the pressing royal demands. They were torn between “a double necessity,” on one hand their “Grievances... in need of relief,” on the other, “Supply.”⁴⁹

Statements made by MPs throughout the session reveal broader anxieties over the effectiveness of their work of rhetorical deliberation. Their preoccupation with the nature and quality of parliamentary discourse, which appears in several contemporary diaries, arose from the reconsideration by some MPs of the role of parliament in English government. If parliament were to meaningfully oppose the Crown, the means of its dissent – rhetorical debate – must be established. Safeguarding parliamentary privilege surely seemed more urgent after the hiatus at Westminster during Charles’s personal rule. In less than a year after the Short Parliament’s dissolution, members of the Long Parliament passed the Triennial Act to ensure regular meetings of parliament. But a sitting parliament might yet not sit well; sustaining debate was not easy in the Commons chamber. Archbishop Laud’s telling description of parliamentary debate as “that noise”⁵⁰ attests to the difficulty in identifying legislative progress in the Commons. Many accounts of these early proceedings reveal a cacophony in the sessions. Although members had traditionally accepted this, the purposeful efforts of some Short Parliament MPs to reform parliament suggest their understanding of accountability that was based on public representation through debate. That similar attention to the aims and achievements of political discourse appears so prominently in publications

⁴⁸ Esther Cope, “Compromise in Early Stuart Parliaments: The Case of the Short Parliament of 1640,” *Albion* 9, no. 2 (1977): 144.

⁴⁹ Aston, *Diary*, 121.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change, and other essays* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 346.

on the periphery of parliament signals the lasting legacy of these concerns as they were expressed in the Commons. The parliament's distinct shift in the mid seventeenth century from "event" into an "institution"⁵¹ depended upon a re-evaluation of how parliamentary language – whether loyal to or dissenting from the crown – could direct the affairs of state.

The Short Parliament is richly documented in the private journals and diaries of its members. Well-grounded fears of reprisal for publishing opinions dissenting from the Crown left the Short Parliament to be recorded in these private documents. Some of its MPs may have undertaken to publish speeches that appeared in some form in the Commons, as one diarist's comment suggests.⁵² However, copies of such speeches are scarce. "Printing for parliament began with the Protestation of 5 May 1641,"⁵³ a date that coincided notably with the first anniversary of the Short Parliament's dissolution. Not until "later when the Court of Star Chamber had been abolished and the royal prerogative limited, [could] the king's view [...] be challenged more effectively in print."⁵⁴ But this apparent lack of public record did not restrict public knowledge, for many citizens were well aware of the proceedings at Westminster. As one observer remarked, "I cannot meet with any man but knows what will becomes of these things... generally so wise are become the Commons having received a diffusive knowledge from the dispersed house." To his eyes this political climate marked a significant departure from the status quo. Before the Short Parliament "this striving with the king could be thought but the act of private men, 'til now in Parliament it is made the act of the third estate."⁵⁵

⁵¹ Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 3.

⁵² Of a speech by the Lord Keeper, Lord Montagu writes that "It is like many to come out in print." See Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 100.

⁵³ Sheila Lambert, *Printing for Parliament, 1641-1700* (London: List and Index Society, 1984), i.

⁵⁴ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 17.

⁵⁵ Upon the dissolution, Thomas Peyton claimed further that "now some say, we are where we were; but I think we are worse, for what grievances soever the subjects thought themselves molested with and therefore would

The archive of material describing the Short Parliament, a cornerstone for the literary and rhetorical analysis of the present chapter, provides critical insight into MPs' expectations for the Commons debates. Several parliamentary diaries are available in modern editions, and the major documentary sources are collected in the Camden Series volume *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640*.⁵⁶ This edition includes accounts both of the Lords and the Commons debates, each from the perspectives of several diarists. A separate volume in the Camden series collects Thomas Aston's parliamentary diary of the Short Parliament, which, as its editor describes, "provides the richest available source for that assembly."⁵⁷ Aston (1600-1646) later proved himself a committed royalist; he fought for the King in the civil war, and died of wounds suffered in battle. More cursory yet wider ranging is the diary of John Rous (1584-1644), MP for Suffolk.⁵⁸ His account offers brief summaries of the Short Parliament and also extends to the preceding and following sessions. Considered as a whole, these records show the ways that participants at Westminster with competing backgrounds and interests represented their assembly's role as the nation's "great council."

Members had good cause to question the productivity of their discourse in the House, and their journals attest to how the circumstances of the Commons debates could limit free discussion. In part this resulted from the physical space in which parliament met. The Commons featured a seating arrangement that marginalized some of those present, and privileged others. As Aston records in one instance, the matter of choosing "the committee

resist 'em, this striving with the king could be thought but the act of private men, 'til now in Parliament it is made the act of the third estate;" quoted in *ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁶ Esther Cope, ed, *Proceedings of the Short parliament of 1640* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977).

⁵⁷ Thomas Aston, *The Short Parliament Diary of Sir Thomas Aston*, ed. Judith Maltby (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1988).

⁵⁸ John Rous, *Diary of John Rous*, ed. Mary Green (London: printed for the Camden society, 1856).

of privileges of elections” degenerated into a shouting match, “so those next the chair name most of the committee.”⁵⁹ Although inconvenient for some MPs, this seating arrangement was accepted and indeed even exploited for the good of the rest of the House on occasion. In one case, the Speaker noted the need to depend on the “writing or ... testimony of some noble persons near the chair.”⁶⁰ The exclusions this arrangement might cause were perhaps unavoidable in the assembly, but they were surely aggravated by the noise and disorder during more heated meetings.

Westminster decorum also imposed limitations on the range of debate, for some registers of discussion were deemed *infra dignitatem*. Many diarists note how Bishop Joseph Hall fell under reprimand in the House of Lords, after he mischanced to “let fall some words” in a committee meeting.⁶¹ The scene is described most elaborately by one anonymous diarist, who does so in detail and likely also with delight:

Bishop Hall of Exeter spoke against one of the Lords, (if I mistake not it was my Lord Say) who was appointed one of the Committees in a business, the bishop said, that the Lord savoured of A Scottish Covenanter, for which speech the Bishop was made openly before all the House to go down to the bar, who there said, If I have offended I cry pardon; they all cried out, No Ifs, whereupon he begged pardon positively.⁶²

In this quarter, the term “Covenanter” – signifying the King’s chief enemy – was deemed too strong an insult, and Hall’s language deemed too extreme as a result. According to

⁵⁹ Aston, *Diary*, 3.

⁶⁰ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 169.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 236. This source is Harleian MS 4931.

another diarist, one lord present (Mandeville, as Cope speculates) observed that the “speech... would much encourage the Scotts.”⁶³ This exchange accords with one historian’s speculation about the circumstances that eventually sparked the Short Parliament’s dissolution: that some of its members sought to present a covenanter declaration for reading in the lower house.⁶⁴

The dramatic scene of Bishop Hall’s reprimand invited diarists’ attention, and it was reported widely in contemporary accounts. But in the main, the inconsistency of these responses poses a challenge to the modern reader, who might expect a more even representation of the course of events during the Short Parliament. It also points to the challenges faced by political critics in that political culture, where bias toward or against certain registers of language could spark an outcry that might supersede the substance of the initial claim at which offence was taken. Accounts of such controversy amplify or efface the scene in accordance with the interest and attention of their respective authors. In the case of Hall’s accusation, the most vivid account (quoted above) includes the offending turn of phrase – that “the Lord savoured of A Scottish Covenanter” – and also a description of Hall’s dressing down. This account is the only one to record the assembled Lords’ reaction to Hall’s too tentative apology, “if” he had indeed offended: “No Ifs!” An alternate account includes passages of dialogue between Hall, Seymour, and Bristol, and specifically mentions Hall’s offence in “*comparing the Lords to Covenanters.*” However, it only briefly describes the scene of correction, noting that Hall (and everyone else) was “sorry for it.”⁶⁵ For his part, Lord Montagu provides a characteristically brief account of the event: “I can not remember

⁶³ Ibid., 99.

⁶⁴ See Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 23.

⁶⁵ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 65. This source is H.L.R.O., Bray MS 16.

the words but they were offensively taken and he made a kind of sorrow for them which satisfied the house, but there was much speech about them in a contrary question.”⁶⁶ In glossing over the offence itself, Montagu’s account perhaps suggests its author’s indifference to the circumstances that troubled others, the resolution of which interrupted the process of debate in the upper house.

In the lower House, a scene similar to the chastening of Bishop Hall further demonstrates that dissenting claims could be rejected on rhetorical, rather than logical, grounds. Following MP George Peard’s condemnation of ship money as “that abomination” and of those without religion as “Heathens,” one diarist notes that “Mr Herbert ... Interrupted him and took exceptions at the language that fell from Mr Peard,” ultimately deeming it to be “very punishable.” Another “seconded the complaint against Mr Peard [and] said though he looked upon ship money as a dying thing yet that phrase of Abomination, he thought deserved reprehensions.”⁶⁷ The critical thrust of Peard’s comment was turned aside because of its references to “abomination”, the “devil”, and “heathens.” In the same way that Bishop Hall’s affront in the Lords was deemed unsuitable, Peard’s correction reveals a sensitivity in the Lower House to the language used in debate. In extreme cases, such sensitivity could halt debate altogether.

Peard, like Hall, was made to retract his offending remark. And he too offered a conditional apology. But Peard mustered a more thoughtful response to his accusers than Hall seems to have managed. He lay some measure of accountability at the feet of his audience to respond to the intention behind an utterance, not just the terms in which it was issued. “He had an English heart,” Peard claimed, and “wish’d no man that heard him but

⁶⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 172.

had an English ear.” Mr “Herbert” – whom the remark seems to have offended most gravely – rejected Peard’s excuse. His own rejoinder maintains that the speaker alone retains responsibility for expressing himself in a manner appropriate to his parliamentary setting. He ultimately defers “to the judgment of the house whether if it must rest upon one... upon him that had an ill tongue, or upon him that had an ill ear.”⁶⁸ Not all MPs shared Herbert’s offence. Sir Walter Earle, for example, wished “not to rest upon such exceptions but to pass by.”⁶⁹ Hambden, however, supported Herbert’s objections to Peard on procedural, rather than moral grounds. He recalled to his colleagues that the “Custom of the house” that dictated “any words spoke at a committee & taken offence at must be reported to the chair to the whole house & there sentenced.” This motion concluded the exchange: as Aston records, “Mr. Speaker takes the chair & he does retract the words. Voted & cleared.”⁷⁰ Here, Peard argued for his own innocence by shifting the burden of right interpretation to his audience. He imagined members of the parliamentary assembly as capable of assessing the substance of the debate; that this was not the case reflects the difficulty in establishing a common vocabulary of complaint or dissent in the assemblies that returned to Westminster in spring 1640. In an assembly where loyalties were divided and sensitivities ran high, it was no easy task to determine what form expressions of loyalty and dissent should take.

Ambition among Short Parliament MPs to reform parliament followed to some extent from the inefficiency of parliamentary process, of which many MPs complained. Beyond restrictions on hearing and certain kinds of speaking, some members spoke up against the general unwieldiness of Commons debate. Exhortations such as Hambden’s –

⁶⁸ Aston, *Diary*, 40.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

“Not to clog the business with more heads”⁷¹ – speak of wider frustration within a House “much divided.” According to some MPs, the difficulty in building consensus in the House arose from their own difficulty in airing simple questions. Herbert, seeking to avoid the “multiplicity of questions, wished it to be put to the Question whether we would give the K: a supply or not?”⁷² Some diarists attribute the slow process to members’ active delay in the Commons. One notes the conflict between those who elected for supply, and those for grievances: “Much it was urged by the Kings council to have it put to the Question whether the house would supply the King or not? but the House did wholly decline that question.”⁷³ This anger with the Commons’ reluctance was shared by some of its own members. Orlando Bridgeman urges his fellow MPs “to speak short & to speak plain English.”⁷⁴ Alexander Rigby, in debate two days later, pressed to “know how many times a question must be demanded & by how many men must it be demanded, before we have it.”⁷⁵ By this time in the session – its final hour, in fact – the Commons still struggled to find a balance between deliberation and decision. The gathered MPs’ proceedings tended in large part toward the former, whether by the impediments of traditional parliamentary process, by the efforts of some to active delay it further, or even by a general lack of experience among the newly assembled members.

Many of the Short Parliament diarists record the great energy among their colleagues in the Commons, and some note that at times their feelings ran objectionably high. From the outset of the Short Parliament, some members voiced concern over their colleagues’ unnecessarily loud humming. This, along with “hawking” and “heckling,” was long a

⁷¹ Ibid., 60.

⁷² Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 191.

⁷³ Ibid., 192-3.

⁷⁴ Aston, *Diary*, 123.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 139.

feature of the Commons, but it elicited complaint by some Short Parliament MPs.⁷⁶ Lord Montague notes one such occurrence on 15 April. Upon the King's promise to the Lords and assembled Commons that once they "proceed with the supply, they should have all their just favours... there was a great hum."⁷⁷ Another diarist records this moment (using upper-case characters) as "THE COMMONS APPLAUD HIS LO^{PPS} EXPRESSIONS BY A GENERAL HUMM."⁷⁸ Similar uproar during the proceedings of Commons on the following day drew objection from veteran MPs in the House: Benjamin Rudyerd (1572-1658) counseled his colleagues that "it is wisdom in us to preserve temper and moderation,"⁷⁹ and Sir Henry Mildmay (c.1594-1668) "spoke against humming as indecent."⁸⁰

Such difficulties were perhaps aggravated because of the great number of newly elected members who had yet to accustom themselves to the formalities of the Commons' business. Newly-elected members made up a considerable proportion of the House in April 1640, and their influence was duly noted. In response to Mildmay's objections about the "indecenty" of humming, Sir Henry Vane "excused the humming saying so many young men being of the House were ignorant of the indecenty of it as yet."⁸¹ This ignorance evidently persisted for some time. A few days after Vane's remark, Thomas Aston records continuing objections to the Commons' raucous aspect: who "speak not with moderation reserve not the respect usually given to this house."⁸² Indeed, records give the impression that silence in the House was noteworthy, even uncommon. After one particularly resonant

⁷⁶ MPs often "answered poor speech by humming, hawking (spitting and noisily clearing the throat), and heckling." See Chris Kyle, *Theater of State: Parliament and Political Culture in Early Stuart England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 21.

⁷⁷ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 97.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 131

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*.

⁸² Aston, *Diary*, 17.

speech, Thomas Aston notes “A long pause. No man speaking.”⁸³ Instances such as this may mark those rare departures from the typical humming, hissing, and general uproar in the Commons. By these accounts, the disorderly temper of the House challenged the proceedings and debates among MPs gathered there. Later in the session Aston records his own statement as being lost in such a tumult. In the “distraction” of voices that arose at the end of the debate on 4 May, Aston records that he “moved that the Speaker might give account of our actions since we met that they had been only to enable us to serve the King & no delay used by us.”⁸⁴ The speech as recorded in Aston’s journal continues at some length, and reads almost as an apology for the Short Parliament, promising that with more time an accord between grievance and supply could be found. It is highly unlikely that Aston could have actually delivered the entirety of this address out loud in those final chaotic moments on the eve of parliament’s dissolution. Aston found himself beyond earshot of the Speaker and at a remove from the main voices that carried the debate that day.

These factors encouraged MPs to pursue motions proposing a streamlining of parliamentary process when they would next meet, in the fall of 1640. But already in the spring session some effort was made to promote productive proceedings. Some MPs sought to maintain a policy of “one speech per debate,” or, as put by Henry Mildmay: “The privileges not to be broke by our selves; when a man hath spoke once to a question, he ought to speak no more.”⁸⁵ A similar policy appears to have been in effect in the House of Lords. As Bishop Warner records, “The keeper that he might tell who stood up first, desired order

⁸³ Ibid., 36. Kyle argues that “In the Commons, silence, the obverse of noise, was a deliberate signifier of shock and protest. It was used to register displeasure with a speech; amazement at the audacity of the orator who had stepped outside the bounds of accepted rhetorical behavior;” see *Theater of State*, 47. One source records an opposite interpretation, where the Earl of Strafford comments in a committee that “he conceives that this silence argues a content;” see Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 85.

⁸⁴ Aston, *Diary*, 144.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 20.

in speaking, and one to speak but once in a question.”⁸⁶ Even John Pym, among the most vocal of MPs, moved that “no man that has spoke may spoke again.”⁸⁷ He drew attention to this discipline in a later speech, claiming that “If there were not something in my thoughts which no man else hath spoke, I should not have spoke.”⁸⁸ Considerations such as these perhaps moved Pym to give single, extended orations. One of them, given April 17, was said to have lasted for two hours.

Yet long debates ultimately made for a short session. Charles was eager for resolution on the question of supply, and expected its prompt approval to supersede all house business. In return, he promised to offer some concessions in response to parliamentary grievances. This posed a problem to some MPs, since the King’s insistence upon supply was itself among the chief grievances up for redress. Its opponents argued for the necessity of deliberations and for the benefits of an assembly whose members would “rather suffer for speaking truth, than truth should suffer for want of speaking.”⁸⁹ The session saw conflict between many MPs’ desire to establish “debate” as a rightful and indeed the primary parliamentary process, and Royalist insistence on MPs’ “duty” to approve the financial supply requested by the king.⁹⁰ This particular point of contention lay behind the Commons’ eventual – but by no means immediate – development of greater executive power. Despite MPs’ desire for debate and redress, and the attendant warnings that “necessity is an ill Councilor,”⁹¹ the growing sense of urgency perpetuated by the Lord Keeper and the House of Lords overshadowed the other proceedings in the House of Commons.

⁸⁶ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 111.

⁸⁷ Aston, *Diary*, 73.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁰ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 200: Sir Francis Seymour claimed “His duty and love to his King drew him one way. And ye trust ye country reposed in him another way.”

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

The agitation and excitement in the House, and its members' tendency toward extended and at times convoluted proceedings, were not the only causes for the perceived "delay." The conflict between "debate" and "duty" was aggravated in particular by a specific mood in the Commons: some MPs believed that their 1640 assembly called for a comprehensive re-examination of parliamentary roles and responsibilities. When considered in full, the proceedings of this brief session reveal a sense among these members of a watershed between the present assembly and those of their predecessors. These discussions of reform were often yoked with those touching the subject of precedent.

Attempts in the Short Parliament to dissent from the crown depended on supporting MPs' references to political precedent. This served as a way of legitimating dissent by framing it as a restoration of previous practice instead of as innovation. Even so, precedent was not beyond question. Some MPs expressed uncertainty over the legality and, at times, the political wisdom of adhering to parliamentary precedent. The most obvious and immediate point of reference was the most recent assembly: that of 1629. Some among the Short Parliament MPs had witnessed for themselves the remarkable scene at the dissolution of that earlier parliament: the speaker forcibly held in his chair by dissenting MPs while last-minute grievances were read in the chaotic closing minutes of the session. Eleven years of Charles's personal rule had not dulled the memory of the event. Attention in the Commons soon turned to it. According to Aston's notes for 18 April, long-serving MP Sir Robert Harley complained in his first speech to the Short Parliament of the circumstances of the previous parliament's dissolution.⁹² He urged the MPs present to consider it as a starting point for their debate: "let us not begin with the feet but with the head. With the chair the

⁹² Harley began his career as MP in James's parliament, in 1604.

offences done by the speaker the last day in refusing the question.”⁹³ Other MPs cautioned against so quickly taking up the mantle of the preceding parliament. On the “manner of the Kings dissolving,” Mr. Herbert “desired the house to forbear, told them they were putting the greatest Question that ever was put in a Parliament.”⁹⁴ This matter of balancing royal prerogative and parliamentary privilege required extraordinary care. As Rudyerd observed, his colleagues must “heed of the splinters of a broken Parliament for they will stick in the flesh.”⁹⁵

The citing of precedent provided no easy way to settle this balance. As MPs soon encountered, for every instance supporting an “aye” there seemed another likely example supporting a “nay.” Dissolutions of recent memory aside, MPs cited a wide range of precedents both for and against their prompt provision of the King’s desired supply. The Finch-Hatton recorder notes the variety of test cases introduced in Commons. MP Charles Jones, “no friend of the Court in the Short Parliament,”⁹⁶ cited “the 21^o of K James,” where the matter of supply was pursued only once a written declaration of grievances was presented to the King. Against this view, “Sir Philip Manering,” whom Cope identifies as “Strafford’s Secretary of State in Ireland,”⁹⁷ lauded the Irish Parliament for their “love” of the King, and sought to “[stir] up the House to follow their example.”⁹⁸ This sentiment echoed the speech given by the Lord Keeper John Finch two days previously, where he had urged Commons to remember that “the kingdom of Ireland in the last Parliament before this

⁹³ Aston, *Diary*, 14.

⁹⁴ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 163.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁹⁶ Simon Healy, “JONES, Charles (c.1595-1640), of Lincoln's Inn, London; later of Plas Du, Llanarmon, Caern.” *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604-1629*. Eds. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris. (Cambridge; Cambridge UP, 2010). Online edition.

⁹⁷ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 173 n. 2

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 173.

had given... 6 subsidies the second day of the Parliament” before receiving any redress of grievances from the King.⁹⁹ Other examples of past precedent invoked to encourage present supply were noted on 24 April, where Bishop Warner recorded in a committee meeting the Earl of Bridgewater’s comment that “In *Henry. 7 2 Ric[hard]. 2. Ed[ward]. 3.* often first they gave subsidies then remedy to grievances.”¹⁰⁰

Such strict adherence to precedent was considered problematic by some of Westminster’s more outspoken MPs, in part because the current session seemed so determined to defy it. Pym immediately rejected Jones’s citation of a supporting precedent, reportedly “showing a great difference between the present case and that in the 21st of King James.”¹⁰¹ Rudyerd noted that even though the parliament of “14 E[dward]: 3” gave subsidies to supply his “expedition into France, by the ill managing of his treasure” Edward’s efforts failed and he was ultimately forced to make truce. Presumably owing to this wasted supply, the following Parliament met with “nothing but jealousies and distempers.” With this example in view, Rudyerd suggests that it is not so much the letter of the precedents they chose to follow in 1640, but the spirit of such precedents. “In the 17th,” he notes “[Edward] called another Parliament... which took Success by their humble Carriage to him and his willingness to ratify their Liberties whereby all breaches were then made up.”¹⁰² This leads to Rudyerd’s complaint of MPs’ haughty carriage in previous sessions, an approach that he maintains will not yield any progress in their current assembly. High-profile MPs like Simonds D’Ewes and John Glynne, both gifted orators with great knowledge of England’s parliamentary history, could cite precedents at length. However, the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 166.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 110.

¹⁰¹ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 173.

¹⁰² Ibid., 139.

fact remained that the assembly of April 1640 met under unusual circumstances of deep resentment owing to the previous dissolution and the long period of personal rule. The atmosphere in the Lower House may have resembled that “moment of historical exhaustion and opportunity” that was later imagined by James Harrington as a precursor to revolution.¹⁰³ Such a moment cast into the question the use of historic legislative settlements in directing modern policy.

The issue of precedent thus proved a central battleground in the Commons’ debates. These sought to establish continuity between the Short Parliament and established parliamentary practice, and marked the MPs’ collective “attempt to understand themselves by understanding their past and their relation to it.”¹⁰⁴ Adherence to legislative precedent was deemed by some as the only source of legitimacy: MPs had been counseled by Sir Edward Coke in an earlier parliamentary session that “no man ought to take it on himself to be wiser than the laws.”¹⁰⁵ But even if, as Coke imagined, those laws represented an “artificial reason” whereby “what speaks through the judge is the distilled knowledge of many generations of men,”¹⁰⁶ they still remained to some extent subject to interpretation.¹⁰⁷ In such a way innovation might be clothed in a charter from the past. A poem that followed the dissolution of 1629 complains of “a sad presage of danger to the land / when Lawyers

¹⁰³ Harrington’s modern editor posits that Harrington’s “*Oceana* is not a utopia so much as an *occasione*, a moment of revolutionary opportunity... he does not use the modern term revolution, but it has come to denote a moment of historical exhaustion and opportunity, and this he explicitly does describe.” See James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xvii.

¹⁰⁴ J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), xiii

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ As Pocock recalls, “Selden was never more suggestive than when he called the common law the English Janus.” *Ibid.*, 36.

strive to get the upper-hand.”¹⁰⁸ This royalist poet parallels the lawyers’ work with another such “presage... when Prince and Peer to Peasants must obey / When lay-men must their teachers teach the way.” Both cases refer to interventions in the House of Commons that were designed to oppose royal prerogative, and “to curb the power of Kings.”

Many members of the Short Parliament were reluctant to trust that “custom therefore embodies a wisdom greater even than the wisdom of parliament.”¹⁰⁹ They sought to establish an expanded role for parliament as a deliberative institution capable of dissenting from the royal prerogative and exceeding its traditional duty, which was broadly understood as – to use the Speaker Glanville’s phrase – the “[giving] money for the Kings pleasure of calling us together as our Ancestors did before us.”¹¹⁰ Such ambition supported parliament’s shift from “event” to “institution.” The lively spirit of reformation, which had been so busy in England’s church (although not, for some, quite busy enough), appeared to have overflowed into its legislature as well.¹¹¹ For some forward-thinking MPs, the precedents they might set were more important than those they might follow. The potentially lasting effects of their decisions in the present session caused Peard, for example, to express the concern that in permitting the collection of ship money the MPs might thereby set a “precedent” that “might hurt the child unborn.”¹¹² Yet even with such hopes of establishing parliamentary authority, certain questions surely came to the minds of MPs: how could their assembly exist if they refused the royal request for supply? What authority – and what

¹⁰⁸ See “Upon the breach between ye King & ye Subiect, at ye dissolution of the Parliament. March 1629”, Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 8^v.

¹⁰⁹ Pocock, *Ancient Constitution*, 34.

¹¹⁰ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 196.

¹¹¹ The parliament’s functions “were not, and until 1640 were not presumed to be, either administrative or executive in nature.” See James S. Hart, Jr., “Rhetoric and reality: images of Parliament as Great Council,” in *The Experience of Revolution in Stuart Britain and Ireland*, ed. Michael J. Braddick and David L. Smith. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 74.

¹¹² Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 172.

purpose – would the parliament then have? Indeed, in the eyes of some observers it had only little. The critique of the Commons voiced in the House of Lords by Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, likely expressed a widespread opinion: Parliament was “like unto a child, make a leg, and kiss your hand... They can do nothing without the assent of this House.”¹¹³

The persuasive addresses of Benjamin Rudyerd presented a middle way between parliamentary reform and adherence to the role that Charles had imagined for the MPs at Westminster. This more pragmatic approach did not overlook Charles’s need of financial supply or the necessity of redressing grievances. Rudyerd cautioned his colleagues lest they “should ... now think better of an Imaginary than of a real Parliament.”¹¹⁴ For the parliament to effect change it must be assembled, and for this, it must remain (or so Rudyerd thought at the time) in the King’s good graces. Even so, Rudyerd proved a critical voice in the Commons, lamenting “this vacation of parliaments” during which “so many disorders have been committed in the violation of Laws, such invasions upon our Liberties.”¹¹⁵ He too sought an “imaginary” ideal of the Commons, and argued to his fellow MPs that “it lies in us to restore parliaments.”¹¹⁶ In this instance, Rudyerd’s goal of “restoration” refers not to modeling the assembly of 1640 after that of 1629, but instead after an ideal form and practice of parliament – one that would prove itself as an institution dedicated as much to the well-being of the English people as it was to the will or whims of the monarch. As Rudyerd claims, “a parliament is the bed of reconciliation between a king & his people.”¹¹⁷ In this, Rudyerd perhaps imagined something greater than the conjugal state described by one historian in his commentary on Henry VII’s relations with the Commons: “his most

¹¹³ Ibid., 85.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 139.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 140.

¹¹⁶ Aston, *Diary*, 4.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

faithful wife, as Lord Herbert truly said, was his parliament, and on its significant obedience he could always rely.”¹¹⁸ The later “bed of reconciliation” implied settling popular grievances, to be sure, but also ensuring an apparatus for the redress of future grievances as well.

Rudyard’s claims of “restoration” countered the King’s allegations that the reform-minded MPs in the Commons were failing to fulfill their rightful legislative duty. In Charles’s view, “his attachment to the traditional course of a parliament implied a reciprocal recognition by parliament of its responsibility to supply in wartime.”¹¹⁹ The failure of the Short Parliament reflects that Charles had little patience for the assembly when it ignored such responsibility. Naturally, the King’s critics saw Charles as the innovator instead. His expansion to the collection of Ship Money, for example, gives credence to that view.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, Charles’s claim to authority was strong enough to inspire loyalty from his supporters (both early and late),¹²¹ and even from prominent members of the parliamentary cause.¹²²

Positioning the parliament between “the king” and “his people,” Rudyard frames the Commons as an institution whose credit is established on popular representation. In promoting this relation, Rudyard’s voice was one among many. Accounts of the early debates in 1640 describe the efforts of numerous MPs who tested the extent of their role as

¹¹⁸ Geoffrey Baskerville, *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* (London: Bedford Historical Series, 1940), 13.

¹¹⁹ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 37.

¹²⁰ Ship Money “was a traditional levy that was made on coastal counties in times of national danger to provide for their safety by equipping the navy, and had been made use of by Charles in 1626-7...In 1635, the writs for Ship Money were extended to cover inland communities as well, a practice that continued until 1640;” see Angus Stroud, *Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 2002), 59.

¹²¹ Sharpe “argues that the king who was executed as a traitor in 1649 was neither a tyrant nor an absolutist and that his personal rule did not evoke the opposition that fought against him a few years later;” see Esther Cope, review of *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, by Kevin Sharpe. *American Historical Review* (1994): 551.

¹²² Notable among these is Sir Thomas, 3rd Lord Fairfax; see Chapter 4, section I.

representatives of the English public. That such members so carefully weighed their accountability to the citizen complicated their accountability to the king, whose expectation of single-mindedness in the Commons was soon foiled. While MPs actively undertook to “understand themselves by understanding their past,” they also sought to do so by determining the scope of their present obligations as public representatives. In contrast to the notions of political representation and participation put forward by Royalists such as Martin Parker, in his *Exact Description*, and John Finch, in his speeches as Lord Keeper, some of the assembled MPs emphasized their significance as actors, not only spectators, on behalf of the citizenry.

This more active form of representation relied upon discourse. That was the lifeblood of the “representative body” that Pym described. If parliament were to establish itself as an institution then it required this freedom at least; for a “happy parliament” to remain so it must also be “free.” In his first speech as Speaker of the House, Sir John Glanville “humbly move[d] for the Commons that they may be free in their persons from arrests & troubles to go about his Majesties service.”¹²³ These requests are recorded more specifically in another source, which itemizes Glanville’s insistence upon “Liberties”: that MPs be “free from Arrest” and that they enjoy “Freedom of Speech.”¹²⁴ The double freedom Glanville requests at the very outset of their fall session – freedom of speech and of person – is meant to lay the groundwork for voicing dissent in the Commons. But these privileges were by no means new. They had been incorporated already within a much longer history of parliamentary liberty that was perceived to be under threat. Freedom of speech, for example, was “one of the four ‘ancient privileges and liberties’ that the Speaker of the Commons sued the monarch

¹²³ Aston, *Diary*, 2.

¹²⁴ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 56. This source is H.L.R.O. Braye MS. 16.

for at the opening of Parliament.”¹²⁵ Tension between Charles and the Commons spurred Short Parliament MPs to articulate once again that freedom and patience were required for fruitful debate. “Duty” and expedience – “necessity,” even, which Milton later termed “the tyrant’s plea”¹²⁶ – bring about an altogether different result.

Some parliamentarians sought to develop a richer understanding of their role as representatives, and in so doing they emphasized the detrimental impact of dissolution. Although Charles had promised “a willing ear to all your just grievances,”¹²⁷ such a profession of goodwill surely remained overshadowed by its speaker’s previous offences in this regard. Many members in the House voiced their fears of the assembly being a short-lived one. Aston, for example, records their motions for annual sitting of Parliament rather than sitting the mercy of royal decision. To some, proper representation of the citizens entailed regular parliamentary sessions. “Our meeting here as a representative body is our life,” as John Pym claimed, and “when we are parted we fall in pieces, this is the greatest grievance.”¹²⁸ Speaker Glanville’s later description of the Commons as “a quintessence of the whole Kingdome”¹²⁹ may have been intended to urge the King and his council to consider that acts against representatives stand as acts against the represented. This model of representation is deployed to defend parliamentary liberty, foregrounding the implication that Charles actually acts against a broader public when he wrongs its elected MPs. Such belief sophisticates the simple definition of “tyranny” offered in Charles’s *Declaration: to all his loving subjects, of the causes which moved him to dissolve the last Parliament* (1640),

¹²⁵ Kyle, *Theater of State*, 14.

¹²⁶ *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, ll 393-394. See John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005), 123.

¹²⁷ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 56-7.

¹²⁸ Aston, *Diary*, 8.

¹²⁹ Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 55.

which calculated it simply as a product of public executions during the personal rule – of which, the King maintained, there were but few.

By the final days of the Short Parliament, two competing priorities had come into focus in the Commons. On one side, some MPs – and the King too – sought to let precedents guide their present assembly. On the other, the issue of “representation” stood as the imperative. This contest between precedent and representation was reflected in the opposition between “supply” and “grievances”, and, in another way still, in that between “duty” and “debate.” By such extension, those brief proceedings of the Short Parliament can be seen to have been moved in large part by two specific questions: could pro-parliament MPs find a place for dissent in the Commons; and, if so, would the King then permit it? MPs in the Short Parliament sought to serve in a way that could still have relevance even when the opinion of the House dissented from that of the Crown, thereby giving dissent an ongoing and acceptable place within the national deliberative assembly. Among the central issues of the Short Parliament, that of dissent looms large, if not largest. But who could voice it and where?

III DISSOLVING PARLIAMENT AND FORMING PUBLIC OPINION

The issue of dissent was soon settled by Charles. By early May 1640, he had learned of a Covenanter declaration to be read by dissenting MPs in the Lower House. This proved an unacceptable concession, threatening to admit into to the House what was for Charles an inadmissible voice. Upon learning of this prospective declaration, Charles shut down the

forum in which it was to be read.¹³⁰ On May 5, Charles delivered to both houses a brief speech in which he commended the Lords for their efforts at bringing about the granting of supply, criticized those “cunning” and “sediciously-affected” MPs who impeded its approval,¹³¹ and then ordered the Lord Keeper Finch to announce the dissolution of the Parliament. In this, at least, the Short Parliament followed precedent: like those assemblies cited by Rudyerd,¹³² and like its direct predecessor, this assembly too did not survive the king’s displeasure.

Parliamentary concerns were aired further in many publications that appeared in the aftermath of the dissolution. This activity in some cases continued where the Parliament had left off: in writings that were (to varying degrees) publicly available, politically-minded authors put to the question the legitimacy of precedent, of prerogative, and of rhetorical debate. These materials were published widely, judging from contemporary accounts that describe London in May 1640 as an environment where readers frequently encountered publications intended to agitate and persuade. That many of these writings were provoked by other public political writing as much as they were by the events at Westminster reveals their authors’ consciousness of the significance of the broadening literary-political culture in which they participated.

Public political writing after the dissolution of the Short Parliament often acknowledged the reciprocity at that moment between political practice and political writing. Affairs at Westminster dictated innovative responses in publication, and some new methods of dissemination demanded new action from those in positions of political

¹³⁰ See Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 23.

¹³¹ Charles, *Declaration* (1640), 46.

¹³² Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 139.

authority. Political writing issuing from anonymous poets and from Charles's own advisors reflects its authors' heightened awareness of public opinion. The royal publication of *His Majesties declaration: to all his loving subjects, of the causes which moved him to dissolve the last Parliament* (1640), for example, is itself motivated by this developing understanding of popular politics. Its authors recognized the need to court opinion, and – even more importantly – to influence the narratives of political activity that played a part in shaping it.

Not all reactions to the parliament's dissolution were literary. Many of the citizens who took to London's streets in April of 1640 to witness the assembly of this "happy parliament"¹³³ returned there again under different, and perhaps darker, circumstances. Although none of the main journal records of the session notes an outcry inside the Commons upon its dissolution, some diarists noted the occurrence of riots that took place in London and Southwark.¹³⁴ John Rous recorded several such public expressions of anger after the failure at Westminster: "Much discontent. Insurrections at London. Insolences by soldiers... Ship money exacted, and in diverse places diversely refused."¹³⁵ He offered fuller description of public expressions of discontent following the dissolution in a later section of his diary:

Upon the dissolving of the parliament, presently were two insurrections in one week, at Southwark and Lambeth; in the first the White Lion prison was broken and prisoners set free, &c.; in the second, Lambeth House in hazard, &c. One man

¹³³ Warner begins his diary of the Short Parliament with "*Parl. felicitur.*"

¹³⁴ Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 42.

¹³⁵ Rous, *Diary*, 88.

was taken and hanged and quartered; see a proclamation about it.¹³⁶

Rous's recording suggests that this negative sentiment was directed toward those figures of authority who may have been considered responsible for the Short Parliament's dissolution. Refusal of the controversial Ship Money, for example, directed popular discontentment at the King. Demonstrations at Lambeth House, the London residence of William Laud, the archbishop of Canterbury, may have been in response to his program of "popish" church reforms, his "upholding Charles's divine right in the face of Scottish resistance," and his affirmation "of the extensiveness of the king's prerogative powers."¹³⁷

More measured responses also appeared after the end of the parliamentary session. In contrast to the street demonstrations, there was a significant output of pro-Royalist verse in the wake of the dissolution. However, no significant concentration of parliamentarian poetry written directly in response to the failure at Westminster has survived in the extant manuscript miscellanies. At the time, citizens seem to have chosen either to riot for the Commons or to turn poet for Charles. One such poem appears in Rous's diary. Recorded following his account of the disruptions in London after the dissolution, the poem "On the Dissolution of the Short Parliament of 1640"¹³⁸ condemns MPs for provoking the King's wrath. Many others recorded this poem as well: it appears in this form in at least eleven contemporary manuscript miscellanies.¹³⁹ Its later inclusion in *Rump* (1662), a collection of

¹³⁶ Ibid., 90.

¹³⁷ Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 41-2.

¹³⁸ The poem appears in Rous, *Diary*, 88-89. All quotations are from this source, unless noted otherwise.

¹³⁹ This total is based on results from the Folger Library's first-line index catalogue (firstlines.folger.edu)

poetry and songs dating to the 1640s and 1650s, seems also to attest to its earlier popularity.¹⁴⁰

In describing the failure of dissent at Westminster, the poem “On the Dissolution” emphasizes the negative consequences of political dissent. Here, the anonymous poet describes a spectrum of opposition to the crown, dividing it into two groups guilty of “such high presumption.” First to receive criticism are those “inferior subjects... not shy, / To wrong the love that rests in majesty,” who through their questioning of “kings’ prerogatives... make a football of the crown.” The poem’s author writes in favour of a “noble order” similar to that emphasized in Parker’s *Exact Description of the manner how His Majestie and his nobles went to Parliament*. Most elaborate among the varied images in “On the Dissolution” that depict affronts to royal authority is the extended comparison between subjects and stars:

...should they all combine,
With Luna at the full, one sun would shine
Brighter then they; nor can he be subdued,
Though he but one, and they a multitude.
Say, subjects, you were stars, and ‘twere allowed,
You justly of your number might be proud;
Yet to the sun be humble, and know this,
Your light is borrowed – not your own, but his.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ See *Rump, or, An exact collection of the choicest poems and songs relating to the late times by the most eminent wits from anno 1639 to anno 1661* (1662).

¹⁴¹ Rous, *Diary*, 89.

This state cosmology outlined here is determinedly heliocentric, casting Charles as “the sun... that makes you warm.” The poet does little here to suggest that citizens might exercise direct influence upon the political centre. His poem strikes an uneasy balance between confirming the value of popular politics – “you justly of your number might be proud” – and preserving the traditional authority of the monarchy, from whom “your light is borrowed – not your own, but his.” Only limited legitimacy is granted to the public collective invoked here, while its expression of “insurrections” (as Rous describes) are condemned as acts of “teeming pride.” The poet also faults these demonstrations as ineffective and as instead having the opposite effect: “Kings,” he writes, “like Noah’s ark, are nearer to the skies, / The more the billows under them do rise.”

In his pointed criticism of MPs, the anonymous poet shows the members’ chief failing to be their inability to resolve their debate over the requested supply. He withholds his most explicit criticism of the assembled MPs until the final section of the poem, where he reiterates the opposition between “debate” and “duty” that was outlined in speeches by Charles and the Lord Keeper:

If faction thus our country’s peace distracts,
We may have words of parliaments, not acts.
Ill-ended sessions! and yet well begun;
Too much being spoke hath made too little done.¹⁴²

In this reading, the dissolution resulted directly from ineffective speech in the Commons. Members’ insistence on debate is caricatured here, as is the prospect of parliament as a deliberative institution. Their assembly – too much given to “faction” – proves one where

¹⁴² Rous, *Diary*, 90. The irony remains that the dissolution saw many parliamentary “acts” of riot, and many Royalist “words” in the poems that circulated after the dissolution.

“none must do any thing, but only say.” The poet in his final lines condemns failed parliamentary speech, criticising the Commons as having “through inactivity squandered the opportunity of a successful session.”¹⁴³ There he urges then to “stoop down,” and to “confess” that

You might be fruitful if that you were less.

Tremble, you threadbare commons; are you vexed

That lambs feed on you? lions will come next.¹⁴⁴

This line of criticism aims to close down avenues for dissent – both from the public and from their elected MPs. Citizens are criticized for revolting outside the House, just as MPs are chastised for their allegedly ineffective deliberation inside it. Casting “faction” as dissent, and parliamentary deliberation as active delay of England’s government, the poet seeks to deny the connection between parliamentary discourse and political power.

In other contemporary political writing, critique of the Parliament is framed in terms of skepticism about parliamentary language. Among the papers of the parliamentary diarist Bishop Lee Warner is found a brief manuscript titled “Parliament dictionary, or a ... metamorphosis.”¹⁴⁵ This document claims to be “the first expounding the strange sense and use of new and old words lately coined and stamped by the authority of the two houses in Parliament ... since the year ... 1640.”¹⁴⁶ It comprises over thirty pointedly satirical definitions of political and religious terms that were highly visible in contemporary political debates. The anonymous satirist’s critical aim is directed at reform-minded MPs in the Commons. His definition of “assembly,” for example, reflects the compiler’s anxiety about

¹⁴³ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 875.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁴⁵ See Bodleian MS Eng. B. hist. 203, fol. 85^v-87^v.

¹⁴⁶ The document stands as an early – perhaps earliest? – predecessor to the best-known work in this genre, Ambrose Bierce’s *The Cynic’s Wordbook* (1906), later termed *The Devil’s Dictionary*.

the truth of parliamentary speech: “the Assembly at Westminster (which some call the Dissembly).”¹⁴⁷ Other definitions contribute to the royalist strain in the dictionary:

Almighty: a compound of 2 Saxon Monasyllables all & might
... should be appropriated (as we profess in our Creed) to God
alone ... yet is usurped upon earth by the Church of Rome ...
and by the Apostate Protest., who blasphemously hath made
the Parliament such an other Almighty in England. ¹⁴⁸

Through this lens, the primary ends of parliamentary language are deception and self-promotion. Such comment might counter claims in the Lower House for the strength of the representative relationship between citizens and their MPs.

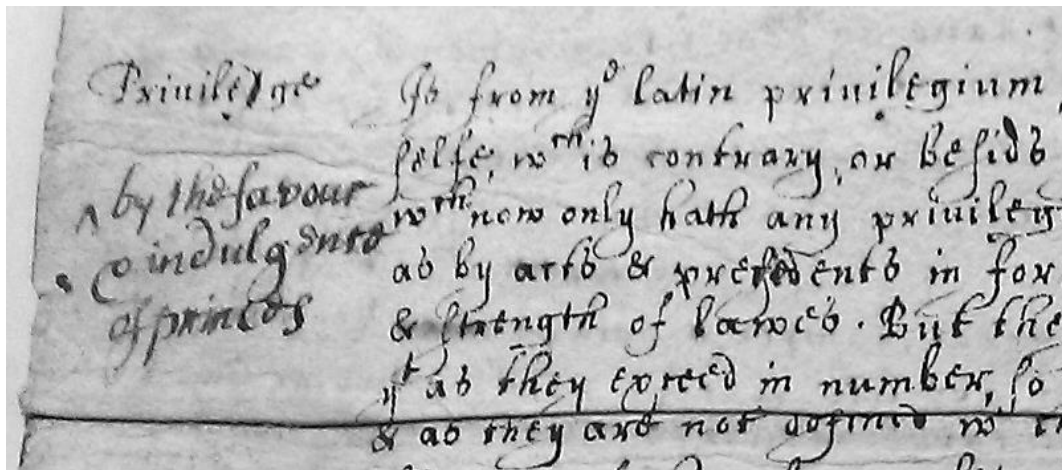
This critical effort was not undertaken in isolation, but countered competing efforts in contemporary political culture to reassess the place of discourse at Westminster. That much political comment responds to this issue – whether for or against – suggests strongly that parliamentary speech was an issue of significant concern at the end of Charles’s personal rule. The appearance of a parliamentary critique in the genre of a comic dictionary reflects the depth of such concerns; unlike similar criticism that takes the form of poetry or polemic, the “Parliament Dictionary” centres deliberately on the linguistic or rhetorical aspect of Westminster politics. But the satirist de-legitimizes such parliamentary language by representing it as incompatible with that used outside Westminster. It is characterized as “dissembly” – a form of sophistry intended only for the gain of the “parliament men” themselves. The satirist expands his critique of political language also to include elections,

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., fol. 85^v.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., fol. 84^r.

defining “Parliament man” as “a thing begotten by the mouth ... of the people, who were inflamed or stirred up thereto by drink, good cheer, fair words or money.”¹⁴⁹

But whatever its claims for the unreliability of political language, the “Parliament dictionary” itself remains a product of a literary culture. Although no archival evidence exists to prove that it circulated widely, the unordered pagination, limited selection (covering only letters a – p), and poor condition of the Bodleian Library copy may suggest that it had been shared between several readers. Moreover, multiple hands contribute additional marginal notes to complement some of the original definitions.¹⁵⁰



(fig. 2)

Entries for “Army” and “Assembly” are also annotated, although in a different hand from that pictured here. Well-worn, collaborative: might the “parliament dictionary” have been passed between Westminster colleagues of Bishop Warner? Whether so or not, multiple voices do combine in the text. Adding that parliamentary privilege derived from the “favour and indulgence of princes,” a secondary reader supplemented the original satiric entry with a recollection of precedent that affirmed the king’s status as the higher power. This claim

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., fol. 86^r.

¹⁵⁰ This feature of the “Parliament Dictionary” resembles the various “addenda” that supplement Ambrose Beirce’s original “devil’s dictionary,” *The Cynic’s Wordbook* (1906).

supports the legitimacy of the critic because his voice does not, like the “parliament man,” issue “against God, the King, the Church, and the State.”¹⁵¹ Thus the broad spectrum of political discourse – both inside and outside Westminster – is here categorized and judged according to its aim, and not only according to its status as “parliamentary” language.

Attention to political speech leads to the revision of earlier writing, as poets append corrective comment to texts already in circulation. Charles’s dissolution of the Commons and the subsequent criticism of its members both dictate the expansion of the anonymous poem “To the Lower House of Parliament,”¹⁵² examined above (see page 46). Written upon the Short Parliament’s assembly in April 1640, the poem reappears in a revised and expanded form in two separate Bodleian Library manuscripts.¹⁵³ The modifying poet – presumably another author – reframes and even reverses the original poem with an additional stanza, which itself appears to have been taken from the contemporary poem “On the Dissolution”:

No king, nor bishop please you what have we got.
an outside English, and an inside Scot,
While faction thus our Countries peace distracts,
We may have words of Parliament, not acts.
Ill ended sessions, and yet well begun,
too much being spoke hath made too little done,
so faction thrive, Puritanism bears sway,
none must doe any thing, but only say.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., fol. 86r.

¹⁵² This version of the poem is recorded in Worcester College and British Library manuscripts.

¹⁵³ See Bodleian MS Ashmole 36, 37, fol. 87^r, and Bodleian MS Douce 357, fol. 6^v.

These lines reflect the timing of their addition after the Short Parliament's dissolution. Incongruous with the gambling imagery that informs the first section of the poem "To the Lower House," and also with its quietly implied sense of political opportunity, the new ending rather condemns the MPs' tendency to debate. The original poem's message to those about to "undertake the game" is overwritten here with a broadly-addressed, critical reading of the "ill ended" parliamentary session and its failed debates. The revising poet thus follows the oft-cited chain of association from "debate" to "delay," from thence to "denial," and finally to "dissent."

The poem "On the Dissolution" responds as much to the public reaction to the event as it does to those factors that were thought to have caused it. Its interaction with the poem "To the Lower House" suggests the work of a poet who sought to quiet the post-dissolution "tumults" that were directed towards Charles and Laud by assigning blame to the Commons, where "too much being spoke hath made too little done." But this corrective surely proved an ill-judged one: although MPs were silenced by dissolution, citizens kept talking, and poets kept writing. The event of the Short Parliament's dissolution was as spectacular as its assembly. Public reactions to the event in verse and in London's streets prove just how polarizing it was. It invited spectators and readers to take sides, and in so doing it turned at least some of them into actors and authors. In the case of the emended and expanded poem "To the Lower House," the dissolution provoked a politically-minded poet to modify the account already in circulation. The agency of this poet lies in redirecting an existing narrative of the parliament that had developed in publications on its periphery (such as that offered in the poem "To the Lower House"). Here, one publicly available representation was selected and promoted over another. The extensive recopying of the verses "On the

Dissolution” attests to their popularity, and indeed the poem’s currency may have led to its partial deployment in answering “To the Lower House.”

These disparate instances demonstrate how poets might through their writings frame a notional assembly for political debate, inasmuch as their works present to the reader an encounter between opposing opinions. The expanded version of “To the Lower House,” for example, can be read as a verse rebuttal or rejoinder to the parliamentary sentiment ventured in the earlier version. It contains the opening statement espousing some hope for parliamentary procedure and achievement of redress at the session’s outset, and also the subsequent revision. Here, royalist revisions serve as a corrective to what was perceived as wayward political verse. The revised edition of the poem may be considered as the work of two separate authors, and in a way not just one poem, but two. It is a circulated unit, whose internal division of authorship and political perspective may have been perceptible to a knowledgeable and discerning reader. And to readers such as this, connections fashioned between texts in print and manuscript support a burgeoning, unofficial deliberative assembly that existed outside Westminster.

The formation of relationships – or “textual communities”¹⁵⁴ – between separate pieces of writing that came to be joined through circulation and poetic intervention may give order to the literary culture that arose about the Short Parliament. What seem upon first reading as isolated examples of poetic revision and rejoinder may take on a significant structure when considered in the broader view. In the case of “On the Dissolution,” which provides a closing fragment to some copies of “To the Lower House,” the text’s scribal life

¹⁵⁴ See Elizabeth Sauer, *Paper Contestations*, 9: “Textual communities, that is, communities generated through the production of books and various kinds of engagements with them, are imaginatively and materially conceived, constructed, or represented.”

points to a broader tendency in political poetry of the period to borrow and piece together sections of likely verse – not only in assembling miscellanies but in individual poems. The copy of “On the Dissolution” recorded in Bodleian Library MS Tanner 306¹⁵⁵ proves distinct from other copies. It ends differently, with an additional four lines added to what in other manuscript copies is the ending of the poem – which was the very section added to the poem “To ye Lower House” after the Short Parliament’s dissolution. The difference invites further questions about the circumstances of its composition and circulation. Perhaps the added closing section of the poem as it appears in Bodleian Library MS Tanner 306 was itself a later addition to an earlier, and shorter version of “On the Dissolution.” In this case, and in the case of the poem’s presumably earlier repurposing, application of poetic fragments expanded and even answered poems already in circulation. However they ultimately took shape, these poems enjoy a scribal life that demonstrates how a well-placed and widely-read text can accrue mass and momentum in its recopying and revision. Such work might be done by sympathetic poets and readers, or by those whose additions and emendations subvert the dissenting poem of a political opponent.

Upon the dissolution, the significant quantity of writing in favour of Charles overshadowed the relatively small number of extant publications from opposing voices. Aside from the records of tumults and insurrections, expressions of the parliamentary position dating to this period are scarce. Parliamentary clerk and historian John Rushworth referred to some such rhetoric, but he did not excerpt any in his own accounts. The diary of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a document included in Rushworth’s *Historical Collections for the Year 1640*, records in an entry dated 9 May 1640 its author’s notice of “a Paper

¹⁵⁵ See Bodleian MS Tanner 306/2, fol. 290^v.

pasted upon the Old Exchange, animating Apprentices to sack my House upon Monday following early.”¹⁵⁶ Within a week’s time, such expressions had multiplied. As the Archbishop himself recorded on that following Monday, “Libels are continually set up in all places of note in the City.”¹⁵⁷ These materials promoted agitation, but given the constraints of their format and genre may not have offered any extended, discursive comment on the late falling-out at Westminster.

One poem dating to the period following the dissolution paints royalist speech as just as problematic as parliamentary speech, and so returns the accusations levelled at the MPs’ infelicitous debates. “A Song of the Lord Keeper his entertainment, in Cambridge as he went to York,”¹⁵⁸ written by an anonymous author, describes a succession of failed speech acts involving the Lord Keeper, Sir John Finch. The poem relates Finch’s progress through various colleges at Cambridge, beginning with his visit to Emmanuel, where

He intended a speech but when he did spy
In his Arminian band Antichristianity,
So zealous he was and so laid him about,
My Lord got not a good word the whole speech throughout.¹⁵⁹

This “intended” speech gives way to a scene at Peterhouse of speech expected but not delivered:

And the Image of St Peter as most men say
Should have given him a miraculous speech by the way

¹⁵⁶ John Rushworth, “Historical Collections: 1640, May,” *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 3: 1639-40*, British History Online.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 11 May 1640.

¹⁵⁸ Citations here from the copy of the poem in Bodleian MS Douce 357, fols. 5^v-6^v. It also appears in Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 19^r.

¹⁵⁹ Bodleian MS Douce 357, fol. 5^v.

And not only St Peter but if any there,
Had made a speech t'had been a miracle I swear.

Finch's next stop – at “Clarehall” – provides an additional scene of problematic rhetoric. There “the Recorder had a speech but in it some there, / Smelt the finger of the Alderman and Mr. Mayor.”¹⁶⁰ In this case, the utterance's authenticity is called into doubt. These various instances of rhetorical failure ultimately lead to the poet's final, fitting criticism of speech in excess: “But why were there not speeches more, / Because my Lord's ears were very sore / With hearing so many.”¹⁶¹ This unique poem¹⁶² observes problematic political speech outside the lower House. In this view, royalist-authored representations might equally challenge the perceptions and even the patience of London audiences.

Charles's dissolution of the Short Parliament proves to have been especially generative of literary expression, which sought in various ways to gain purchase on London's political class. In its scope and content, this body of writing reflects contemporary authors' acknowledgment of public opinion as an important variable in the political calculus. This output also affected Charles's own political strategy. The tumults in London that followed the dissolution urgently required him to account for the rift at Westminster, but the “abundance” of information already in circulation about the failed parliamentary session also – and perhaps more pressingly – demanded his response.¹⁶³ This issued in *His Majesties declaration: to all his loving subjects, of the causes which moved him to dissolve the last Parliament* (1640), a document that followed the tradition,¹⁶⁴ if not the form, of Charles's

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., fol. 6^r.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., fol. 6^v.

¹⁶² The poem stands as the lone instance encountered in my archival research of such targeted anti-royalist critique dating to the wake of the Short Parliament's dissolution.

¹⁶³ Esther Cope speculates that an “abundance of information about the Parliament” was obtainable during the session. See Cope, “The King's Declaration,” 330.

¹⁶⁴ Charles offered a similar *Declaration* after the dissolution of 1629

previous royal declarations. Comparison of the *Declaration* of 1640 with those published before his period of personal rule reveals a new approach taken by Charles and his advisors in response to public concerns after the Short Parliament's dissolution. At this unstable political moment, the *Declaration* marks a bold attempt to gain control of the public narrative of recent events at Westminster. In putting forward what its authors intended as a definitive public record of the proceedings, the *Declaration* aimed to answer broader concerns over the failed parliamentary session, and to influence the public reaction to the unexpected prorogation. Its success might be measured by the extent that it shifted blame for recent political disappointments away from Charles and his inner circle of advisors.

At its outset, the *Declaration* resembles the earlier royal missives that followed dissolutions of parliament. Regarding the King's decisions concerning "the calling, adjourning, proroguing, and dissolving of Parliament," the very first sentence states he is "not bound to render any account but to God alone, no more than of his other Regal actions."¹⁶⁵ In this Charles takes a line from his *Declaration* of 1629, where he states that "he is not bound to give an account to any, but to God only, whose immediate Lieutenant and Vice Regent He is."¹⁶⁶ The terms of critique that appear in the previous *Declaration* (1629) – "undutiful and seditious" – are applied once again to the Short Parliament MPs.¹⁶⁷ The *Declaration* of 1640 also uses phrasing similar to that used in previous declarations to explain the purpose of the publication, namely that "his Majesty ... hath thought fit ... to set down by way of Declaration, the true causes as well of his Assembling, as of his Dissolving

¹⁶⁵ Charles, *Declaration* (1640), 1-2.

¹⁶⁶ Charles, *His Maiesties Declaration to All His Louing Subiects, of the Causes which Moued him to Dissolue the Last Parliament Published by His Maiesties Speciaall Command* (Dublin, 1629), 2.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3; see also Charles, *Declaration* (1640), 3.

the late Parliament.”¹⁶⁸ Contemporary readers found much in the pamphlet that was consistent with the genre and with Charles’s preferred methods of public relations.

But the *Declaration* of 1640 soon proved itself as a departure from established practice. In terms of length alone the later document expands significantly upon its predecessors. With one exception, it was the longest printed declaration yet of Charles’s career.¹⁶⁹ The *Declaration* offers an extensive account of the brief parliamentary session, including references to particular speeches and summaries of certain days’ proceedings. The summary reflects the ideology of a royalist author who “treat[s] messages from the crown as the principal events of the Parliament,”¹⁷⁰ and it culminates in a reproduction of Charles’s speech at the dissolution. Despite this focus, the *Declaration* describes in unprecedented detail the proceedings in the Lower House, surpassing the treatments that appear in previous declarations.¹⁷¹ The earlier *Declaration* that had followed the dissolution of 1629, by contrast, recorded a relatively narrow assortment of parliamentary occurrences that took place over a three-year period. These were cited in support of that *Declaration*’s argument for the king’s right in dissolving parliament. Unlike that of 1629, whose author had selected various events in the Commons as emblematic of parliamentary provocation, the *Declaration* of 1640 offers a record that in its breadth appears to make some concession to the significance of public opinion. With such fuller reference to the goings on inside

¹⁶⁸ Charles, *Declaration* (1640), 2.

¹⁶⁹ That exception being *A large declaration concerning the late tumults in Scotland* (1639), a vast document totalling 436 pages.

¹⁷⁰ Cope, “The King’s Declaration,” 326.

¹⁷¹ Strictly speaking, the level of detail may have raised questions of parliamentary privilege. Mr St John: refers to “an Act in H. 4 not printed; That no man should speak to the King or any other of what passeth in the house.” Cope, *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, 179.

Westminster, citizens might do more than simply take the King on his word,¹⁷² but could more reasonably feel able to judge for themselves the session and its outcome.

In presenting such an opportunity, the *Declaration* that followed the Short Parliament exceeds the scope of Charles's earlier engagements with citizens and with public political writing. That he would respond in print to publications unwelcome to the crown was certainly no innovation in 1640. Such dissemination had met with Charles's censure before. In 1626, he issued *A Proclamation prohibiting the publishing, dispersing and reading of a Declaration or Remonstrance, drawn by some Committees of the Commons-House of the late dissolved Parliament*. That broadside had put forward a simple strategy for dealing with this counter-narrative: prohibition, or censorship. There Charles had sought to constrain the means of production ("publishing"), social networks of political readers ("dispersing"), and individual reception ("reading"). Once again in 1629, a royal *Declaration* responded to problematic publications or representations of royal practice. As the royal author claimed at the outset of that text,

We have thought good to set down thus much by way of Declaration, that We may appear to the world, in the truth and sincerity of our own Actions, and not in those colours, in which We know some turbulent and ill affected Spirits... would represent Us to the public view.¹⁷³

This later approach proved the less reactionary of the two. Instead of prohibiting offensive representations, the *Declaration* of 1629 promoted a compelling counter-representation of

¹⁷² John Rous readily accepted the king's account in 1629: "This parliament was dissolved, March 2, by proclamation. See the book of the king's declaration, made to his subjects, of the causes why he dissolved it. See Rous, *Diary*, 36.

¹⁷³ Charles, *Declaration* (1629), 4.

Charles. But the *Declaration* of 1640 undertakes its own re-positioning of the royal image – which “all men may easily judge”¹⁷⁴ – against a public record of political affairs and parliamentary proceedings.

Whatever the purported freedom of such judgment, the later *Declaration* was guided by Charles’s own attempts to preserve his authority through strategic citations of political precedent. Like the MPs who had gathered that spring, Charles was conscious of the role that precedent might play in lending legitimacy to political decisions. It also played a role in his condemnation of dissenters in the Commons. At its outset, the *Declaration* laments the “undutiful and seditious carriage of divers of the lower house,” which proved

enough to have made [Charles] averse to those ancient and accustomed ways of calling his people together, when instead of dutiful expressions towards his Person and Government, they vented their own malice and disaffections to the State, and by their subtle and malignant courses, endeavored nothing more then to bring into contempt and disorder all Government and Magistracy.¹⁷⁵

Later statements in the pamphlet echo this condemnation of the Commons’ departure from precedent. The MPs are said to have “[forgotten] the true use and institution of Parliaments,”¹⁷⁶ and to “have been... far from treading in the steps of their Ancestors.”¹⁷⁷ Charles promoted his adherence to tradition more widely also. In another contemporary

¹⁷⁴ Charles, *Declaration* (1640), 52.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

publication, he responded to parliamentary demands by “repeat[ing] the famous dictum: ‘Nolumus leges Angliae mutari’ (‘We do not wish that the laws of England be changed’).”¹⁷⁸ However, the Parliament had overstepped the boundaries of law and tradition when its members reached, as Charles alleged in his *Declaration*, for “that Regal power, that is truly mine.”¹⁷⁹

Whatever its aim to provide a comprehensive political narrative upon which citizen readers’ opinions might be based, the *Declaration* does make pointed departures from other records in its retelling of the events leading up to the breaking of parliament. Some of these differences seem calculated to sway public opinion in favour of the King as he amplifies his critique of Commons in print. For example, in place of those “cunning and ill affectioned” MPs blamed in the May 5 speech, the *Declaration* attributes the dissolution to “the malicious cunning, of some few seditiously-affected men.”¹⁸⁰ This rephrasing frames the accused in terms of Church and State law, holding them guilty both of sin (“malice”) and of treason (“sedition”). Further, the *Declaration* extends the disavowal of guilt on the part of the Crown and Lords, claiming “that it was neither your Lordships fault, *nor mine*, that it is not so,”¹⁸¹ and inserts Charles’s “wish that [the Commons] had remembered”¹⁸² their duty to provide the requested supply. For his part, Charles carefully maintains that he was following precedent, and that the MPs were in error by neglecting it. At all points the pamphlet serves to deflect blame from Charles, directing instead it towards those MPs

¹⁷⁸ Corinne C. Weston, “England: Ancient Constitution and Common Law,” in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 395.

¹⁷⁹ Charles, *Declaration* (1640), 46. This telling phrase appears in the *Declaration*’s reproduction of Charles’s closing speech, but is absent from other diarists’ accounts.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 43; italics indicate text that does not appear in journal accounts of the speech.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 45.

“whose sinister and malicious courses enforced his Majesty to dissolve this Parliament.”¹⁸³

And should this attribution of blame not persuade its reader, the *Declaration* takes one last measure to preserve Charles’s reputation by stating that “His Majesty was ... enforced by the advice of His Privy Council to resolve to break up and dissolve the parliament.”¹⁸⁴

The *Declaration* makes clear Charles’s position on the viability of dissenting voices in the Commons. The document centres on his construal of Parliamentary proceedings – “debate” – as invariably tending toward “delay.” This delay in parliamentary process was deemed unsuitable, and as such was taken as “the worst kind of denial.”¹⁸⁵ Entire days of the Commons’ debate are flatly condemned as entirely unproductive, and the author further disdains the “many discourses and debates” aired in the Commons touching their pretended Grievances.¹⁸⁶ The very debates described here as “without ... any resolution at all”¹⁸⁷ remain the same ones that, in a different light, seemed particularly generative of consensus among MPs – to which comments such as the following from Sir John Suckling attest: “This house is the forge & the Irons are in the fire.”¹⁸⁸ Following the associations outlined in royalist poetry circulating at the time, the *Declaration* codes “Debate” as a negative, as synonymous with “Delay” and “Denial.” And to these claims are further added those of “sedition” and “malice.”

Strong claims against elected representatives lead in the final passage of the *Declaration* to a reimagined relationship between subject and monarch, one that

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 41. As Adamson speculates, “the King’s later claim that he was forced to break up Parliament by his Privy Council seems far from reality;” see Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 17.

¹⁸⁵ Charles, *Declaration* (1640), 45.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁸⁸ Aston, *Diary*, 124.

circumvents intermediaries in parliament. In addition to the pamphlet's positive appeal to the populace as arbiters in the case of the dissolved parliament, it proclaims that all men

may freely address themselves, by their humble Petitions to his Sacred Majesty, who will graciously hear their complaints, and give such fitting redress therein, that all his people shall ... be fully satisfied, that no persons or assemblies can more prevail with his Majesty, than the Piety and Justice of his own Royall nature.¹⁸⁹

This notable pledge in print, the likes of which had not been seen in any of the earlier royal declarations discussed here, emphasizes the great extent to which the *Declaration* of 1640 was for Charles an experiment in populism. It can be read as an attempt to outflank parliament in the struggle for support against Scotland's Covenanters. It did not go unnoticed. Rous in his diary notes the Yorkshire gentry's petition to Charles's where they cite his "fatherly care of your pore people, that your Majesty hath vouchsafed, by your printed declaration, to invite them to the pouring out of their complaints into your princely ear."¹⁹⁰ The statement reflects Charles's interest at that time in circumventing parliament, and leaves the reader to wonder if Charles intended a more permanent return to personal rule. Charles's success in the second Bishops War, it has been proposed, might "have meant the end of Parliament altogether."¹⁹¹ Already at the dissolution in May he was perhaps making plans to govern without it. At least, he seems to have imagined some arrangement

¹⁸⁹ Charles, *Declaration* (1640), 54-55.

¹⁹⁰ Rous, *Diary*, 91.

¹⁹¹ Trevor-Roper, *Religion, Reformation, and Social Change*, 237.

wherein he might treat more directly with the public in redressing such grievances as he thought fit to hear.

IV CONCLUSION

The return to Westminster politics in 1640 after the personal rule dramatized the opposition between king and parliament that so profoundly influenced the literature and politics of that decade. Among the many points of contention between the two sides, it is the troubled issue of political speech that informs the present study. The MPs who still remembered the previous dissolution of 1629 and the decade-long absence of parliament that followed sought to renew the liberty of debate in the Commons and to revive parliament as an active member of the body politic. Their voices are a major defining feature of the journals and diaries that recorded the Short Parliament. For Charles, his suspicions about incursions on royal prerogative and his growing sense of urgency regarding the Bishops Wars left him unappreciative of extended parliamentary debates. In the face of royal concerns, the MPs' debates seemed a "delay as good as denial."

Royal concern about parliamentary discourse was taken up also in literary writing that circulated after the Short Parliament's dissolution. Politically-minded authors further questioned the usefulness of MPs' debates and MPs' authority to dissent from the king. Underlying the controversy over parliamentary privilege and royal prerogative was the question of whether rhetorical deliberation in parliament was a sufficient guide to decision-making at Westminster. With this concern in view, allegations of misrepresentation and of rhetorical failure became points of critique in contemporary political writing. Although they

were most often leveled against MPs by supporters of Charles, royalist political speech did not entirely escape such criticism.

Uncertainty about the political arrangement at Westminster invited much broader political debate. Following the Short Parliament some authors addressed political speech outside of the Commons, as encountered in their own forum of politically-minded authors and readers. As subsequent chapters of this study will demonstrate, concerns located in Westminster about the legitimacy of parliamentary rhetoric expanded to include a similar concern for various forms of political deliberation and discussion: if speech in parliament was suspect, then what was the status of public political speech? The “soundscape of parliament”¹⁹² set the stage for the wider Babel of public discussion erected in the early 1640s. In both political arenas, discourse was by turns celebrated and condemned. But the range of reactions from traditional authorities to this increasingly public political culture suggests a new acknowledgment of the importance of public opinion. Charles’s unprecedented *Declaration ... of the causes which moved him to dissolve the last Parliament* (1640), even though motivated perhaps more by his hatred of the Commons than for his love of the commoners, marks a significant departure from his traditional politics. Its reflection of a new attitude towards public opinion, as well as its forging of the King’s opposition to Parliament, foreshadows the rhetorical and political engagements of the subsequent years.

¹⁹² Kyle, *Theater of State*, 5.

2. Representing and Defining Parliament: Milton, Smectymnuus, and the Long Parliament, 1640 – 1644

Stand up Smectymnuus, & hear thy trial;
Thy monstrous Title puts me to a pause:
Was ever any Non-Conformist Loyal?
Loves he the King, that disobeys his laws?¹

Robert Wild, “The Scotch Riddle Unfolded”

Although the Short Parliament did, as John Pym feared, “fall in pieces,”² it soon found itself put together again. Charles’s failure in the Second Bishops War led him back to Westminster. In obvious contrast to its predecessor, this second parliament of 1640 came to be known as “the Long Parliament.” Notwithstanding desertion, recruiter elections, and purges, it sat until 1649, and also again – but only briefly – on the eve of Charles II’s restoration in 1660. During their embattled first year, members of the House enjoyed long-awaited success in opposing the royal prerogative. Their achievements exceeded the Short Parliament’s faltering return to the radical potential of the preceding session of 1629, which,

¹ Bodleian MS Don. B. 8, p. 443.

² See Pym’s speech of 17 April: “Our meeting here as a representative body is our life, when we are parted we fall in pieces, this is the greatest grievance.” See Thomas Aston, *The Short Parliament Diary of Sir Thomas Aston*, ed. Judith Maltby (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1988), 8.

although ending in controversy over a decade previously, still inspired MPs' dissenting voices in 1640.

Writers inside Westminster and also on its periphery took exceptional interest in the rise of the Long Parliament. Increasingly bold claims for parliamentary authority found expression in the Commons, and MPs who published speeches in print ensured that their voices were heard also more widely. The year that followed the Short Parliament's dissolution witnessed much literary activity from political observers surrounding Westminster. Their comment issued in political poetry and polemic that sought to resolve the uncertainty about the relationship between king and parliament. Contemporary royalist political thought held that the assembly's chief claim to legitimacy was the king's good grace. For the lawyers whose jurisprudence inspired the "parliamentarian constitutionalist revolution of 1640-42," parliamentary power rested upon "the common law ... [which] represented a body of fundamental law protecting the birthrights of the English people."³ But the assembly's authority in the eye of the public might derive from more immediate means: as a later political critic observes, "the parliamentary regime lives by discussion."⁴ The work of the MPs, polemicists, and poets who went great lengths to augment this life during the early years of the Long Parliament provide the subject of this chapter.

The return to parliament in fall 1640 was not in itself a clear victory for the MPs who stood in opposition to Charles and to the royal prerogative. Much skepticism remained about parliamentary speech after Charles's condemnation of the Short Parliament debates as

³ Eliot Vernon and Philip Baker, "Introduction: The History and Historiography of the *Agreements of the People*," in *Agreements of People, the Levellers and the Constitutional Crisis of the English Revolution*, ed. Eliot Vernon and Philip Baker (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 1.

⁴ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York, 1963), 66. Qtd. in Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 126.

“delay [which was] the worst kind of denial.”⁵ As one former MP complained before the Long Parliament, “it is a witless thing to petition the King for a parliament; it will not blow the Scottish rebels away.”⁶ Against this opposition some Long Parliament MPs promoted the value and viability of deliberative political dissent. They did so first in the Commons, where reforms sought to smooth the passage of debate. Some MPs even contributed their own money to the security for Charles’s financial supply, effectively paying for their privilege. Others promoted their proceedings more widely through printed parliamentary speeches that circulated outside Westminster. Some of these publications aimed to demonstrate successful debates, representing the rationality and productivity of MPs’ rhetorical deliberations. Pamphlets such as *Mr. Grimston’s Speech in the High Court of Parliament* (1640) brought readers into the rhetorical space of the Commons chamber. Thus both the Commons’ rhetoric and its legislative concerns encountered wider scrutiny as the Long Parliament became more visible to the public.

Debates at the outset of the Long Parliament over the legitimacy and use of parliamentary discourse prove lastingly connected with what may seem much broader questions of political authority and influence at Westminster. The influence at Westminster of church officials – which might even appear to threaten “popery” – and some forms of royal intervention were seen as constraints on deliberative process in the Commons. Early objections from MPs and political authors to what appeared an increase in the influence of England’s bishops reflected widespread anxiety about alternative influences on affairs of state in areas that traditionally were the purview of the Commons. MPs and political authors

⁵ Charles I, *His Majesties Declaration* (London, 1640), 45.

⁶ Henry Spiller, 21 November 1640. See Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 1.230.

observed with dismay that such groups could be in ascendancy over parliament, and in their own right take on parliamentary roles as assemblies with profound political influence. Anxiety over the matter was heightened as critics equated some forms of Presbyterian political authority with the influence of the unreformed, Roman church on English politics. These commentators suspected, as Milton soon did, that “new presbyter is but old priest writ large.”⁷ To some of its observers, the embattled parliament faced adversaries motivated by royalist and by Roman Catholic interests both. It is no coincidence that the critic who despaired of the Commons’ ability to “blow away” the Scots, Henry Spiller, faced charges of recusancy.⁸

Surrounding the Long Parliament were public debates that soon proved more visible, more viable, and more engaging than the political debates of recent memory. One such exchange, the pamphlets that have come to be known as the Smectymnuan controversy, linked the uncertain associations between church government and state government with those existing also between political rhetoric and political action. This controversy initially issued from a group of politically-connected clergymen and the prominent scholar Bishop Joseph Hall – “our English Seneca,” as one clergyman describes him.⁹ Although centred on issues pertaining to episcopacy, some of these pamphlets’ most significant claims were made for and against the soundness of parliamentary debate and decision.

Between them, authors on both sides of the Smectymnuan debate offer competing claims for how parliament is best addressed, and how that assembly’s deliberations might

⁷ “On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament” in *John Milton, the Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (Harlow: Longman, 1997), 298-300.

⁸ On charges of recusancy, Spiller was “taken into custody in November 1640, and his wife was convicted of recusancy early in the following year.” See *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604-1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris, 2010. Online ed.

⁹ See Thomas Hall, *Samaria's downfall, or, A commentary (by way of supplement) on the five last verses of the thirteenth chapter of Hosea* (1660), 133.

best proceed. The Smectymnuan debate proves the durability of the concerns over political language that defined the Short Parliament, and the possibility of a much wider application of the parliamentary advice they offered: the contributors' attention to rhetoric extends self-consciously to their own work of animadversion. In either assembly – MPs gathered in the Commons or authors engaged in prose controversy – authority depended on language. That “Smectymnuus” elicited multiple poetic responses is further proof of public attention to the debate, and demonstrates that participants in prose controversy could also have a public life that exceeded their own pamphlets.¹⁰

The controversy eventually attracted the attention of John Milton, himself relatively young in comparison with the Smectymnuan authors and their opponents. He had no doubt followed other prose debates as a reader, but Milton's immersion now also as a contributor to controversy permitted his greater exploration of rhetoric's application in the service of political and religious affairs. He engaged there in what was presumably much more prolonged and more public form of discourse than he had experienced previously, whether during the exercises he completed at Cambridge or in his own independent education. But he evidently came to embrace that rhetorical work.¹¹ In this exchange Milton tested, and perhaps even discovered, his own conceptions of toleration and liberty within the context of the wider debate, as it progressed through issues of episcopacy, literacy, and public reason. Among the Smectymnuan authors it is Milton who perhaps most visibly promotes a broader acceptance of reasoned political dissent, embodied by the citizens' elected representatives in parliament. If such dissent is deemed acceptable, then governance (and the reason it

¹⁰ Several poems featuring “Smectymnuus” survive. See Bodleian MS Don. b. 8, p. 443, and British Library Harley MS 4931, fols. 16r-17v.

¹¹ “Milton cut his teeth in the world of controversial exchange.” See Nigel Smith, “The anti-Episcopal tracts: republican Puritanism and the truth in poetry,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 159.

required) must be distributed – but how far distributed?¹² Milton’s exploration of this question reveals that the concerns behind his later pamphlet *Areopagitica* (1644) were developing already in the Smectymnuan controversy. Consideration of *Areopagitica* in the Smectymnuan context permits some view of a longer trajectory of Milton’s thought.¹³ Milton there applies a version of the model of rhetoric that emerges from the “dust and heat” of that controversy, one that gestures toward greater accommodation in debate of opposing positions, and that reflects more visibly and consciously on the relationships between speakers.

The specific discursive and ideological work within the Long Parliament, as well as in the Smectymnuan pamphlets and their successors, contributes lastingly to what has been described as the “construction of the revolutionary reader.”¹⁴ Such activity reached a height with the execution of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford (12 May 1641), an event that proved the extent of parliamentary executive power. It also tested the limits of public reason as readers balanced competing representations both of Strafford, whether as traitor or martyr, and of the Commons, as either an agent of political reform or, more darkly, of judicial murder. Inciting numerous competing publications in print and manuscript, the contest between these perspectives foreshadows the time when citizens might choose to venture more than just their opinions either for king or for parliament. These contemporary

¹² It has been argued that the series of Laudian church reforms instituted in the early 1640s were designed to reflect “the newly emerging logic of the politics of the day,” where “more than ever before, the government needed to take into account the opinions and prejudices of [a] popular audience.” See David Como, “Predestination and Political Conflict in Laud’s London,” *The Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), 293.

¹³ Recent scholarship considers other selections from Milton’s early prose writing in attempting to describe Milton’s emergent political views. For example, Sharon Achinstein claims that Milton’s divorce tracts “represent a significant and underappreciated development in Milton’s theorizing of liberty,” offering much more than “the author’s disappointments in his first marriage.” See Sharon Achinstein, “‘A law in this matter to himself’: contextualizing Milton’s divorce tracts,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. McDowell and Smith, 174.

¹⁴ Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 22.

discussions informed the eventual acceptance of the existence – and, later still, the necessity – of a credible reading public in pre-revolutionary England.¹⁵ Against this backdrop, the Smectymnuan controversy marks an outward turn to the discussions of deliberative politics at Westminster, where politically-minded authors sought to promote specific parliamentary mechanisms that, when adopted also in publications outside the Commons, began in their working to resemble public reason. In this way, the expectations for conduct at Westminster are transferred also to assemblies off centre, whether in published disputes, or – more widely – in those back-alley parliaments populated by citizen readers.

I PROTECTING AND PROMOTING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

The activity of MPs who returned to Westminster in November 1640 suggests their continued commitment to reform in the Commons. From its outset, the Long Parliament sought to establish its authority as an institution independent from – and even in opposition to – the crown. This work depended in part upon restoring the assembly’s public reputation after the dissolution of the Short Parliament. Some MPs attempted through their publication of speeches to emphasize the rational process of debate in the Commons, wherein deliberations encompassing multiple voices must precede sound parliamentary decision. These representations supported the legislative work in Parliament as it tested new executive powers in response to the perceived threat of tyranny, both in Ireland under Strafford, and closer to home.

¹⁵ In these years it became clear that “a broader spectrum of the population seemed now to be politically aware and articulate.” See Como, “Predestination and Political Conflict in Laud’s London,” 293.

From the outset of the fall debates, prominent members objected to Charles's final stroke in the previous session: his printed *Declaration*. As journal records show, many MPs considered this document to be deceitful. At issue was the King's purported misrepresentation there of the proceedings of the last session. One MP objected in the Commons to "The great slanders in the declaration, for which he desired reparation." The quarter from which such reparation might come was a yet unspecified, although the same MP observes – and skeptically, perhaps – that "The King took it upon credit of others, he never saw it."¹⁶ The work of the *Declaration* was attributed to Charles in suspicion, if not in fact. Later analysis shares this MP's skepticism: Esther Cope observes that "whether or not Charles actually made suggestions about the content of the *Declaration*, he certainly approved of its statements."¹⁷ Although the authorship of the *Declaration* proved a matter of some debate, the outrage of the House was soon leveled at the Lord Keeper John Finch. He was openly condemned in the Commons on 21 December, in part owing to his role in writing those "slanders in the Declaration." Notes from the next day's proceedings observe that he had fled.

The Long Parliament was much like the Short Parliament before it in that it was significantly preoccupied with its predecessor. Much of the MPs' work in the opening weeks of the new session lay in coming to terms with the dissolution of the Short Parliament just six months before. Important in these efforts was the work of framing the MPs' dissent so that it did not amount to the "sedition" of which they were accused in the *Declaration*. This task was undertaken with particular zeal by "one of the first speakers in both the Short and

¹⁶ Jansson, *Proceedings*, 1.35.

¹⁷ Esther S. Cope. "The King's Declaration concerning the Dissolution of the Short Parliament of 1640: An Unsuccessful Attempt at Public Relations". *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Aug., 1977), pp. 328-9

Long Parliaments to call for a redress of grievances,” Harbottle Grimston.¹⁸ Directing parliamentary dissent against the royal appointees in the church, he suggested in a speech early in the session that their previous assembly had been displaced by “the synod sitting” – not necessarily by the King himself.¹⁹ Already by 16 November 1640, a parliamentary committee for religion moved “Against canons, that none hereafter should be made but by consent in parliament.”²⁰ All diarists in Jansson’s edition of the proceedings of the Long Parliament remark on Grimston’s speech of 7 November 1640, where he “related the whole passages of the last parliament.”²¹ A version of Grimston’s retrospective speech also “circulated as a separate and was printed in 1641.”²² Although diarists’ accounts vary in detail, some may have realized early into Grimston’s oration that, like other set-piece speeches before, it too would appear soon enough in print.²³ The circulation of the speech, *Mr. Grimstons speech in the high court of Parliament* (1641), reflects wider public interest in the MPs’ own accounting for the failed spring session.

Grimston’s recollection of the failed Short Parliament offers an opposite reading to that in the royal *Declaration*. He writes “in the remembrance of what was done the last Parliament, and where we ended,” considering “what hath bin since that Parliament, and who they are that have been the Authors and Causers of all our miseries and distractions,

¹⁸ “Grimston, Sir Harbottle, second baronet (1603–1685),” Christopher W. Brooks in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

¹⁹ See Jansson, *Proceedings*, 1.326. Fleetwood: “The case is this. The Convocation last parliament called as part of the parliament prevailed after the dissolution. They proceeded afterwards in making new canons.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.156.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1.33.

²² *Ibid.*, 1.33. See Harbottle Grimston, *Mr. Grimstons speech in the high court of Parliament* (London: Thomas Walkely, 1641).

²³ Some parliamentary diarists depended upon printed accounts to supplement their own record. Lord Montagu writes in his diary of the Short Parliament that “the Lord Keep made a speech but it was long and my memory fails me in nature. It is like many to come out in print” (21 April). See Esther Cope, ed., *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977), 100.

both before and sithence.”²⁴ Grimston’s energetic opposition in these points is carefully directed away from Charles, even if such direction is complicated by the pamphlet’s offer of a public record against that proposed in the King’s own *Declaration*. In the main, Grimston opposes in his speech the “synod” sitting, a group that, though “called together upon pretence of reconciling and settling Controversies and matters in Religion” during the Short Parliament, came “to take upon them the boldness thus out of Parliament to grant Subsidies and to meddle with men’s freeholds” even after the Commons’ dissolution. Such “raging Tyranny,” Grimston writes, must be “stopped in time” before the Synod “do worse.”²⁵ In providing a counter-history to Charles’s printed *Declaration*, Grimston does at times venture closer to the mark in attributing blame. He strongly objects to the searching of the “studies and pockets,” of certain MPs after the dissolution, an imposition he attributes to “the Star-Chamber.”²⁶ Modern historians attribute the undertaking of these offensive searches to Charles’s secretary of state Sir Francis Windebank, who worked to determine the extent of Short Parliament MPs’ sympathy with the Scottish Covenanters.²⁷

Between the lines of Grimston’s objections to the recent failures of representation at Westminster – false claims about the inefficiency of the Commons, and royally-sanctioned interference with elected representatives – the reader finds an apology for parliament. The published *Speech* aims to reaffirm the purpose of England’s deliberative assembly by describing the soundness of its procedures. By emphasizing the rationality of discussion in the Commons, Grimston answers much wider complaint than that met with in Charles’s *Declaration*. There, the assembly is deemed unproductive, while attendant political verses

²⁴ Grimston, *Speech*, 2.

²⁵ Grimston, *Speech*, 11.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 6-7.

²⁷ See Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 20-22.

lament the failure of the recent “ill ended sessions” where “too much being spoke hath made too little done.”²⁸ Grimston describes instead an orderly model of deliberation and debate:

Mr. *Speaker*, [in] the last Parliament... a Subsidiary aid and supply was propounded, and many Arguments used to give the precedence before all others matters and Considerations whatsoever.

On the other side, a multitude of Complaints and Grievances of all sorts; as well concerning our Eternal as our Temporal estates were presented and put in the other balance. The wisdom of that great Council weighing both indifferently... concluded that they were in no capacity to give.²⁹

The scene presents parliamentary procedure in the abstract, as an issue is first “presented” or “propounded”, then “weigh[ed]”, and finally “concluded.” Using the image of a “balance” as a model for parliamentary debate, Grimston casts dissenting views as a necessary counterweight that ensure “indifferent” or equal proceedings. The closing remarks in the *Speech* add further detail to Grimston’s picture of due parliamentary process. There Grimston describes MPs’ ongoing accountability to citizens; this relationship permits public influence upon the shaping of English law. A committee must be named, Grimston moves, to

Take these Petitions, that have now been read, and all others of the like nature into their considerations, to the end, that the parties grieved, may have just repair for their grievances; and

²⁸ “On the Dissolution”, Bodleian MS Tanner 306/2, fol. 290^v.

²⁹ Grimston, *Speech*, 3.

that out of them, Laws may be contrived, and framed for the preventing of the like mischiefs, for the future.³⁰

This final summation recommends that more direct connection Grimston desired between parliament and the public. In this model, popular opinion leads to petitions, which are received by parliamentary committees who, upon their “considerations,” contrive “laws” in response and redress.³¹

Despite its publication in pamphlet form, as an oration Grimston’s speech broadcasts an unmistakably parliamentary voice: it elaborately – and deliberately – reproduces the tone and tenor of the Commons’ debate. This performance conjures the Commons chamber in the reader’s imagination, and brings the audience into the rhetorical space of state debate. The printed version preserves the flights of oratory to which Grimston and many other MPs were prone, including extended passages of rhetorical questions set in heavy parallel structure, local uses of repetition for effect, and other flourishes. The speech is also characterized by those points of parliamentary procedure accompanied by rhetorical markers, such as Grimston’s persistent address of “*Mr. Speaker*”: “*Mr. Speaker*, This is the Age; This is the Age (*Mr. Speaker*) that hath produced and brought forth ... Vipers and Monsters of all sorts...”³² In this, the pamphlet places significant emphasis on its audience, complementing in tone and format the message of the speech’s culminating claim that parliamentary work proves most useful when it expresses broader public will. Other printed parliamentary speeches reproduce similar markers of formal, procedural rhetoric. One example signals its closing remarks by beginning “*Mr. Speaker*: My humble motion therefore is...”³³ This

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ Ibid..

³² Ibid., 15.

³³ Simonds D’Ewes, *A speech made in Parliament by Sir Simon Ducy* (London: F. Coles and T. Banks, 1642), sig. A4^r.

specialized vocabulary was spread through the prominent increase in such printed materials from 1640 to 1642; by 1642, “more than 100 purported speeches of named members were in printed circulation,” and the genre was at that time “significantly more numerous than any other kind of ephemeral tract.”³⁴ In their deliberate engagement with readers, pamphlets such as these helped forge the links of public attention and public interest that a proper parliament – at least as Grimston himself imagined it – required.

Claims for the stability, efficiency, and rights of the Commons issued within an uneasy political climate of rumour and speculation. Fear of a second dissolution ensured prompt approval in the Commons of the repeated request for supply. The assembled MPs even offered the financial security for the supply from their own pockets, thus taking an unprecedented measure to prolong their parliamentary session. Some worried that the event of MPs purchasing their own privilege to sit might set a dangerous precedent for future assemblies. Others were more concerned with their immediate future, which threatened to be marked more by peril than by privilege. Any optimism in the Commons at the outset of the fall session was overshadowed by members’ fear for their own safety: one MP spoke of having been “Informed by a gentleman, a member, that one was upon the stairs with a pistol under his cloak last night, and 12 Irishmen with swords and pistols,” while another “delivered an information of a design the papists had to cut the throats of the parliament.”³⁵ Such anxieties – whether justified or not – soon had very real consequences for the opponents of the Long Parliament.

³⁴ A. D. T. Cromartie, “The Printing of Parliamentary Speeches November 1640–July 1642,” *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 1 (1990): 23.

³⁵ Jansson, *Proceedings*, 1.120.

Although fears of Roman Catholic intervention were not new, they were in this period linked with a specific enemy of the Parliament. Behind the perceived threat – or so many in the Commons thought – was Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. A chief counselor of Charles, Strafford was believed to be behind much of the “catalogue of misrule” that ultimately justified the parliament’s return in late 1640.³⁶ Fear of Strafford’s combined pro-Catholic and pro-Ireland agenda overturning English sovereignty was brought more clearly to light in a scene reminiscent of Charles’s flourishing of the Scots’ letter *au Roy* in the Short Parliament. On 14 November 1640, as Peyton records, “Mr Grimston informed of a letter from the Earl of Strafford wherein he had written that by the laws of the land, the law of nations, and the law of nature every subject is to obey the command of his superior, etc.”³⁷ Strafford’s dark phrase – “every subject is to obey” – aggravated the already existing fear of threat from Ireland, overshadowing liberty of person and of religion. In Strafford, many saw Roman Catholic sympathies extending too surely to the English church and the English state. Such influence seemed especially coercive or even inquisitorial in its circumvention of due deliberative and representative process in parliament. A later parliamentary diarist recalled that “we know it was one of the articles of high treason laid by us to the Earl of Strafford’s charge that he had persuaded his majesty to the dissolution of [the Short] parliament.”³⁸ As Strafford put it, Charles was by the parliament’s failure “loose[d] and absolved from all rules of government,” and thus permitted to do “everything ... as power might admit”³⁹ to further his course. Strafford’s agenda proves to have been no

³⁶ Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 57-8. “The petition of twelve peers” was presented to Charles in summer 1640, calling for a return to parliament after the Scottish victory at Dunbar.

³⁷ Jansson, *Proceedings*, 1.149.

³⁸ See Wilson H. Coates, Anne Steele Young, Vernon F. Snow, eds., *Private Journals of the Long Parliament* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1982), 1.190

³⁹ Quoted in Adamson, *Noble Revolt*, 19.

secret: by late November the newly-met Parliament had reviewed claims against him and determined to try him for treason.

The decision to try Strafford did not immediately resolve the anxiety in Parliament. Other challenges prevented Parliament from moving against its perceived enemies. After Finch's expulsion many MPs' attention turned to Secretary Windebank. Likewise tarred with the brush of popery, Windebank was said to be soft on recusants, and also to have bribed a sheriff to cease their persecution.⁴⁰ But – perhaps following Finch's example – Windebank fled soon after these accusations were aired in the Commons.⁴¹ Unlike Finch, however, he did not attempt any defence of himself in the Commons. These developments complicated MPs' efforts to set their course for the fall session and beyond. Uncertainty also overshadowed the decision to try Strafford. Who, for example, had the right to try him – the Commons or the Lords?⁴² There was a new manœuvre, and so was yet legally dubious. For the MPs who intended the trial, the way forward was anything but clear. It was further complicated by these sudden flights, legal uncertainties, and the much-reported threat of violence against MPs.

At its outset, the Long Parliament's opening session appeared to be unraveling much faster than its members were able to piece it together. Having secured their seats out of their own pockets, however, the MPs took good care to protect their investment. On the very first day of the session, some members voted for a guard. Beyond this measure, many MPs sought greater efficiency in the process of debate. As in the Short Parliament, some MPs were better placed in the Commons chamber than others to influence the proceedings'

⁴⁰ Jansson, *Proceedings*, 1.214, 216.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1.458.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1.398.

outcome. Sir Francis Seymour, for one, “was blamed for whispering into the Clerk’s ear the name of one for a subcommittee.”⁴³ Difficulties in speaking persisted, although in the fall session some members sought official measures to ensure freedom of debate. Simonds D’Ewes records Sir Henry Mildmay’s motion “that when anyone spoke none might cry Aye or No to interrupt him, and that speedy order might be taken for our security,”⁴⁴ just as the official journal of the House of Commons records William Strode’s motion “for the preservation of order in the House.”⁴⁵ These procedural solutions to disorder in the house had not been widely sought in the spring parliament, at least according to extant records. They prove significant at this time because they reveal MPs’ deliberate efforts to reinforce by way of legislation the efficient functioning of their assembly, so as to make the process of Commons debate as productive as possible. The shortcomings of the previous session – perceived or otherwise – were to be answered by outwardly-focused MPs with a controlled performance of legitimacy and power in the lower House.

Whatever the legal concerns to which it responded, the trial of Strafford was also intended to support the returning MPs’ performance of parliamentary power. Such performance required controlling public representations of the proceedings of the trial from their outset. Parliamentary activity in its early stages reflects this goal. Having learned from Charles’s objectionable *Declaration*, some MPs saw before them a task greater than providing a countering or supplementary narrative of the proceedings against Strafford. They rather sought control over the kind of narrative that could be shaped, beginning with recording in the Commons chamber. One parliamentary diarist observes “a long dispute and

⁴³ Ibid., 1.44.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1.250.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1.456, note 4.

altercation about one John Rushworth's noting in characters, that was the Clerk's assistance," commenting further that Rushworth "had delivered out no copies of anything."⁴⁶ Rushworth's career as a clerk, scribe, and secretary would take him deep into the service of successive Parliamentary, Cromwellian, and Restoration governments. Here, at the outset of the Long Parliament, his work was sharply questioned. Details of parliamentary proceedings leading up to the controversial trial were to be guarded. Parliamentary observers and diarists widely record such restrictions: the Commons Journal, for example, includes the order "that no member of this House shall visit the Earl of Strafford, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, during the time of his restraint, without license first obtained from this House."⁴⁷ The accused was said to have been refused all visitors; as MP Peyton speculates, "no not [even] his own brother that was of the House" might talk with the accused.⁴⁸ These circumstances surely heightened interest in Strafford's own testimony.

In its pursuit of Strafford, the Long Parliament set a course openly in dissent from the King. Charles had previously considered accusations against his counselors as if made against the crown itself. Strafford was a "leading counselor"⁴⁹ and one well-liked by Charles. The proceedings against Strafford complemented other performances of authority, as Long Parliament MPs sought to determine parliament's role as a deliberative institution, on the one hand establishing consensus according to law, and on the other testing the boundaries of dissent. But this dissent was expected to issue within the preexisting arrangements of state.⁵⁰ Even an MP such as John Glynne, who "took a prominent part in

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1.400.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1.164.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1.169.

⁴⁹ Andrew Hopper, *'Black Tom': Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 18.

⁵⁰ Although many historical narratives that consider Charles's return to parliament in 1640 do so according to "historians' desire to establish how far their proceedings contributed to the causes of the Civil War," few if any

the impeachment of Strafford,”⁵¹ emphasized the mutual restrictions placed upon the parties involved in consensus-based government: “the parliament consists of King, clergy, and Commons and no binding in anything without common and general assent of all.”⁵² This statement reflects a widespread view of the monarchy as “as compounded of three coordinate estates – king, lords, and commons – whom no subordinate authority could resist.”⁵³ The relationship between the three proves to have been governed by a complex but by no means certain arrangement of privileges and prerogatives.⁵⁴ From this context issued much contention among those who sought a way forward after the impasse between Charles and the Parliament in 1640. In the view of authors such as Henry Parker, monarchical authority was secondary to “the supremacy of parliament.”⁵⁵ Supporters of Charles’s own right naturally maintained a substantially different view of the balance of power at Westminster, where “sovereignty, undivided and unshared, resided in the king alone.”⁵⁶

Against such arrogations of authority which claimed that some of the estates held greater position than others, some MPs answered that the base of their power was the same: “the King,” Glynne argued, “has not supreme power in his own person, but it is in him and

political observers in 1640 anticipated that outcome. See David Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 121.

⁵¹ M. W. Helms and A. M. Mimardière, “GLYNNE, John (c.1603-66),” in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1660-1690*, ed. B.D. Henning (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1983. Online edition). Glynne’s later reputation was coloured by an accident at Charles II’s coronation, where “he added to the gaiety ... by falling off his horse during the procession.”

⁵² Jansson, *Proceedings*, 1.317.

⁵³ Corinne C. Weston, “England: Ancient Constitution and Common Law,” in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 396

⁵⁴ “Generalization about fundamental law in Stuart England is tricky because the term is so elusive.” *Ibid.*, 389.

⁵⁵ “Parker, Henry (1604–1652),” Michael Mendle in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

⁵⁶ See Weston, “England: Ancient Constitution and Common Law,” 399; in *Freedholders Grand Inquest* (1648), “the most formidable anti-coordination tract of the century,” the anonymous author distinguished between the House of Commons as having been established “within time of memory,” and the king and House of Lords as having been “accepted as immemorial.” Influential French jurists argued that “the king had a monopoly of legislative power;” see *ibid.*, 362.

the whole body of the kingdom.”⁵⁷ The elected MPs, too, might derive their authority from such a “whole body” of English citizens. But this connection between popular will and parliamentary action proved uneasy when accountability to the dictates of popular representation demanded a voice dissenting from the will of the crown. In such a case, as the MP Oliver St. John warned, those among his colleagues who sought to preserve rather than abolish Charles’s supply from ship money, “*bonum publicum* might run into *malum publicum*.”⁵⁸

Such were the strictures placed before MPs by competing conceptions of government. On one hand, MPs were pressed for “common and general assent” among stakeholders; on the other, the Commons’ own credibility and even its “use” depended upon MPs’ ability to muster a collective dissenting voice on divisive issues. As expectations, precedents, privileges, and prerogatives all multiplied, the accommodation of opposing views was made to seem necessary. But such accommodation, in practice, presented many difficulties.

II THE SMECTYMNUUS CONTROVERSY AND PARLIAMENTARY POLEMIC

As the Commons debated the role of bishops in directing affairs of state as well as those pertaining to the ordering of their church, the same issue received significant attention also in publications on the periphery of Westminster. One locus for such discussion is the series of pamphlets that together came to be known as the “Smectymnuan” controversy, which

⁵⁷ Jansson, *Proceedings*, 1.318.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.336. St. John claimed that there will be “no use of parliaments if ship money stands.”

spanned from January to July of 1641.⁵⁹ The main contributors to this exchange were the Bishop Joseph Hall (“the Humble Remonstrant”) and a group of Church of England ministers whose initials constitute SMECTYMNUUS: Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow. “The prime subjects of their quarrel and contradiction,” as one participant has it, are “Liturgy, and Episcopacy.”⁶⁰ In this, the Smectymnuan pamphlets followed the debate that emerged in the opening months of the Long Parliament regarding the liberties taken by Convocation – or “synod sitting” – after the abruptly-ended spring session. Because the Smectymnuan authors “all had the ear of those MPs who sought robust reform of the church as it had developed under Archbishop Laud,”⁶¹ they enjoyed some direct influence over such debates, whether in the Commons, the Lords, or in committees formed by the assemblies. But even with this influence, they chose also to participate in prose controversy. Many of the pamphlets in the exchange were addressed explicitly to Parliament.

In their passage through point and rejoinder, claim and argument, the participants in this controversy voiced their competing expectations for the deliberative political discourse that circulated within and also in view of parliament. Long Parliament MPs quickly made clear that the assembly that returned to Westminster in November was not the same one that had left in May. It remained for London’s political commentators, however, variously to

⁵⁹ Joseph Hall, *An Humble Remonstrance* (January [?] 1641); Smectymnuus, *An Answer to a Book Entitled, An Humble Remonstrance* (February/March 1641); Hall, *A Defence of the Humble Remonstrance against the Frivolous and False Exceptions of Smectymnuus* (April 1641); Smectymnuus, *A Vindication of the Answer to the Humble Remonstrance* (June 1641); Hall, *A Short Answer to the Tedious Vindication of Smectymnuus* (July 1641); John Milton, *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus* (July 1641).

⁶⁰ Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 9.

⁶¹ “Smectymnuus (act. 1641),” Vivienne Larminie in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, January 2013. Bishop Hall, who had been “dissociated from the Laudian ‘innovations’ and indeed suspected by the ecclesiastical establishment of puritan sympathies... surprised many by coming to its defence.” Hall had the ear of Laud himself, and consulted with him directly during his preparation of *Episcopacie by Divine Right* (1640); see also Don M. Wolfe, “Introduction,” *YP* 1.53.

assess, represent, model, and support the new forms of parliament work. For some of the participants in this controversy, these representations aimed to support the parliament's rise in power in the difficult early years of a revolutionary decade. At other times, they helped establish the authors' own credit as advisors or as "teachers and persuaders" of parliament. The spirit of animadversion required these pamphleteers to engage in various ways with their opponents' writings, but perhaps most visibly in correction. Smectymnuus critiqued Hall's method of address to the Commons,⁶² and he was quick to respond in kind. But whatever roles they took on throughout the exchange – whether apologist, confuter, or remonstrant – the Smectymnuan authors together debated the merit both of discourse in parliament and of writings on its periphery, and questioned the nature of the authority behind such speech.

Although the Smectymnuan pamphlets addressed the concerns that brought about Strafford's trial in an extra-parliamentary forum, their authors did so – to use Strafford's own phrase – in "a Parliamentary way."⁶³ In this, these writings demonstrated that the model register of in-House discourse could apply also to the discussions on its periphery. With such a wider audience came a wider range of opinions and convictions. The Smectymnuan authors sought to determine how rhetorical deliberation (even among those who consider themselves opponents) might accommodate fairly the perspectives of multiple participants, balancing collective discovery with discretion and even with denunciation. Although their own efforts in coming to terms with dissent were not entirely successful, the Smectymnuan authors' contending views provided a framework that supported the political thought of John

⁶² See Kranidas, *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal*, 96: "Though the author's identity was widely known, the conventional fiction of anonymity was scrupulously maintained; the adversary of SMECTYMNUUS was Bishop Joseph Hall under the quite transparent mask of the Humble Remonstrant."

⁶³ Quoted in Elizabeth Cooper, *The life of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford* (London: 1874), vol. 1, 64.

Milton, himself a contributor to the debate. The great extent to which his later pamphlet *Areopagitica* is influenced by the Smectymnuan controversy is the subject of the next section in this chapter.

Representations of parliamentary authority in Hall's and Smectymnuus's pamphlets appear first in the terms they used to address the Commons. These terms develop over the course of the controversy. Hall's comments early in the proceedings emphasized the limits of parliamentary influence and the weaknesses of the parliamentary judgments that emerged through debate. In *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament, by a Dutiful Son of the Church* (1640), which "follow[ed] the imposition of the so-called 'et cetera oath' by convocation,"⁶⁴ Hall offered a warm-seeming welcome to the gathered MPs: "Ye are now happily (through God's blessing) met in a much-longed-for Parliament." His identification of the group as "the Sanctuary, whereto now every man flees" further heightened the sense of Parliament's claim to a higher authority;⁶⁵ more than "blessed", it may be equivalent to the Hebrew temple (or "sanctuary") described in the Old Testament. This would appear to qualify the Commons to judge the "quarrel, and contradiction" between Smectymnuus and the Remonstrant.⁶⁶ Hall's trust in their judgment, however, was far from complete. He follows in his *Remonstrance* the original meaning of the term, offering the admonition and warning that its etymology implies (Middle French, *remonstrance*). Although he claimed that Parliament had sufficient authority to settle "Episcopal and liturgical" matters, Hall also took care to weight more heavily its claim to "civil" rather than "sacred" authority. And that "civil Politie hath sometimes varied," while "the sacred, never,"⁶⁷ proved the former as also

⁶⁴ "Hall, Joseph (1574–1656)," Richard A. McCabe, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman.

⁶⁵ Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 2-3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

the lesser power. Perhaps overlooking the very real ecclesiological uncertainty that provoked his writing, Hall attributed to episcopacy an “original Authority.”⁶⁸ By contrast, he at times represented parliamentary deliberations as being compromised and destabilized by external influences. These included “railing Pamphlets,”⁶⁹ which – to Hall’s dismay – had received “but an easy censure”⁷⁰ from the Commons.

Against such impediments Hall intended his own voice to provide some remedy, should the MPs choose to heed it. The opening lines of the *Remonstrance* suggest Hall’s representation of himself as an outsider to that great council. Reviving a long-familiar trope from Ovid’s *Tristia*, where the exiled poet bid his “little book” to go “where your only begetter is banned,”⁷¹ Hall wrote that his own text “hath broken through the throng, and prostrates it self before you: How meanly soever, and unattended, it presents it self to your view, yet it comes to you on a great errand, as the faithful Messenger of all the peaceable and right-affected sons of the Church.”⁷² Beyond Hall, the *Remonstrance* was intended to speak as “Messenger” for the entire group of maligned bishops. More personally, Hall may have also recalled his own reprimand before the Lords during that last session, which, as the parliamentary journals attest, was the talk of Westminster. In either case, the pamphlet suggests that the Commons achieved only partial representation in that session – the proponents of such episcopacy as Hall perhaps envisioned found little room for expression at Westminster. In this way Hall’s Ovidian theme emphasizes the relativism that often attends questions of dissent: why was parliamentary opposition to the crown readily

⁶⁸ Ibid..

⁶⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 8.

⁷¹ Ovid, *The poems of exile: Tristia and the Black Sea Letters*, trans. Peter Green, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 3.

⁷² Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 1-2.

considered a legitimate “dissenting” viewpoint, while Hall’s own to the Parliament was less likely to be considered as such?

Hall’s pamphlet aimed further to unsettle the Commons’ authority by insisting on that assembly’s status as a secondary power. Its subjection to the monarch ought, for Hall, reflect in the session’s outcome: “since Sovereign Authority hath for this purpose both summoned, and actuated you, you will not fail to produce something worthy of so high an expectation.”⁷³ Such accountability, as Hall might have imagined, necessarily preceded that of any conclusions that might be established through the MPs’ debates. Add to this Hall’s descriptions of the bishops’ beneficial influence, and of the susceptibility of MPs to the interference of “railing Pamphlets,” and the picture is altogether clear: the Commons was at best uncertain, and at worst doomed. However true the pamphlet later proved – in one place, the anonymous “Modest Confuter” (believed by some to be Hall) was eerily prophetic⁷⁴ – it gave Hall’s own detractors ample cause to write on the behalf of those “whose capacities ha[d] been shamefully underestimated by the prelatical party.”⁷⁵

Hall’s pamphlet soon met with a rejoinder that confronted his position on episcopacy, Smectymnuus’s *An Answer to a Booke Entituled, An Humble Remonstrance* (February/March 1641). In its authors’ own claims and in their detailed animadversion of Hall’s *Remonstrance*, this pamphlet outlined the great extent to which “the bishops have oppressed and hindered monarchy.”⁷⁶ In this work the Smectymnuan authors received support from John Milton, marking his entrance into prose controversy. He supplied a brief

⁷³ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁴ Anon., *A Modest Confutation of a Slanderous and Scurrilous Libel, Entitled, Animadversions Upon the Remonstrant’s Defense Against Smectymnuus* (1641): “What can the end of these proceedings be, but an irreconcilable distance between party and party; then jealousies, then provocations, then wars, then ruin!”

⁷⁵ Thomas Kranidas, *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005), 129-30.

⁷⁶ Wolfe, “Introduction,” *YP*, 1.79.

postscript to the *Answer* that cited in detail a range of historical, “secular” sources against the Bishops to supplement “the Smectymnuan theological emphasis” in the preceding text.⁷⁷ However central issues of prelacy are to its rebuttal of Hall, Smectymnuus’s *Answer* responded also to Hall’s representations of parliamentary process. The *Answer* offered much about the proper methods of debate in the House of Commons and the proper mode of address to that assembly. As this work unfolded, its conclusions about parliamentary rhetoric applied as much to the controversialists themselves as to the MPs whom they addressed. Smectymnuus’s *Answer* begins by foregrounding the present context of prose controversy. In its opening line, it introduces itself in direct relation to Hall’s *Remonstrance*, and explicitly represents their exchange as taking place before the assembled members of the Commons: “We doubt not but that book which was lately directed to your Honours, bearing the name of an *Humble Remonstrance*, hath had access unto your presence.”⁷⁸ That Hall’s work had received such an audience necessitates the Smectymnuan response, “lest the Author should glory in our silence, as a granting of the cause.” The Smectymnuan group complained that that its opponent’s views were such as ought to make him “ashamed to plead [his] cause at your Honours BARRE.”⁷⁹ By representing their own debate as unfolding within the Commons chamber, these authors occupy the common ground between political speeches in print and in parliament. Just as there were restrictions imposed upon one speaking “at the bar” in the Commons – “if as a witness, then standing; if as a delinquent, kneeling”⁸⁰ – so too must there be upon those who would address the assembly through

⁷⁷ Ibid., 79-80. The Postscript “bears unmistakable marks of John Milton’s mind and method, especially as shown in *Of Reformation*.” See also Thomas Corns and David L. Hoover, “The Authorship of the Postscript to *An Answer to a Booke Entitled, An Humble Remonstrance*,” *Milton Quarterly*, 38 (2004): 59-75.

⁷⁸ Smectymnuus, *An Answer to a Book Entitled An Humble Remonstrance* (1641), 1.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁸⁰ Jansson, *Proceedings*, 1.103.

pamphlet publication. As it advanced, the Smectymnuan controversy uncovered additional similarities between the proceedings in political forums outside and inside the Commons.

Smectymnuus's specification of best polemical practice helped explain why the Remonstrant's dissenting voice was less viable than others expressed in the Commons: it tended more to correction than it did to deliberation. Although it appears to have been read by some in parliament, the *Humble Remonstrance* may not have been as fully weighed in the "balance" that Grimston imagined as a model for parliamentary process. Early on, the Smectymnuan *Answer* termed the pamphlet "to be neither *Humble*, nor a *Remonstrance*; but a heap of confident, and ungrounded assertions."⁸¹ Such confidence and assertiveness might soon begin to resemble intolerance and even tyranny in its own right, and – in view of recent church reforms under Archbishop Laud – these associations were strengthened by the supposed sympathies between Episcopal and Roman church practice. To admit Episcopacy might also be to admit Rome, a church that was not tolerated in part because it in turn appeared to preclude opposition and dissent rather than accommodate or tolerate it.⁸²

Smectymnuus judged Hall's tract to be as much a messenger of this party as it was of the bishops. The group maintained that parliament was under no obligation to air the grievances of a tyrant. Moreover, the "man [who] thinks he hath obtained a *Monopoly* of learning, and all *Knowledge* is lockt up in his *bosome*"⁸³ contributes very little to a debate. The accusation of "*Monopoly*" further associates Hall with "arbitrary" power: Charles had depended in part

⁸¹ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 1.

⁸² See Elizabeth Hodgson, "Milton Takes the Veil," in *Milton and Questions of History: Essays by Canadians Past and Present*, ed. Feisal G. Mohamed and Mary Nyquist (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 314-5. Milton considers prepublication licensing as an "inquisition," which he attacks for "closing debate and denying opposition."

⁸³ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 14.

upon “royal grants of monopoly” to raise funds during his period of personal rule, an “unpopular” measure seen by critics as an example of “arbitrary government.”⁸⁴

Compared to Hall, the Smectymnuus group voices considerably higher expectations for the achievements of rhetorical debate, whether encountered in the Commons chamber, in political pamphlets, or elsewhere. Deliberants, Smectymnuus argued, must be held to account for their speeches and their audiences. In response to Hall’s complaint, “Alas Alas How Good People may be abused by misinformation,”⁸⁵ the *Answer* reminds the Remonstrant of his duty to take “pains to answer” an objection rather than to “wave at it with his *Rhetoric*.”⁸⁶ Such “pains” demand deliberation rather than the “assertion” attributed to Hall early in the *Answer*. But Hall had “persistently brought to the exchange a capacity, lacking in the Smectymnuans, for sustained contempt.”⁸⁷ For their part, the Smectymnuans imagined discourse and even deliberation as ways to strengthen policymaking. In this view, political progress takes on a new trajectory, adopting the back and forth of dialectic discourse rather than travelling in a straight line of royal edict, as if following the “beams of majesty.”⁸⁸ The Smectymnuans in their *Answer* sought to make room in the landscape of political debate for reasonable dissent.

In seeking to establish this point, the Smectymnuan group countered one of the central claims in the *Humble Remonstrance*: that differences of opinion among members of

⁸⁴ See Blair Hoxby, *Mammon’s Music: Literature and Economics in the Age of Milton* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 3-4; also “*Areopagitica* and Liberty,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, eds. McDowell and Smith, 229. “Many grants of monopoly were cynically exploited by courtiers for their own profits and deeply unpopular with the people;” Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 258.

⁸⁵ Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 23.

⁸⁶ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 32-33.

⁸⁷ Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140.

⁸⁸ Aston, *Diary*, 6.

a political group necessarily delegitimized that group's authority. In response to Hall's discredit of civil power on account of it having "sometimes varied,"⁸⁹ Smectymnuus argued that such evolutionary change is necessary:

the same *light of nature*, and the same *just policy*, that did at the first command the establishment of [laws], may and will persuade their *abolishment*; if not, either our Parliaments must never Repeal any of their former Acts (which yet they have justly and wisely done) or else in so doing must run Counter to the *light of nature*, and the *Rules of just policy*.⁹⁰

This defence of civil polity gestures toward an ongoing process of developing ideal legislation. And it also applied, for Smectymnuus, to their church: "can it be expected that the Church in any age should be free from divisions, when the times of the Apostles were not free?" Laymen could observe the "divisions" in early church practice as easily as a patristic scholar; they are plain even in familiar New Testament writings such as the book of Acts. A brief review of early church history reveals numerous uncertainties among members of the early Christian church pertaining to doctrine and discipline. And this is as it ought to be; as "the Apostle tells," and Smectymnuus reminded, "it must needs be that there be divisions."⁹¹ In the Long Parliament context, such "division" may prove a strength if it issues in the process of questioning absolute authority. In cases both "civil" and "sacred," the *Answer* argued that truth can be derived from persistent deliberative process rather than

⁸⁹ Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 8.

⁹⁰ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 20-21.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 82. See 1 Corinthians 11:18-19: "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

from “original authority.”⁹² Temporal government was subject to changes, but it was not destined to fail as a result.

For Smectymnuus, the *Humble Remonstrant’s* – Hall’s – failure to acknowledge a breadth of perspectives weakened his credibility. Although Smectymnuus expected benefits from debate among dissenting parties, Hall presented in his own pamphlet a singular purpose that offered no sign of its representing a diverse and possibly conflicted party. The *Answer* accused the *Humble Remonstrance’s* author of misrepresenting the claim that his work is “*the faithful messenger of all the peaceable and right affected sons of the Church of England.*” “For,” as the Smectymnuans ask,

how could this book be the messenger of all *his own party* in England, when it is not to be imagined that all could know of the coming forth of this book before it was published: and how can that book crave admittance in *all their names*, that speaks in the singular number, and as in the person of one man almost the whole book through.⁹³

The idea of a “unified” yet plural voice is thus problematized, partially for logistical reasons, but also more generally as Smectymnuus doubted the ability of a single voice to speak on behalf of a larger assembly. Where Smectymnuus questions the representative quality of the *Remonstrance*, Hall voices a similar, but broader, skepticism about the entire Commons when he condemns those who “between soft flattery towards some of that House, and rough violence to others (witness your Libels against so many of them, as their consciences made

⁹² Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 8.

⁹³ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 15.

Vote contrary to some proceedings) are like to over-turn all.”⁹⁴ Claims such as these seem to deny that an assembly can be divided and yet still whole. They signal a revealing shift in representation from singular authority to a more dispersed or collective model of authority that in its later stages may be defined as “public.”

Beyond its value (as Smectymnuus argued) as a forum in which to reform and revitalize policy, parliament may also benefit from an “original authority” of its own. Just as precedents from the early church lend patristic weight to early-modern claims for and against episcopacy, the Smectymnuan authors cite an early precedent pertaining to the English parliament. On the opening page of their *Answer* to Hall, they compared Parliament with “those admired sons of Justice, the *Areopagi*.”⁹⁵ This group of judges (known collectively as the Areopagus) constituted the highest court in Athens. This comparison between great Greek and English councils supplied some justification for the latter by giving them claim to the former’s heritage as an established and credible deliberative – and adjudicative – assembly. Such dignity as Smectymnuus wished for parliament derives from procedure as much as from classical tradition. Their *Answer* noted that the Areopagus enjoyed the benefit of a “constitution,” which specified “that such as pleaded before them should plead without *prefacing* and without *Passion*. Had your *Honours* made such a constitution,” the Smectymnuan group continued, “this Remonstancie must have been banished from the face of your Assembly.”⁹⁶

Although Smectymnuus cited the Areopagus as a model assembly, it had other associations that might complicate its reception by contemporary readers. Although their

⁹⁴ Hall, *Modest Confutation*, 16.

⁹⁵ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

reference is complimentary (“admired sons of Justice”), it is to a secular court, and one known by contemporary readers chiefly for its questioning of the apostle Paul.⁹⁷ The group did not condemn Paul, but his admonition to them – “I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious” – may have spoken through this later invocation to the uneasy religious temper in the Commons, just as his reproof of “devotions... to the unknown god” may have to their conflicted purpose. Smectymnuus’s invocation in a later work of “*Dionysius Areopagita*”⁹⁸ confirms the earlier reference’s Pauline association, following from an Areopagite Dionysius who “clave unto [Paul], and believed.”⁹⁹ Paul before the court presents a model witness for Smectymnuus: he pleads for them to question established tradition, and proclaims the unity of membership in the Christian community.¹⁰⁰ However potent this signification, where the Smectymnuan group perhaps imagined their own testimony before the Parliament as a similar scene, their *Answer* itself does not dwell at any length upon the Areopagus. Hall faulted his opponents’ usage of the term,¹⁰¹ which they denied in a printed *Vindication*,¹⁰² and the “Modest Confuter” further reiterated.¹⁰³ Beyond this disagreement neither Hall nor Smectymnuus expanded the association between their parliament and the Areopagus.

The contending views of parliament between Hall and Smectymnuus contrast visibly in the content of the prayers that close their respective pamphlets. The extended prayer that closes *An Answer* – offered either “to” or “for” parliament – echoes and then exceeds Hall’s own prayer at the conclusion of his *Humble Remonstrance*. There, as Hall prays “to the

⁹⁷ See Acts 17.

⁹⁸ Smectymnuus, *A Vindication of the Answer to the Humble Remonstrance* (1641), 4.

⁹⁹ Acts 17:34.

¹⁰⁰ See Acts 17:26-27: [God] “hath made of one blood all nations of men... that they should seek the Lord.”

¹⁰¹ Hall, *Defence*, 2

¹⁰² Smectymnuus, *Vindication*, 4.

¹⁰³ Anon., *Modest Confutation*, 24.

Father of all mercies that it would please him to inspire the Great Council with all wisdom from above,” he focuses his plea on the results he imagined of such a blessed meeting of parliament.¹⁰⁴ In stark contrast, the Smectymnuan authors focus in detail on the process of the parliament in their own prayer

Unto Almighty God, *who is great in power, and infinite in wisdom, to pour down upon the whole Honourable Assembly, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of Council and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. That you may be able to discern betwixt things that differ; separate between the precious and the vile, purely purge away our dross, and take away all our sin; root out every plant that is not of our heavenly Father's planting. That so you may raise up the Repairers of breaches, and Restorers of paths to dwell in. Even so, Amen.*¹⁰⁵

In this appeal, the Commons needs “the spirit of wisdom and understanding” as well as that of “Council and might” in order that it might proceed properly. Such proceedings are described here in active terms, as the supplicant imagines an assembly able to discern, to separate, to purge, to take away, to root out, and to raise up. By thus seeking to associate divine influence with the processes of parliament work (even if only in an idealized version), rather than with the delivery of a specifically desired outcome, the Smectymnuan authors add legitimacy to those proceedings that had seemed to some only as “delay.” Such

¹⁰⁴ Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 43: “so as it may produce much glory to his own name, much complacency and contentment to his dear Anointed, comfort to all good hearts, terror to his enemies, seasonable restraint to all insolence and faction, prevention of all Innovations; and lastly, a firm peace and settlement to his Church and Common-wealth.”

¹⁰⁵ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 93.

comment reflects a more hopeful expectation of the assembly and accords with their earlier affirmations of political viability through the bringing together of different perspectives: by their “discernment” and “separation,” MPs’ handling of divisions might prove a part of political progress.

Many differences exist between Smectymnuus and the Humble Remonstrant in addition to their respective attitudes towards parliament, and as their controversy continued it showed little sign of resolution or of yielding the truth that some of its participants imagined might result from sustained engagement between proponents of opposing viewpoints. Only one month after Smectymnuus’ *Answer* was made available to London’s readers, Hall (again anonymously) published his *Defence of the Humble Remonstrance* (April 1641). As the controversy expanded in length – the *Defence* is just about twice the length of the previous *Answer* – it did not necessarily do the same in scope. Each side actively wrote against the other through the spring and summer of 1641, but “neither advanced their arguments significantly, and both became increasingly prolix.”¹⁰⁶ In Hall’s *Defence*, the language of controversy took a more aggressively adversarial turn. While the Smectymnuus group wrote that “we will not enter the Lists with a man of that *learning* and *fame* that Bishop *Hall* is,”¹⁰⁷ which in itself suggests that anonymity was not ironclad, Hall welcomed the prospect of rhetorical contest in those terms, and wrote in his own preface that “I doe cheerfully enter these lists.”¹⁰⁸

This adversarial approach limited deliberative possibilities, focusing instead on combative rhetoric. Such a register of pamphlet proceeding, at least as it is imagined by

¹⁰⁶ Campbell and Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*, 140.

¹⁰⁷ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 72.

¹⁰⁸ Hall, *Defence*, ii.

Hall, did not turn on direct intellectual engagement with his opponents' position, nor their engagement with his own. "Spend your Logique upon your own works," he wrote, and "let mine be such as I contrive them."¹⁰⁹ This resistance to dialogue marked an impasse between the two parties that perhaps precluded resolution. Hall's response to Smectymnuus's discussion of the Areopagus, for example, demonstrates a simplistic denigration of dissenting ideas at the level of presentation rather than of thought. Here, he objects to the term's usage, yet not its significance: "The *Areopagi*? who were those? Truly my masters, I had thought this had been the name of the place, not of the men. It is an ill sign, they say, to stumble at the threshold."¹¹⁰ Such reproofs are not based on the content of the debates, but the syntax – their chief failing in this is grammatical. The proceedings of the two deliberants suggest a disengaged, adversarial model of discourse, and seldom represent any coming to terms through controversy.

Perhaps because he recognized this, Hall addresses his *Defence* to a singular, or non-deliberative authority. Beyond his combative rhetoric of "entering the lists," Hall carries the jousting metaphor further in his reference to the traditional arbiter of such ceremonial combat in "rejoycing to hope that Your Majesties Eye may be the Judge and Witness of my success."¹¹¹ Hall's pamphlet turns away from the previous addresses to Parliament, and instead addresses Charles himself. This departure prefaces the *Defence* and signals in the rest of the work a retreat from the rhetorical mode of "debate" to the author's appeal to what he perceived as the highest natural authority. At this time of political and religious uncertainty, Hall places his trust only in that "which long use and many laws have firmly

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

¹¹¹ Ibid., sig. A3^v.

established,” and, as he hopes, “it will stand long enough, against the battery of their Paper-pellets.”¹¹² Of the liturgy and Communion, he noted Smectymnuus’s assertion that “Multitudes of people... distaste it,” yet asked “shall we humour them, [and] abandon both?”¹¹³ The wisdom of crowds was thus deemed an insufficient guide in determining church practice. So too was it in the choosing of bishops, a task signified by “the impositions of hands” – but not, Hall concludes, “Laic hands.”¹¹⁴ The *Defence* rested on representations of commoners and laymen who prove incapable of judgment. This condition, for Hall, results from the harmful effects of libel and other rhetorics – from “abuse by misinformation” – as much as it does from ignorance.

If Hall was reluctant to trust the representatives’ judgment, then he was even less likely to trust that of the represented. The initial exchanges of the Smectymnuus pamphlets raised a question that found continued debate in their controversy and in the broader political context: what role do citizens have in advising parliament? Hall’s *Remonstrance* and the Smectymnuan *Answer* differ on the extent that such influence is permissible. The *Remonstrance* plainly states the detrimental effects of pamphlets, and Hall’s own publications – their authority seemingly unaffected by their author’s claims against the medium – convincingly denounce popular expressions of political will. Fear of public ignorance might deter broader legitimation and acceptance of popular expressions of dissent.¹¹⁵ Against this view, Smectymnuus saw the practice of animadversion as being able to remedy popular ignorance. The task of educating readers, then, is one the polemicist ought not to ignore. Hall’s reluctance to take “pains” – he professes no intention of

¹¹²Ibid., 45.

¹¹³ Ibid., 25-6.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 78.

¹¹⁵ Such was the “Babel” cited by Royalists “to register horror at the fact of political disagreement.” See Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 73.

“following them in every step of their loose and superfluous discourse”¹¹⁶ – amounts to his own abandoning of his readers. In the *Defence*, Hall represented as futile the engaged participation in prose controversy that Smectymnuus had advocated; it was just a “following” or turning, and did not achieve in itself any conclusion or resolution. Resolution can only be grounded, as Hall appears to suggest, in a singular, already-established authority: king or bishop. Hall’s constructions in the *Remonstrance* of an ill-reading and ill-judging populace and of unproductive pamphlet debate invite Milton’s claims to the contrary in his later pamphlets, which present a quite opposite view of potency in the “dust and heat” of controversy.

III MILTON AGAINST THE SOPHISTS

As Smectymnuus and the “Remonstrant” continued their debate in print, Strafford’s trial steadily progressed to its conclusion. Following a breakdown in the quasi-judicial proceedings against him, the Commons resorted to voting against Strafford in a bill of attainder. This measure ensured the end desired by so many in Parliament: the scaffold. These events claimed the attention of citizens in England and also of foreign observers; they constituted, as even a Whig historian would concede, “a high tragedy, unsurpassed for historical and human interest in the political annals of any time or land.”¹¹⁷ Only one year earlier, the Short Parliament had been dissolved at Charles’s displeasure; now, after failure in the Second Bishops War (summer 1640) and growing fears of threat from Ireland, the political balance had shifted quickly enough already to permit the Commons to move

¹¹⁶ Hall, *Defence*, 2.

¹¹⁷ G. M. Trevelyan, *A Shortened History of England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 298.

decisively against Charles's trusted advisor. The execution itself reportedly drew a crowd of 100,000,¹¹⁸ and although it "was seen in its aftermath to have been a way of avoiding further bloodshed,"¹¹⁹ it eventually proved a "curtain-raiser" for the Civil War.¹²⁰

The Smectymnuan controversy resumed after Strafford's execution, revived both by the new political developments and by a new participant. Following the brief postscript he supplied to Smectymnus's *An Answer to the Humble Remonstrance*,¹²¹ Milton entered more fully into the fray with his own publication, *Animadversions upon The Remonstrants Defence Against Smectymnuus* (July 1641). *Animadversions* was only one part of his polemical output during that year. At this time he also wrote *Of Reformation* (May 1641) and *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* (June or July 1641). Milton's surefooted claims in these pamphlets about the necessity of dissenting political voices come also to emphasize Parliament's importance as it began to establish its own executive powers. The wider settlement Milton envisioned here cast religious and political dissent as a most needful – and most English – undertaking. Supporting this is Milton's description of a parliament sitting at Westminster that was not "unhappy,"¹²² but rather "sacred."¹²³ These patterns of representation emphasize the Commons' authority, and so seek to give greater credit to dissenting parliamentarians. The pamphlets in the Smectymnuan controversy and the wider response to their arguments that followed contributed significantly to the widening debate

¹¹⁸ Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 138.

¹¹⁹ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Religion, Reformation, and Social Change* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 264.

¹²⁰ Sauer, *Paper Contestations*, 41.

¹²¹ For a discussion of Milton's authorship of the *Postscript*, see *YP* 1.79-80; See also Thomas Corns and David L. Hoover, "The Authorship of the Postscript to *An Answer to a Booke Entitled, An Humble Remonstrance*," *Milton Quarterly*, 38 (2004): 59-75.

¹²² Recall Bishop Warner's comment at the dissolution of the Short Parliament: "parl. infelicitur."

¹²³ Milton, *Animadversions*, 61; according to one of its participants, the Smectymnuan controversy held a prominent place in the public eye: "if thou hast any general or particular concernment in the affairs of these times, or but natural curiosity, thou art acquainted with the late and hot bickering between the Prelates and Smectymnuans."

over the ideal arrangement between church and state,¹²⁴ and proved that the late reformatory zeal in the former institution was active also in the latter.

They were also an important influence on John Milton. His later publications suggest that the Smectymnuan pamphlets hold value as literary as well as “historical documents.”¹²⁵ In particular, Milton’s own role in this prominent exchange informed his now best-known prose work, *Areopagitica*. This pamphlet has seldom been considered fully in the longer context of the Smectymnuan writings. But if viewed as a postscript to that earlier controversy, *Areopagitica* can be understood to complete Milton’s longer work of transforming what was at first advice to Parliament now into advice to participants in a wider arena of political discussion. Milton’s publications from 1641 to 1644 serve as signposts to the narrative proposed in this study, where increasing expectations for deliberative language in the Commons come also to be applied to the assemblies of political observers that surrounded Westminster.

In *Animadversions*, Milton sought to turn readers’ attention back to parliament after Strafford’s execution, reminding them of the depth of the representative relationship between citizens and MPs and demonstrating that political accountability extended to the former group. Unlike the previous entries in the Smectymnuan controversy, however, Milton did not address *Animadversions* directly to the Parliament or to the King in his preface. Instead, Parliament figures less by way of address than it does by invocation – a significant departure from previous Smectymnuan tracts. Milton avoids the courteous deference deployed by the Smectymnuus group – “your noble sirs,” etc. – as well as the increasingly elaborate prayers offered on the Parliament’s behalf that conclude *Humble Remonstrance*

¹²⁴ Anon., *Modest Confutation*, i.

¹²⁵ Kranidas, *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal*, xii.

and *An Answer*. Not until the third page of *Animadversions* does the first explicit concession to any particular audience occur, where Milton claimed “to deal plainly with you Readers.”¹²⁶ Milton then persistently and “plainly” addressed the “ingenious” Readers in *Animadversions*, in part because the moment at which he wrote – “our time of Parliament, the very jubilee, and resurrection of the State” – required an open political discourse to oppose “that deceitful, and close couched evil of flattery that ever attends them.”¹²⁷ Published advice to parliament could remedy such sophistry, as long as it was offered by “these free-spoken, and plain hearted men that are the eyes of their Country, and the prospective glasses of their Prince.”¹²⁸ Thus public advice is presented as essential to good governance: successful policy depended much upon input from “the man whose eyes are open, that said to the *Parliament* surely could those look with my eyes.”¹²⁹

Milton’s Smectymnuan writings emphasized that these two assemblies – the Commons, and the citizens – may be more substantially linked through a shared exercise of reason. Whereas, as Milton recalls, many stories tell of “Princes, and great Statists” who went in disguise to gain a “precious gem of Truth” about the nation and its people, the practice was newly made unnecessary by a developing tradition of “free writing,” unconstrained by licensing.¹³⁰ Milton aimed here to revise Hall’s statement in *Humble Remonstrance* that “unless we would suppose Princes to be Gods, we cannot think they can know all things: Of necessity they must look with others eyes.”¹³¹ Hall referred there to parliament, but Milton saw a similar, but much broader connection between the public and

¹²⁶ Milton, *Animadversions*, YP 1.663.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, YP 1.669-70.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, YP 1.670.

¹²⁹ Milton, *Animadversions*, YP 1.696.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, YP 1.670.

¹³¹ Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 5.

its elected MPs. Here, as in *Areopagitica*, “Milton urges Parliament to conceive of the English people as fit to manage themselves.”¹³² Even so, he imagined their independent “political work”¹³³ in direct relation to Parliament.

That readers as well as writers had a political responsibility was made plain in the aftermath of Strafford’s trial. The readers Milton imagined in *Animadversions* and *Apology* correspond with this political climate, where the proliferation of competing publications that surrounded the trial proved the need for public literacy. For his part in the drama Strafford performed well, “facing death with great calm and courage.”¹³⁴ His speech on the scaffold showed the same rhetorical power of his speeches in the Lords and Commons, and soon came into print. But so too did competing speeches that were spuriously attributed to Strafford. Uncertainty about the legitimacy of these publications soon turned to “controversy... over the accuracy of the final printed versions” of Strafford’s speech.¹³⁵ Poems, in addition to speeches, contributed to the flood of Straffordiana received by readers. These publicly circulated materials placed a greater burden of judgment on the citizens who encountered them, leaving them to decide for themselves whether or not the execution was just, or if it was justly represented. A handwritten marginal note appearing on one copy of the broadsheet “Strafford his Elegiac Poem” reflects such skepticism, claiming flatly that “Strafford never made verse in his life. Thought to be Tho. Armagh.”¹³⁶ In response to this publishing climate, John Bond emphasized in his *Poets Knavery Discovered* (1642) how

¹³² Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 61.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 4: “When writers challenged their readers, offered patterns for them to imitate; when they harassed, prodded, and chastised them; commanded, cajoled, and lied to them... they did political work.”

¹³⁴ “Wentworth, Thomas, first earl of Strafford (1593–1641),” Ronald G. Asch in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2009.

¹³⁵ Sauer, ‘*Paper contestations*,’ 41-42.

¹³⁶ See British Library MS Harley 4931, fol. 143^v.

important it was at that moment that readers “learn how to distinguish betwixt the Lies, and real Books.”¹³⁷ If Strafford’s death indeed “tipped the scales toward a new surge of Parliamentary government and the decline of benevolent despotism,”¹³⁸ then this sea change in government also placed new demands upon public readers. As the “war of words and paper bullets” broadened, authors conscious of media literacy adopted other strategies than that which Bond himself employed in simply listing false pamphlets to warn prospective readers.

These readers were of lasting importance to Milton because their exercise of literacy might be made to serve protestant truth. But *Animadversions* and *Apology* also demonstrate the broader political implications of Milton’s anti-prelatical efforts. These writings responded to Strafford’s trial, as much as they did to the Smectymnuan controversy, in their discussion of English nationalism, as defined by dissent from Rome. Milton joined political and religious reform in framing a distinctly Protestant England as a dissenting nation:

[God] hath yet ever had this Island under the special indulgent
eye of his providence; and pitying us the first of all other
Nations, after he had decreed to purify and renew his Church
that lay wallowing in Idolatrous pollutions, sent first to us a
healing messenger to touch softly our sores.¹³⁹

It not without reason that a nationalist appeal should sound after Strafford’s execution, an event that the patriot Milton’s response to justify the authority of the ascendant Long Parliament.

¹³⁷ John Bond, *The Poets Knavery Discovered* (London: 1642), sig. A1^v.

¹³⁸ Wolfe, “Introduction,” *YP* 1.92.

¹³⁹ Milton, *Animadversions*, *YP* 1.704.

Even as Milton demanded in his *Animadversions* that greater access be given to those who would attempt to address parliament, he expected such addresses to be offered in an appropriate form. He defined this ideal register in the negative through a series of criticisms of the Remonstrant's performance in the debate thus far. Milton's critique addressed the very first lines in the Smectymnuan controversy, where Hall had claimed to write "lest the world should think the Press had of late forgot to speak any language other than Libelous."¹⁴⁰ Such sentiment, to Milton, "shew'd but green practice in the laws of discreet *Rhetorique* to blurt upon the ears of a judicious *Parliament* with such a presumptuous and over-weening *Proem*."¹⁴¹ In the Remonstrant's case, Milton objected to those who so widely condemn all printed public expression as dross, or at least as "Libelous", and so in some way he echoed Smectymnuus's earlier reproof that "the man thinks he hath obtained a *Monopoly* of learning, and all *Knowledge* is lockt up in his *bosom*."¹⁴² Hall's dismissal of the reason of the multitude denied the possibility that some good would come of tumult. And "yet," Milton ventured, "I shall be bold to say that reason is the gift of God in one man, as well as in a thousand."¹⁴³

That Hall so readily took upon himself the burden of instruction disqualified him from the office of a faithful teacher of parliament. First Smectymnuus and then Milton characterized Hall as deficient in wisdom, committed to unsound doctrine. Yet these two pillars – wisdom and doctrine – must, for Milton, support any claim to authority. Indeed, it is "with the gift of wisdom, and sound doctrine" that a clergyman proves himself most useful

¹⁴⁰ Hall, *Humble Remonstrance*, 1.

¹⁴¹ Milton, *Animadversions*, YP 1.667. Milton would later level similar accusation of hubris at a greater adversary in *Paradise Regained* (1671), where Satan displays "over-weening," or self-conceited, pride. See *Paradise Regained*, 1.147.

¹⁴² Smectymnuus, *An Answer*, 14.

¹⁴³ Milton, *Animadversions*, YP 1.684-5.

to the Commons, “though not to be a member, yet a teacher, and persuader of the Parliament.”¹⁴⁴ In this view, Parliament was not accountable to the bishops’ votes nor to their participation in the legal process of government in Westminster. Parliament more rightfully received its guidance from a perfected clergy who relied upon wisdom and doctrine to guide the Commons’ decisions. By contrast, Hall taught not as one with such authority. “Your whole *Remonstrance*,” Milton wrote, “does nothing else but beg it and your fellow-*Prelates* do as good as whine to the *Parliament* for their Flesh-pots of *Egypt*, making sad Orations at the Funeral of your dear *Prelacy*.”¹⁴⁵ These modes of address – whining, complaint, and even mourning – were not fit to address the “sacred Parliament” imagined by Milton.

In addressing the qualities of a “teacher of Parliament”, Milton shifted the focus of the Smectymnuan controversy to address the uses of language in representing, addressing, and performing parliament. In Milton’s formal entry into the exchange he suggested that the “substance of their quarrel” had changed: behind concerns over “episcopacy and liturgy” was the debate about the value of rhetorical debate as a force to generate state policy. He denied Hall’s apparent reproach of parliament’s “judgment, and approbation” by representing a credible and balanced deliberative process among MPs capable “not only of receiving, but of voting to a commitment, after it had been advocated, and mov’d for by some honourable, and learned Gentlemen of the House.”¹⁴⁶ While Smectymnuus and Hall made a show of deferring to parliamentary decision, Milton paid especially close attention to how such decisions come about. In this, he emphasized that the Commons’ authority derives

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. *YP* 1.722.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., *YP* 1.701.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., *YP* 1.677.

from its strength in and through rhetorical deliberation. Within this context Milton confirmed the value of influence on parliament of its “teachers” who did not sit in the Commons, as well as the parliament’s ability to evaluate the merit of such speakers.

Even so, Milton experienced lasting anxiety about the effect of exploitative speakers within the Commons. The spectre of the sophist restlessly stalks *Animadversions*, as Milton aimed to identify those who use language properly, and those who do not. Indeed, Hall was among those who do not; Milton found him “either grossly deficient in his principles of Logic, or else purposely bent to delude the Parliament with equivocal Sophistry.”¹⁴⁷ Hall and the Bishops were equated with those classical orators-for-hire whose practices so concerned Socrates and, later, Isocrates; the sophists’ practice of agonistic rhetoric and their pursuit of lucre opposed those who viewed language as a means of ensuring virtue and truth. Unlike sophistic teachers, who typically demanded payment for instruction in the laws of rhetoric, “Socrates... never bargain’d with any for teaching them; he fear’d not lest those who had receiv’d so high a benefit from him, would not of their own freewill return him all possible thanks.”¹⁴⁸ Prelates are “sophists” then because of their expectation of payment and disregard for truth. Milton ensured that Hall’s abuses on both counts are made clear to the reader; the opening section of *Animadversions* includes much close quotation of Hall’s preceding pamphlet, so that “the ingenuous Reader without further amusing himself in the labyrinth of controversial antiquity, may come to the speediest way to see the truth vindicated, and Sophistry taken short at the first false bound.”¹⁴⁹ Milton turned again to this

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., *YP* 1.694.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., *YP* 1.719.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., *YP* 1.664.

same “ingenuous Reader” later in the pamphlet, then to demonstrate to him “how this *Remonstrant* would invert himself conditionally with all the rheume of the Towne.”¹⁵⁰

Accusations of sophistry also linked prelacy with tyranny. Milton claimed that “we who by Gods special grace have shaken off the servitude of a great male Tyrant, our pretended Father the Pope, should now, if we be not betimes aware of these wily teachers, sink under the slavery” of Prelacy.¹⁵¹ Milton’s own language, rather, is reminiscent of those who wrote to promote the pursuits of philosophy over those of sophistry: “such a high calling therefore as this,” he wrote, “sends not for those drossy spirits that need the lure, and whistle of earthly preferment, like those animals that fetch, and carry for a morsel, no.”¹⁵²

Such claims aimed to advance the concerns over discourse that had failed to be resolved in the Short Parliament. In that assembly, deliberation was denounced by Charles as an unnecessary delay of the royal agenda, and by political poets as a distraction from accomplishing legislative progress. Milton’s expectations of the Long Parliament prove the highest yet among the Smectymnuan authors, for he concluded that parliament already held the much prayed for powers of discernment and wisdom. Milton’s development in *Animadversions* of a “Sacred Parliament” derives in part from the Commons’ command of language. It was this same Parliament that should stand alongside Milton against the sophists. The “Sacred Parliament” acts as both proponent and protector of English scripture, and stands to “forbid” Hall, as Milton wrote, from “violat[ing] the sense of Scripture.”¹⁵³ Milton offers numerous objections in *Animadversions* to such violence against sacred text. The prelates, he argues, “endeavour to impress deeply into weak, and superstitious fancies

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., *YP* 1.693.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., *YP* 1.728.

¹⁵² Ibid., *YP* 1.722.

¹⁵³ Ibid., *YP* 1.726.

the awful notion of a mother, that hereby they might cheat them into a blind and implicit obedience to whatsoever they shall decree, or think fit.”¹⁵⁴ Here, readers could be harmed by church authorities whose edicts supersede popular judgment; their resulting “blind[ness]” might prevent them from serving as “the prospective glasses of their Prince.”¹⁵⁵ Elsewhere, the text itself receives harm: Hall is portrayed as in this case having “us’d all [his] cramping irons to the Text and... with a violent and bold *Hyperbaton* to transpose” it.¹⁵⁶ With only a few quick steps Milton moves from “text” to “liberties,” making equal these offences to English protestant text and the English protestant nation. Milton condemned such double violence also in *Of Reformation* where “these devout Prelates for these many years have not ceased in their Pulpits wrenching and spraining the text, [...] proscribing and confiscating from us all the right we have to our own bodies, goods and liberties.”¹⁵⁷

Elsewhere, Milton attributed to the “Sacred Parliament” a kind of divine utterance, one capable of resolving the wayward developments in church organization under the Prelates. The extended passage in *Animadversions* where Milton develops “a Law case” reveals his hopes for parliament in this regard. In this case – which reads as a traditional stewardship parable of sowing and growing – Milton describes “an honest and laborious servant” who tended over time a garden rich in “all wholesome herbs, and delightful flowers,” only to be presented with an unexpected obstacle:

now, when the time was come that he should cut his hedges,
prune his trees, look to his tender slips, and pluck up the
weeds that hinder’d their growth... and who would think that

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., *YP* 1.728.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., *YP* 1.670.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., *YP* 1.707-8.

¹⁵⁷ Milton, *Of Reformation*, *YP* 1.592-3.

any other should know better than he how the day's work was
to be spent? Yet for all this there comes another strange
Gardener that never knew the soil, never handl'd a Dibble or
Spade... much less had endur'd an hour's sweat or chillness.¹⁵⁸

As the parable unfolds, the “strange Gardener” insisted on his own authority to settle the affairs of the garden. Naturally, the “honest and laborious servant” dissented. Yet the stranger insists further, counting on his superiority in “dignity” and in “wages” to recommend him to the work at hand. Curiously, the case ends here, without resolution: “the Gardener smil'd and shook his head, but what was determin'd I cannot tell you till the end of this Parliament.” Milton deferred to the Commons as capable of completing the unfinished parable. A moment such as this reflects Milton's desire to yoke the energies for reform of religion and of state; his work in *Areopagitica* to “fit together ‘discrete’ liberties”¹⁵⁹ had already begun in 1641, as he surveyed the animadversions of Hall and Smectymnuus.

Milton's later activity as a prose controversialist suggests the lasting influence of the Smectymnuan controversy on his own thought. He praised in *Areopagitica* (1644) the “dust and heat” of controversy, and some of the “dust” stirred in the Smectymnuan exchange still clings to that later text. Critics have disputed the reasons why Milton's pamphlet bore its unusual title.¹⁶⁰ For his part, Milton did not explain its application there. But few have considered the Smectymnuan roots of the pamphlet, which prove deep enough to suggest that Milton's objective was not so narrow as only to answer the issues of censorship and

¹⁵⁸ Milton, *Animadversions*, YP 1.716-7.

¹⁵⁹ Blair Hoxby, “*Areopagitica* and Liberty,” in *Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. McDowell and Smith, 221.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 234.

licensing that faced him in 1644 as the newly notorious author of controversial writings on divorce. The pointed contention between Hall and Smectymnuus over the term “Areopagus” perhaps inspired the later title of Milton’s *Areopagitica*, but when considered in full, Milton’s later pamphlet depends on that Smectymnuan context for much more. Milton’s performances and representations of dissenting discourse in *Animadversions* (1641) and *An Apology Against a Pamphlet call’d A Modest Confutation* (1642) suggest that his early years as a pamphleteer were especially formative, and provided important groundwork for his later, and better-known prose work *Areopagitica*.

The parliamentary order for press licensing that passed on June 14, 1643, “against which Milton wrote the *Areopagitica*,” marked for him a disappointing end to what had been a long-running debate about the use of such control over the press.¹⁶¹ The threat to liberty posed by this order no doubt spurred Milton to publish, as his modern biographers have concluded. But to attribute the pamphlet’s composition solely to the immediate legislative context may overlook the full range of Milton’s concern at that time. Prominent claims in the later pamphlets of the Smectymnuan controversy may have, in Milton’s view, required further animadversion, even if he no longer saw himself on the side of the Smectymnuan authors. Milton’s own association with this group had likely waned by spring of 1644,¹⁶² on account of its apparent support (which Milton himself did not offer) for a Westminster Assembly that was motivated increasingly by Scottish Presbyterians. For this reason Milton

¹⁶¹ See Ernest Sirluck, “Introduction,” in *YP* 2.160-3; in concrete terms, it enacted “licensing, registration, signature, copyright, import control, search and seizure, arrest, imprisonment by order of Parliamentary committee, and association of the Stationers in administering the Order.”

¹⁶² Campbell and Corns, *Milton: Life and Works*, 161: “Milton probably retained friendly relations with the Smectymnuans, though in terms of their views on the sectaries they had been drifting apart since *The Reason of Church-government*.”

might have been reluctant to write any longer beneath Smectymnuus's banner.¹⁶³ Even so, to him it may have appeared that their earlier cause was worthy of his continued support, and its opponents were worthy of further response. The anonymous¹⁶⁴ pamphlet *Modest Confutation of A Slandorous and Scurrilous Libel, Entitled, Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defense against Smectymnuus* (1642), for example, issued what may be imagined as a direct challenge for Milton: "unbounded liberty... brings forth... disorder, disunion of affections between man and man, impiety, atheism, and anarchy."¹⁶⁵ In its response to such claims, and in other ways, Milton's approach in *Areopagitica* is distinctly Smectymnuan.

Milton answered the Modest Confuter's threat of violent "disunion" in *Areopagitica* by reimagining scenes of confrontation as leading to a more positive result. To any follower of the Smectymnaun controversy, this approach would have seemed nothing new. In *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal*, Kranidas observes in his subject's antiprelatical writing an

enthusiasm for crowded confrontational scenes – what amounts to intellectual agoraphilia, one which will climax in *Areopagitica*. This is genuine relish in confronting crowds with ideas, crowds of ordinary people, an exhilaration in ministering to, in informing, in exchanging ideas with, a people whose capacities have been shamefully underestimated by the prelatical party.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Milton likely maintained his ties with the Smectymnuan author Thomas Young, his former tutor at Cambridge. See Nicholas von Maltzahn, "Milton, Marvell, and Toleration," in *Milton and Toleration*, ed. Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 101.

¹⁶⁴ For a brief discussion of this pamphlet's authorship, see Campbell and Corns, *Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*, 145.

¹⁶⁵ Hall, *Modest Confutation*, 28-29.

¹⁶⁶ Kranidas, *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal*, 129-30.

The possibility of fruitful confrontation motivated the Smectymnuus authors as well in their own writing against prelacy. Their claim that “it must needs be that there be divisions”¹⁶⁷ in ecclesiastical matters acknowledged as much. For his part, Milton held in *Areopagitica* that sect and schism were overt signs that men were “taking care of their Religion into their own hands again.”¹⁶⁸ Milton’s further representations in *Areopagitica* of a collective search for truth bear resemblance also to those in his own writings. In *Animadversions*, for example, he represented himself as busy “in the detecting and convincing of any notorious enemy to truth and his Country’s peace.”¹⁶⁹ He made a lively return in *Areopagitica* to the cause of “truth” – “our richest merchandise” – whose “importation” was threatened by the enforcement of pre-publication licensing. Such legal measures would circumvent the “ablest resistance”¹⁷⁰ that, in Milton’s view, promised better understanding rather than the “disunion” feared by proponents of licensing. It was in being free from this prohibition that public writing remained “the more easy to refutation, if need be, there being so many whose business and profession merely it is, to be the champions of Truth.”¹⁷¹ Surely Milton imagined himself among their number.

That “richest merchandise” Milton saw as England’s birthright. *Areopagitica* continued his earlier promotion of English exceptionalism, describing the nation as one uniquely suited to the intellectual challenge of discovering Christian truth. This suitability derived from its inhabitants, and even from the very readers whom Milton addressed. In describing their character, he recalled the conclusion of that “wise roman who preferred the

¹⁶⁷ Smectymnuus, *Answer*, 82.

¹⁶⁸ Milton, *Areopagitica*, YP 2.554.

¹⁶⁹ Milton, *Animadversions*, YP 1.662.

¹⁷⁰ Milton, *An Apology Against a Pamphlet*, YP 1.869.

¹⁷¹ Milton, *Areopagitica*, YP 2.548.

natural wits of Britain, before the laboured studies of the French.”¹⁷² Further still, their shared literary heritage proved capable of critical and even dissenting thought. As he had done in *Animadversions*,¹⁷³ Milton cited in *Areopagitica* the English Spenser as a “better teacher than Scotus & Aquinas.”¹⁷⁴ In offering this praise, Milton credited his imagined readers with qualities similar to those that his contemporaries considered most important to sound parliamentary decision in the Commons. Facility with discourse, then, did not – could not – remain the purview only of parliamentarians. It was, as Milton imagined, a part of England’s national identity as much as it was, as parliament’s supporters maintained, a part of its national deliberative assembly.

Milton’s approach in *Areopagitica* recalls thematic and stylistic aspects of the Smectymnuan pamphlets, as well as their rhetorical relation to parliament. But behind these similarities, the trajectory of Milton’s writings in the Smectymnuan controversy and in *Areopagitica* marks an outward turn to these works’ discussion about political rhetoric. There Milton projected the model of parliamentary discourse that developed in those earlier pamphlets onto a much wider public, making universal the rhetorical work of political debate. Already in *Animadversions*, Milton oriented his case against Hall toward a wider public by avoiding recourse to specialist knowledge: “I shall not intend this hot season to bid you the base through the wide, and dusty champaine of the Councils, but shall take council of that which counsel’d them, reason.”¹⁷⁵ Milton’s claims for the strength of public reason invited his readers to consider themselves as credible judges of the controversy encountered in print. These writings supported individual faith and reason as means against what Milton

¹⁷² Ibid., *YP* 2.552.

¹⁷³ Milton, *Animadversions*, *YP* 1.722-23.

¹⁷⁴ Milton, *Areopagitica*, *YP*, 2.516.

¹⁷⁵ Milton, *Animadversions*, *YP* 1.684.

perceived as slavish adherence to tradition, whose appearance in church life seemed to some as a legacy of a pre-reformation church. This individual “reason[,] now illustrated by the word of God, shall be able to produce a better prevention then these Councils have left us against heresy, ignorance or want of care in the Ministry.”¹⁷⁶ Although Milton imagined these popular deliberations as running parallel to those at Westminster, he consciously returned to the political centre following his description in *Animadversions* of public judgment: “let the Parliament judge[,] who now themselves are deliberating whether Liturgy, and Episcopacy be to be well wish’d to, or no.”¹⁷⁷ In much the same way, Milton deferred to parliament after introducing the stewardship parable in the same pamphlet.

Areopagitica similarly privileged the work of deliberation, but aimed instead to promote its use in a wider political sphere. Scenes of judgment and deliberation reminiscent of those in the Smectymnuan controversy appear also in *Areopagitica*, but in the later pamphlet they centre more directly on citizen readers. These high expectations for readers’ engagement in public forums extend Milton’s claim in *Animadversions* against “binding a Collective to a singular person,”¹⁷⁸ which he added to Smectymnuus’s argument against those who claim to hold a “monopoly” on learning or to be beyond reach of the exchange of ideas. Milton had long been interested in representing the processes of engaged intellection and deliberation. In *Animadversions* he described MPs as capable “not only of receiving, but of voting to a commitment, after it had been advocated, and mov’d for by some honourable, and learned Gentlemen of the House.”¹⁷⁹ The description of intellectual process in this passage more generally anticipated Milton’s later representation in *Areopagitica* of pensive

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., *YP* 1.685.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., *YP* 1.695.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., *YP* 1.710.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., *YP* 1.677.

readers “sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas... others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement.”¹⁸⁰ An additional passage in that later work represents a similar scene of active reason:

For this is not the liberty which we can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth, that let no man in this World expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply consider'd, and speedily reform'd, then is the utmost bound of civil liberty attain'd, that wise men look for.¹⁸¹

In all of these cases, Milton attended in detail to the processes of arriving at conclusion through engagement with the written or spoken word. The deliberations he described in *Areopagitica* were framed in terms reminiscent of those used in the Smectymnuan pamphlets to describe similar rhetorical and intellectual work.

Milton's claims in *Areopagitica* recommended a wider application of the advice that had been offered to MPs in the Smectymnuan pamphlets. In particular, Milton's distinct characterization of his readers in *Areopagitica* as “fit to manage themselves”¹⁸² followed from such earlier discussion about MPs' own fitness to manage themselves. But even with such freedom Milton's imagined readers were not completely unbridled, especially if in *Areopagitica* he modeled the relation between himself and his readers after that which took shape between the Smectymnuan pamphleteers and the Parliament. Both rhetorical engagements incorporated an advisor figure whose role it was “though not to be a member,

¹⁸⁰ Milton, *Areopagitica*, YP 2.554.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., YP 2.487.

¹⁸² Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 61.

[to be] a teacher, and persuader of the Parliament.”¹⁸³ In the Smectymnuan context, this comment reflected on the bishops’ active participation in Westminster politics. Although they might be liberated from such strict legislative influence (so Smectymnuus hoped), MPs might still be taught and persuaded by the bishops. Their influence would issue within the wider field of parliamentary advice from the “free-spoken, and plain hearted men that are the eyes of their Country, and the prospective glasses of their Prince.”¹⁸⁴ An extension of this argument in *Areopagitica*, where all manner of books serve as teachers, holds that all readers – not just princes and statists – benefit from exposure to multiple, competing perspectives.¹⁸⁵ The faith Milton had in public writing relied upon assumptions he had voiced already in *Animadversions*: “in all wise apprehensions the persuasive power in man to win others to goodness by instruction is greater, and more divine, then the compulsive power to restrain men from being evil by terror of the Law.”¹⁸⁶

Milton’s reiteration of this central line of argument in *Areopagitica* bridged his anti-prelatical and anti-censorship pamphlets. In his early career as a prose controversialist, Milton summarily confronted Remonstrants, Presbyters, and then even MPs whose approaches to political speech failed to account for the possibilities of open debate or discussion (whether in the Commons or in public). Milton’s own views formed in facing this opposition. Although his

earliest entries into print had aligned him with the

Presbyterians[,] in the divorce tracts and *Areopagitica* (1644),

Milton gives evidence of his embrace of more radical

¹⁸³ Milton, *Animadversions*, YP 1.722.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, YP 1.670.

¹⁸⁵ Hoxby, “*Areopagitica* and Liberty,” 235.

¹⁸⁶ Milton, *Animadversions*, YP 1.722.

theological positions. These works hail his birth as an Independent, who rejects the Presbyterian vision of national church government and imposed religious orthodoxy as he had earlier rejected that of Catholicism and Laudianism.¹⁸⁷

Even though his views changed thus, the “critical readerly engagement” clearly “at stake”¹⁸⁸ in *Areopagitica* followed debates about discourse that arise in the Smectymnuan pamphlets.

The new theological positions he “embraced” by 1644, though radical, perhaps were seen to follow a pattern established in the scripture. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643), Milton recalled “the *new Commandment*” recorded by John: namely “the infinite enlargement of Charity.”¹⁸⁹ The reference confirmed that “Jesus’s mission is in charity to ease the severity of the Old Testament laws,” but it was also more immediately significant because it opened the door for Milton’s reexamination of divorce.¹⁹⁰ He perhaps gestured towards a similar shift from old to new in *Areopagitica*, where “some grain of charity” – in addition to “a little generous prudence, [and] a little forbearance of one another” – might “unite into one general and brotherly search after Truth.” Pursuit of this virtue permits authors and readers to “forgo this Prelatical tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men.”¹⁹¹ Once again Milton saw Christian “charity” as denoting a form of collective understanding that could supersede the letter of “orthodoxy.” In specific terms, this meant opposing the more coercive forms of rhetoric that were ill-suited to parliament – whether undertaken at Westminster or more broadly between London’s politically-minded authors and readers.

¹⁸⁷ Sharon Achinstein, “‘A law in this matter to himself’”, 175-6.

¹⁸⁸ Sauer, ‘*Paper Contestations*,’ 24.

¹⁸⁹ John Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, YP 2.330-1; see John 13:34.

¹⁹⁰ Campbell and Corns, *Milton: Life, Works, and Thought*, 164.

¹⁹¹ Milton, *Areopagitica*, YP 2.554.

IV CONCLUSION

Milton's contemplation of true and false teachers may have arisen from his own experiences in the classroom, but it may also have been informed by his reading of the Attic educator and orator Isocrates. In his oration *Areopagus*, Isocrates warned that high council about false teachers. He made similar claims also in *Against the Sophists* and *Encomium of Helen*. Milton's own particular zeal against the sophists in *Animadversions*, which animated also his later writing against censorship, may have been in part owing to Isocrates's example. But Milton's was only one voice of many. As the first section of this study has shown, particular attention to political rhetoric was a defining feature of the political discussions within (and also surrounding) parliament following Charles's personal rule.

But the productive, executive debate that yielded great and terrible results in later years did not fall immediately into place once parliament returned to Westminster after Charles's personal rule. As its diarists observed, the Short Parliament was marked more by its members' energy than by their efficiency or legislative results. However, the failure of that assembly and its aftermath forced a wider reconsideration of the need for political deliberation in the Commons. The implications of these MPs' debates about the legitimacy of the head of state (or of their own assembly) were at the outset overshadowed by a more basic question of whether or not they could hold such debate at all. Moreover, lasting anxieties about ill-intended persuasion, misrepresentation, and the as yet dubious capabilities of an English reading public opposed the broader acceptance of unrestrained political discourse. Such concern existed even among faithful parliamentarians. Milton himself was not above such doubt: despite his optimism at the rise of the Long Parliament,

“the tumultuous decade from 1644 to 1654 had not convinced Milton that the majority of Englishmen really knew what it meant to fight the wars of peace by governing themselves.”¹⁹²

The discord at Westminster in the early 1640s also prompted a wider reconsideration of parliamentary politics. Parliament’s public trial and execution of Strafford unsettled a historic balance between the Commons and the Crown, and pointedly defied precedents of recent memory. Only months earlier, Charles had freely dissolved his “disloyal” parliament. Such recourse was evidently unavailable to him by the winter of 1641 when Strafford faced the scaffold. England saw the parliament’s jurisdiction tried along with Strafford’s innocence, although perhaps in a different court. This event and its aftermath attest to the early stages of what proves a substantial shift in expectations for public adjudication by citizen readers. Against the “Babel” cited by royalists “to register horror at the fact of political disagreement,”¹⁹³ authors and MPs together contributed to the development of the culture of debate that was more fully established during the years of civil war. The relative freedom of expression during this period owes much to earlier efforts in and around the Commons to legitimate cultures of political debate.

The ascendancy of the Long Parliament was supported by these efforts, both inside and outside of the Commons. Inside, MPs aimed to prove that their assembly had a viable voice in its dissent from the crown. Their debates also seemed naturally to extend outside the walls of Westminster, where – with the help of highly visible publications like the pamphlets in the Smectymnuan controversy – they encouraged a wider acceptance of public political dissent. In some cases, more public forms of deliberation and discussion followed what

¹⁹² Hoxby, “*Areopagitica* and Liberty,” 236.

¹⁹³ See Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 73.

resembled the newly reformed parliamentary practice. That “most important” accomplishment of civil war polemic, for example, “was that [its] dialogue allowed for varying perspectives while containing the conflict within the boundaries of its discussion.”¹⁹⁴ One significant influence of parliament work on political writing was in legitimating dissent. This result gave new structure to the political debates that came to define England’s revolutionary decade. There, authors and readers could pose new questions about the heads of religion and of state. The next section of this study describes the efforts of authors and readers to find order within this expanding sphere of political writing.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

Part II: Publics

3. “Parliaments of Paper” and Public Readers, 1642-1650

SIR RALPH HOPTON excused the king’s coming hither with so great a number and so unusually armed because we ourselves had divers of our servants attending in the lobby without the door of this house armed in an unusual manner also with carbines and pistols...¹ (5 JANUARY 1642)

And when the king came out again, they asked how strong the House of Commons was. He affirmed that he saw divers of them to have pistols.² (7 JANUARY 1642)

Although the early years of the 1640s were distinctly marked by the division between Charles and his parliaments, the conflict between them reached a new and dramatic height by January 1642. Parliamentary diarists describe the great anxiety among MPs who feared coercion and even violence from Charles’s supporters at this time. For his part, Charles claimed that his own show of force was defensive, issuing in response to a provoking

¹ Wilson H. Coates, Anne Steele Young, and Vernon F. Snow, eds., *Private Journals of the Long Parliament* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1982), 1.15.

² *Ibid.*, 1.24.

display from supporters of the parliamentary cause. In the second scene cited above, a rhetorical and political standoff between the two sides began to look like it would be an armed one as well. The events that constituted this breaking of state need no extensive rehearsal here, for detailed accounts of the historical moment may be found in recent scholarship. Agitators in the Commons sought to limit the scope of the King's rule by prerogative, and to further promote parliamentary executive powers; in response, Charles attempted (and failed) to arrest five prominent MPs on 4 January 1642. Following this "botched *coup d'état*,"³ the Parliament immediately published a complaint of breach of privilege,⁴ for his part, Charles and many of his supporters withdrew from London soon thereafter. This political disintegration at Westminster launched a quest for legitimacy according to the laws both of the land and of public opinion, the latter of which took shape amid "Wars of Words and Paper Bullets"⁵ on the periphery of the English Civil War.

Even if the Long Parliament had indeed "failed as a forum in which to express and reconcile political differences,"⁶ such differences were embraced by a new deliberative forum that took shape as "the streets became a Parliament of Paper."⁷ This chapter describes the claims for and against the capacities of readers who participated in this burgeoning external deliberative assembly. A notable self-reflexivity marks the public discourse from this period, as politically-minded authors often addressed the question of what such discussions should be expected to accomplish. Authors from either side of the political conflict wrote to promote models of a reading public supportive of their own respective

³ John Adamson, *The Noble Revolt: the Overthrow of Charles I* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), 499.

⁴ Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 179.

⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603- 1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 285.

⁶ Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire*, 182.

⁷ Leo Hollis, *London Rising: the Men Who Made Modern London* (New York: Walker, 2008), 16.

political ideals. Some critics dismissed the credibility of citizen readers as capable adjudicators, considering the text as a *pharmakon* that influenced or “infected” its readers (as John Dryden complained).⁸ Others imagined more sustained political engagements for “revolutionary readers”⁹ and attempted to draw new participants into a debate that reached from the “very meanest commoner”¹⁰ to the upper reaches of the Parliamentary leadership. Although its full achievement may be shown to take place later in this century,¹¹ the formation of the public political sphere that Jürgen Habermas has described was supported by the earlier formation of a public literary sphere where the styles of discourse and habits of thought that defined the Long Parliament found new employment among public authors and readers.

Many contemporary accounts and many modern scholars imagine the public represented in the Stuart parliaments as a public of readers. Recent discussion of the “making” of such “publics”¹² permits a much fuller understanding of their scope and function during England’s revolutionary decade. However, their origins are more difficult to identify. Much modern historiography of the public political sphere describes its formation using supernatural terms, whether as being “summoned into existence,”¹³ “invoked,”¹⁴ or

⁸ Quoted in Tim Harris, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660-1715* (New York: Longman, 1993), 21.

⁹ See Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the revolutionary reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

¹⁰ Andrew Marvell, *An Account of the Growth of Popery*, ed. Nicholas von Maltzahn, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 2.225.

¹¹ See Steven Pincus, “The state and civil society in early modern England,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 217: “Despite Charles II’s ambivalent attitude to public discussion, the Exclusion crisis revealed that many had accepted the normative value of the public sphere.”

¹² See Paul Yachnin and Bronwen Wilson, eds., *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹³ Wes Folkerth, “Pietro Aretino, Thomas Nashe, and Rhetorics of Public Address”, in *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Yachnin and Wilson, 68.

¹⁴ Mark Knights, “How rational was the later Stuart public sphere”, in Lake and Pincus, eds., *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, 263.

“called into being”¹⁵ by authorial address. My examination of mid-century political rhetoric in this chapter reveals the work of poets who, once having hailed their readers as political adjudicators, also actively developed those readers’ capacity to be such. These citizen readers were deliberately fashioned and taught by poets and polemicists who wrote to enrich their media literacy. In turn, they shaped the textually-mediated networks within which they communicated with fellow readers.

Few sources reveal as much about early modern reading practices as manuscript miscellanies. Instances of intertextual reference and comment scattered throughout these collections – which are described by one scholar as “the ultimate source for the study of reading, the book, and identity”¹⁶ – seem often to realize Milton’s vision in *Areopagitica* of trial by the “dust and heat” of controversy. This chapter identifies examples of such trial in extant miscellanies, where readers and poets participated in public debates framed through the composition, circulation, and reception of select political poetry. These poems both provided representations of political events and concerns, and performed a political work of their own by connecting readers through meaningful textual engagements. In this way, some political writing in this period aimed to accomplish more than simply representing an existing world, seeking also to create new political realities by fostering relationships between citizens and their political representatives. Such “scribal publication served to define communities of the like-minded,”¹⁷ with readers, as much as authors, defining the boundaries of the communities in which they participated. The miscellanies under review in this chapter thus have a distinctly public character, which is sometimes overlooked in studies

¹⁵ Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, “Rethinking the public sphere,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. Lake and Pincus, 6.

¹⁶ Kenneth Lockridge, “Individual literacy in commonplace books,” *Interchange* 34, no. 2/3 (2003): 337.

¹⁷ Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 33.

that have framed these as more private documents.¹⁸ Some of these volumes reveal compilers' active responses to the contemporary authors who sought to educate readers who were more conscious of bias in political propaganda, who were aware of their fellow readers, and who were capable of imaging "trimming" politics. The circulation and reception of their writings worked against visible failures to establish representation of opposing viewpoints within a single political assembly, and in doing so they contributed to a wider coming to terms with dissent that supports the century's achievement of early modernity.

I PUBLIC REASON AND ITS CRITICS

According to the activity in the Commons and in publications on its periphery in the years following Charles's personal rule, commentators from both political camps – royalist and parliamentarian – shared a common anxiety over the role of public political discourse. Their growing mistrust of publicly-available writing on affairs of state accompanied the textual campaigns that foreshadowed later military action. In the Commons, members voiced significant concerns over the printing and circulation of spurious political speeches, which sometimes misrepresented parliamentary proceedings and participants. Popular interest in MPs' speeches ran high, as significant parliamentary speeches saw multiple editions in print. However, altered or fabricated versions of speeches were published too. These official and unofficial publications presented a significant challenge to the readers who assessed the competing claims to authority from within traditional political assemblies at Westminster.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 80: "The fact that most personal miscellanies rarely record the circumstances of receipt of particular items, and almost never those of further transmission, disguises their dynamic quality as points of transit within networks of copying."

How could misrepresentations be identified? How could the influence of public will on state affairs be legitimate if it was itself subject to corrupting influences of popular print? That an existing act prohibited the publication of parliamentary proceedings did not stop the presses. But if such activity could not be suppressed, it could perhaps be managed: on 17 May 1641, it was “*Ordered*, That the Committee appointed to consider the Printing of the Speeches of the Members of this House, &c. be added to the Committee for Printing.”¹⁹ On 24 August 1642, a full “Ordinance for restraining the License of Printing” was read in the Commons,²⁰ and “with the concurrence of the Lords the following *Special Order of both Houses concerning Irregular Printing, and for the suppressing of all false and Scandalous pamphlets* was published.”²¹

Public forms of political speech, such as petitions and political poetry, were also questioned by authors skeptical both of the use of oppositional discourse and of the facility of those who wielded it. Writings dating to this period by the poet John Denham (later an MP, but then sheriff) reflect these concerns. In poems such as “The Poets Petition” and *Coopers Hill*, he questioned the validity and the use of public political writing as a medium for political discourse. Other poets, such as the anonymous “E. P.”, represented the impasse between king and parliament as one derived from language, where a confusion of “terms and styles” rendered debate impossible. Charles’ public relations in the early 1640s acknowledged the importance of his subjects but not of public discourse or public

¹⁹ *Journal of the House of Commons, volume 2: 1640-1643* (1802), 148. See also Frederick Seaton Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 180-2.

²⁰ *Journal of the House of Commons, volume 2: 1640-1643* (1802), 734. MPs continued their efforts to manage print; see Annabel Patterson, *The Long Parliament of Charles II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 15: “in 1642 a committee was appointed to consider the best way ‘of divulging, dispersing and publishing the Orders and Votes, and also the Declarations of the House, through the Kingdom, and of the well and true printing of them.’”

²¹ Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England*, 182. The full text of the Order appears in *Journal of the House of Commons, volume 2: 1640-1643*, 739.

deliberation. He addressed his subjects in print and in person, but treated them as an audience or as spectators rather than as participants in a deliberative political forum.

Oppositional discourse seldom thrived in the Long Parliament, whether early or late. Records of proceedings in its first years suggest that opposing political views were not there considered an integral part of the discussions intended to generate policy. Exclusion, rather, was more prevalent than inclusion when dissent was aired in the Commons. The editors of *The Private Journals of the Long Parliament* observe that “the composition of the lower house had changed between the opening of the Long Parliament and January 1642,” this in large part because many members “had been excluded or expelled.” The “nearly 10 percent change in the membership surely benefited the cause of [the parliamentarians] more than King Charles.”²² Voices who supported the king were later quieted in – and even ejected from – the Commons. The culture of division, if not yet quite of partisanship, was owing to the struggle between those who promoted greater latitude for parliamentary rule, and those who sought to preserve the fullest range of Charles’s royal prerogative.

The weeks immediately after Charles’s attempted arrest of the five members in January 1642 saw some attempts in the Commons to resolve differences between the King and Parliament, but these were frustrated by delay that, although not “as good as denial,” marked some significant reluctance among MPs to treat with the King. On 12 January, the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

moved to know if, according to a motion made this afternoon,
he should move his majesty in the name of this house to return
to London for the dispatch of the great affairs of the kingdom

²² Coates et al, *The Private Journals of the Long Parliament*, 1. xxi.

and for the begetting of a true understanding between his
majesty and the parliament.²³

The question was not immediately settled, as some MPs “desired to defer the debate of this
till tomorrow morning.” In his parliamentary diary, D’Ewes records his own strong feeling
that

this kingdom could never be safe or happy without the union
of prince and people, and that therefore this motion tending to
that end I desired it might be pursued. And it was my earnest
hope that his majesty would return single to us and leave those
Cavaliers that now attended him behind him.²⁴

Not all of his colleagues shared this opinion. Debates from 13 January show MPs’ reluctance
to restore goodwill between themselves and Charles. Against the calls from MPs to “send to
his majesty to express our grief for his absenting himself from us and to desire him to
return,” Denzil Holles maintained that no such reparations could be made until “himself and
the other members of this house accused of high treason were cleared and the violation of
the privileges of this house in their persons were redressed.”²⁵ One diarist recorded on 14
January that the debate on “agreement and accommodation betwixt the king and parliament”
was a lengthy one. It was eventually

Ordered, that the house be resolved into a committee to take
into consideration of ways and means of removing the present

²³ Ibid., 1.45; this source is Simonds D’Ewes’s diary.

²⁴ Coates et al, *The Private Journals of the Long Parliament*, 1.45-6.

²⁵ Ibid., 1.54.

distempers and disorders and settling the honor, peace, safety,
and happiness both of the king and kingdom, and resolved.²⁶

This committee did not report their results for a month. By that time, Charles had begun to seek settlement on his own terms. The duration of the stalemate after that moment of crisis at Westminster also prompted considerable activity among political observers outside the Commons, whose collective engagements ultimately constituted a collateral, notional political assembly.

The busyness of presses and readers at this time drew numerous complaints from MPs, revealing their significant anxiety about the value of the political publications they faced. Those writings that addressed the Long Parliament, as well as those that issued from it, met with skepticism, and “while some MPs welcomed the petitioners and their demands, others reacted with fear and consternation.”²⁷ D’Ewes noted a “false petition of Hertfordshire” drawn up by Thomas Herbert, which was then printed. But Herbert’s crime was plainly surpassed by those “loose beggarly scholars who did in alehouses invent speeches and make speeches of members in the house and of other passages supposed to be handled in or presented unto this house.” D’Ewes’s reaction to these affronts to parliamentary readers (and also perhaps to parliamentary privilege) may best be described as rage, it being

so scandalous to the parliament itself that it should be
permitted whilst we sit here, as we have now just cause to
make these men examples for a terror to the rest. I would not
have these beggarly fellows committed to the sergent’s

²⁶ Ibid., 1.69.

²⁷ Ibid., 1.xxvii.

custody, to whom they will be a burden, but sent to the Gatehouse... and then we may afterwards... have a further punishment inflicted upon them by whipping, standing in the pillory, and the like.²⁸

This motion was reportedly “assented unto,” and “though some spake after” D’Ewes did not record their objections to his frustrated claim for vigilance, and even for censorship, over the political press.

Ill-intentioned authors who deliberately misled the public were not the only source of publication anxiety in the Commons as MPs strove to settle wider perceptions of that assembly after its initial break from the King. That the public political record was filtered at various stages of its transmission, including at the initial moment recording in the Commons chamber, gave MPs sufficient cause to question the authority of the various accounts of recent parliamentary process. Paying particular attention to records describing the events of 5 January, D’Ewes observed “all” that “the king caused... to be left out”²⁹ of Rushworth’s transcript of Charles’s speech at parliament after realizing that “the birds had flown.” Another diarist recognized gaps in the record, and noted that the King’s speech “is in print, though not all of it.”³⁰ This selective publication and republication of political texts was not uncommon. The editors of the *Private Journals of the Long Parliament* volumes note “numerous” examples of printed speeches dated to the first week of January 1642 whose “authenticity is doubtful.”³¹ Another historian remarks of similarly dubious parliamentary publications that they leave “a nice problem for attributionists.”³² But for many Long

²⁸ Ibid., 1.165; 25 January 1642.

²⁹ Ibid., 1.9.

³⁰ Ibid., 1.13.

³¹ Ibid., 1.15.

³² Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: an Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 165.

Parliament MPs, these spurious speeches presented a daunting challenge, and one perhaps too great, to the public readers whose abilities and judgment were so often cast into question.

Charles shared a similar ambivalence about the capability of citizens to judge rightly. One of his attempts in 1642 at public outreach suggests the difficulty of early attempts at achieving public politics. Of course London itself was too hostile a place to undertake such work: after the turmoil that followed his failure to arrest the five members, Charles travelled to York. This was the second time he resorted there after a failure at Whitehall; after the dissolution of Short Parliament in May 1640 for its failure to approve his desired financial support for war in the north, Charles had travelled to York to oversee the marshalling of an army to face the Covenanters. Both instances mark attempts at political independence, as Charles sought to accomplish his will without backing from parliament. However, he undertook his 1642 visit with the aim of gaining broader support from his subjects, after having once again failed to secure it from their elected political representatives. Charles's calling of a public assembly at Heworth Moor in spring of 1642 suggests his interest at that time in engaging with citizens in a parliamentary capacity, although not in "a parliamentary way." There he took upon himself the duty of hearing grievances and generating consensus (the very goals of Parliament itself). But he plainly avoided public political discussion or debate. Beyond its intended effect of bolstering royalist support in the provinces through a display of royal goodwill and good intention, Charles's appearance at Heworth likely also marked a return to the promise he made at the close of the Short Parliament, and reiterated

in his printed *Declaration* (1640): to redress popular grievances with or without help from the Commons.³³

A fresh document from his hand, *His Majesty's declaration to the ministers, free-holders, farmers, and substantial copy-holders of the county of York* (1642), joined the earlier *Declaration* in its attempts to preserve the King's public reputation in the face of the political turmoil at Westminster. The pamphlet³⁴ – which was printed first at York, and later in London – was distributed among the thousands of men who attended the King at Heworth Moor, as a supplement to a speech he delivered there. Local magistrates were spread through the crowds and given copies to read aloud. In the address, the King assured his audience of “Our own Zeal to the Protestant Profession.” He further promised that “We shall never enforce any Prerogative of Ours beyond [the Law],” and that he would “give you, and all Our Subjects the fullest latitude of it, both for the liberty of your persons, and the propriety of your estates.” In this way Charles responded directly to the three main grievances that had consumed the Short Parliament, namely the safety of religion, property, and person. Promise of “our resolutions to maintain peace,” however, may have seemed tenuous given the presence of “the prime gentry, and of one regiment of our trained bands” who accompanied Charles. Such friction aside, his declaration requested that the men of York renew their confidence and trust in royal rule, citing “Our former thirteen years Reign” – only four of which had included a sitting parliament – as being “too long to dissemble Our Nature.”³⁵

³³ For a description of this scene, see Andrew Hopper, *'Black Tom: Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1-2.

³⁴ Citations here from the copy at Wing / 2456:22; this pamphlet was printed not in London, but issued directly from “York: printed by Robert Barker, printer to the Kings most Excellent Majesty: and by the assignes of John Bill, 1642.” One of several later imprints of this *Declaration* claims that the pamphlet was “imprinted first at York and now re-printed at London for Edward Husbards, June 6, 1642” (see Wing / C2284).

³⁵ Charles, *His Majesty's declaration to the ministers, free-holders, farmers, and substantial copy-holders of the county of York* (York, 1642), 3-5.

Those on the ground in York, however, were granted plain view of that nature: one plainly reluctant to respond to his subjects' grievances.

A stir of papers and pamphlets, as well as a printing press, followed Charles as he traveled from London to York. In answer to the state of the presses in London, where "all [were] open to vent whatsoever [the parliamentarians] think fit to say to the people,"³⁶ Charles's supporters established their own printing press at York. This measure drew complaint, but Charles responded that the York publications "have been extorted from us by such provocations, have not been before offered to a king."³⁷ Although they could leave behind the hostility and threat of violence they encountered in the metropolis, these faithful royalists could not so easily escape the debate over the schism at Westminster, which had already spread to the provinces. Within this culture of critical reading, every man was turned politician. Political messages engendered readers' skepticism before all else.

Beyond the "two Cart loads of Records and Books" that were brought to York by Charles's followers, many contemporary pamphlets commented on royal business.³⁸ Some even made direct appeals to the King. Charles was not the only one to bring his papers to the moor at Heworth; while his *Declaration* circulated, a petition from some residents of Yorkshire also worked its way through the crowd toward the King. In true parliamentary fashion, bold royal statement so met with quick civic rejoinder. Yet the message offered to Charles fell on deaf ears. As described in the anonymous pamphlet *A letter sent by a Yorkshire gentleman, to a friend in London* (1642), the authors of the petition requested

³⁶ Charles thus "bewailed" the state of publication in London at the time; see Clive Holmes, *Why Was Charles I Executed?* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 200.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

³⁸ *A Letter Sent by a Yorkshire Gentleman, to a Friend in London* (1642; no place of publication given), 4.

Sir *Thomas Fairfax* ... to present the same Petition to his Majesty ... which he (notwithstanding the Lords *Savills* opposition) accepted of, and used his utmost endeavor to deliver the same, and after extraordinary opposition, made his way through the Horse, and came at last near to his Majesty, and lighted and tendered the same: who putting it aside with his hand, declined the acceptance thereof.³⁹

Other accounts record that Charles not only “put aside” the petition, but also spurred his horse to strike its deliverer. According to the author of the *Letter*, Fairfax reportedly left the petition “upon the Pommel of his Majesty’s Saddle; and returned and acquainted the Freeholders therewith.”⁴⁰ The “Assembling” at Heworth Moor, as Charles described it,⁴¹ proved just as rowdy as any in Whitehall, and some observers record the efforts of Royalist supporters who sought to suppress the spread of petitions through the crowd.

But if traditional authorities’ credibility met with doubt, so too did public political statements expressed in popular petitions and in other writings that surrounded parliament in the early 1640s. The utility of discourse was contested among MPs and also among their observers during the Short and Long Parliaments, considered by some the means of just debate, and by others only an unnecessary “delay” and “denial” of the royal prerogative. It was tested again outside of parliament, where political discourse itself became the topic for many poems that circulated in this period. Beyond their critique of either the Parliament or the King, or – as later divisions took shape – of “roundhead” and “cavalier,” such poems undertake more detailed literary criticism inasmuch as they consider the utility of public

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴¹ Charles, *His Majesty’s Declaration to the ministers, free-holders, farmers, and substantial copy-holders of the county of York* (1642), 2.

political writing as an influence on state affairs. These questions proved especially pressing during the period of civil war as competing factions strove for public support.

The poetry of John Denham dating to this period responded to this emerging literary culture of public poetic critique. Diarists and miscellany compilers recorded numerous instances of poems that were posted on the doors at Westminster, “dropped” within the Commons chamber,⁴² and “affixed” in public places.⁴³ Inasmuch as they focused public attention on the Commons, such writings at times served a parallel function to the formal genres of public petition and of published parliamentary speech. Denham’s own poetry gave expression to the critical spirit that flourished among contemporary poetically-inclined political spectators. In one widely circulated poem, “The Poets Petition,” Denham lampooned both the proponents of petitions and the authors of political poetry.⁴⁴ But Denham addressed somewhat equivocally in this poem the merit and use of public writing on state affairs. On the one hand condemning the influence of political poetry and on the other confirming the influence of such public writing, Denham strikes a satirical tone in describing state poets but restrained himself from absolute irony. The “Poets Petition” may also stand as Denham’s own reluctant acknowledgement of the power that public discourse (whether in the form of poetry or of rhetoric) appeared to have on contemporary political process.

In keeping with its imagined speaker, “The Poets Petition” suggests at its outset that poems are more suitable than traditional petitions as expressions of public polity. Denham

⁴² Esther Cope, ed., *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977), 242: “These verses were dropped in the Parliament house”; see also Worcester College MS 216, fol. 4r, “A copy of verses dropped in Westminster hall, in the city, and other places of the kingdom.”

⁴³ Bodleian MS Tanner 52, fol. 13r, “Verses affixed to a picture of Cromwell set up on the Exchange.”

⁴⁴ According to the *Union First Line Index of English Verse*, the poem appears in six separate manuscripts and in three printed pamphlets. This section refers to the copy in Bodleian Library MS Rawl. D. 398, fols. 233^{r-v}.

laments in the poem's opening section that although "set forms of prayer be an abomination / set forms of petitions find great approbation."⁴⁵ His answer is instead to offer a petition in verse. But the appeal in the poem to the higher possibilities of poetry – "a privilege ancient and native"⁴⁶ – is overshadowed by the reality of poets who speak too freely. Such complaints were often made in poetic satires against the MPs gathered at Westminster during the political uncertainty at Westminster. As "the Poets Petition" continues, Denham's description of the claimants strengthens connections between MPs and poets, inasmuch as they both prove antagonists to the King. The failings of one party are made to emphasize those of the other, whether ill-considered speech – "to speak what ever we please / without fear of prison or pursuivant fees"⁴⁷ – or simple misrepresentation:

...an old custom our fathers did name it
Poetical License & always did claim it
by this we have power to change age into youth
turn nonsense to sense & falsehood to truth
in brief to make good whatsoever is faulty
(this art some poet or the devil hath taught ye).⁴⁸

"Some poet or the devil" – Denham seems unable to decide whose sins are greater. While earlier verse satires of political figures represent failed speech acts, here the representations turn more adversarial. In this case the criticized speakers are more than inept and now have pointedly dishonest aims.

⁴⁵ John Denham, "The Poets Petition", ll. 7-8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 19.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ll. 21-22.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, ll. 25-30.

How does this derision of poets complicate Denham's own *ethos* as a writer of political verse? Denham's poetic aim is difficult to identify, shifting between critique and lament. The former mood acknowledges the power of political poetry and political rhetoric. Denham warns the reader that he ought not to trust what he reads, whether penned by poets or MPs. What then ought he to make of Denham's own writing? The "Poets Petition" wavers between outright satire of unrestrained political discourse and Denham's uncomfortable acceptance of the need to resort to the same ways and means he finds so disagreeable. Even as Denham's poem highlights royalist fears of unchecked political discourse, whether in parliament or outside, it adds mass and hence momentum to "the proliferation of printed materials" that itself "legitimized public opinion" in the period.⁴⁹ Such provoking material did not only invite a response – it demanded it. Behind the unflattering scene of literary and political misrepresentations may lie the poet's own acknowledgement – however grudging – of "that trust above all others in poets reposed / that kings by them only are made and deposed."⁵⁰ That claims against public poetry echoed those made against parliamentary discourse suggests some wider acknowledgment that the two forums were more similar than not.

The "Poets Petition" informs Denham's better – indeed, best – known poem, *Coopers Hill*, which itself surely surpasses all of the poet's work in its thorough and confident support of the monarch. First written in 1641, Denham's masterpiece was frequently revised, and occasionally printed, although modern scholarship distinguishes chiefly versions early (1641/2; the "A" text) and late (1655; the "B" text).⁵¹ In his *Index of*

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Sauer, *Paper-contestations' and Textual Communities in England, 1640-1675* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 7.

⁵⁰ Denham, "The Poets Petition", ll. 33-34.

⁵¹ Brendan O Hehir, *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks: a Critical Edition of Sir John Denham's Coopers Hill* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), ix.

English Literary Manuscripts, Peter Beal adds that the poem was “transcribed repeatedly,” and prompted “widespread manuscript circulation.”⁵² This dissemination strongly favours the “A” text of *Coopers Hill*,⁵³ which itself appeared in print in 1642. Having witnessed the proceedings against Strafford (in which trial he served as witness), Denham wrote the poem to caution Parliament “against provoking the dormant strength of the King.”⁵⁴ The poem is known best for its expression of this political sentiment, and for its innovative form, which pioneers the “topographical reflective” genre. Yet the poem comments as directly on the nature of public political language as it does on that of kingship. Here, Denham argues for the king’s status as a subject that defies discourse, and whose authority exceeds poetic representation.

Coopers Hill cast a shadow upon the growing contemporary interest in the potential of political discourse. Denham presents the proliferation of royal representations in public poetry as unnecessary and inadequate responses to their subject. Such reservations about the efficacy and use of state poetry seem to have followed royalist skepticism about the use of debate in parliament. Denham emphasizes the king’s primacy early in the poem, writing that “Courts make not Kings, but Kings the Court.”⁵⁵ Later in the poem he observes another thing that a king “needs not”:

He, who not needs that Emblem which we paint,
But is himself the Soldier and the Saint.
Here should my wonder dwell, and here my praise,
But my fixed thoughts my wandering eye betrays.⁵⁶

⁵² Peter Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (London: Mansell, 1980), 1.331.

⁵³ O Hehir, *Expans’d Hieroglyphicks*, ix.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁵ John Denham, *Coopers Hill* (1642), 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

Here, secondary representation – the “Emblem” – is unnecessary. These remarks may stand as a rejoinder in earnest to the satiric construction in “the Poets Petition,” that “kings by [poets] only are made and deposed.” A prefatory note to the 1655 edition of *Coopers Hill* shares this skepticism about representation: the poet John Birkenhead compliments Denham’s allegory as one “skillfully mantain’d without dragging or haling in Words and Metaphors.”⁵⁷ Denham imagines and characterizes a world in which monarchical authority is self-evident, capable of touching citizens with a sense of awe yet not dependent on any labour of attendant poets beyond their “wonder” and “praise” – such registers as Milton perhaps imagined in his condemnation of “flattery” in *Areopagitica*.

Denham’s own rhetorical thrust in *Coopers Hill* points to an arrangement between a king and his subjects not mediated by discourse. In the poem, Denham described ties between citizens and monarch that are not rhetorical, but filial:

That blood, which thou and thy great Grandsire shed,
And all that since these sister Nations bled,
Had bin unspilt, had happy *Edward* known
That all the blood he spilt, had been his own.⁵⁸

This relationship was represented as natural, or intrinsic, rather than one open to question or reconsideration. The poem’s penultimate passage (celebrating *Magna Charta*) frames a similar relation between “King and subject”, where the former “give[s] liberty,” and the latter “love.” Here, political dissent voiced in response amounts to empty words that fail to describe the truth of the arrangement: “Tyrant and Slave, those names of hate and fear, / The

⁵⁷ Denham, *Coopers Hill* (1655), sig. A2^v.

⁵⁸ Denham, *Coopers Hill* (1642), 7. The figure of “Edward” here is “Presumably Edward III’s grandfather, Edward I, rather than his great-grandfather, the ineffective Henry III;” see O Hehir, *Expans’d Hieroglyphicks*, 117.

happier style of King and Subject bear.”⁵⁹ Denham’s imagined public bears resemblance to the scene described in Martin Parker’s broadside upon the assembly of the Short Parliament⁶⁰ of a group unified by their beholding the royal person, as well as by their positive response to royal display.

What of those citizens who might respond differently? From his political milieu, Denham could not overlook the issue of dissent. His model of representation and discourse presupposed that “discord” exists but that it did not necessitate expressions of opposition. In *Coopers Hill*, the poet lamented the political tumults that had overtaken England: “is there no temperate region can be known?”⁶¹ While Denham suggested that difference and “discord” were inevitable, as “the harmony of things, as well as that of sounds, from discords springs,” it remained for “Nature” to “unite... such huge extremes.”⁶² Political intervention was not a sure means of such resolution. Brendan O Hehir observes the influence on *Coopers Hill* of a particular world view: “that least understood classical and Renaissance cosmological principle of ‘balanced opposition’ or *concor discordia*.”⁶³ The doctrine posits that “the most usual method of effecting a net balance of the opposites is that of alternation. Day and night follow each other successively, as do winter and summer.” Thus, in that which “may be termed... God’s system,”⁶⁴ politics were subject to such a higher, universal power. This assumption marginalized the scope for alternative political arrangements that reflected immediate expressions of public will rather than the ebb and flow of natural, or universal law. Denham’s musings on “discord” and “harmony” promoted

⁵⁹ Denham, *Coopers Hill* (1642), 17.

⁶⁰ See Chapter 1, section I.

⁶¹ Denham, *Coopers Hill* (1642), 8.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁶³ O Hehir, *Expans’d Hieroglyphicks*, 165

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 168

to his readers a conservative way of thinking about themselves and the state, accepting the already existing settlement between “King and Subject.”

The recourse to natural order that issues in the final passage of *Coopers Hill* evokes a common vocabulary in contemporary political writing that linked political pressure on the King – what might be termed “public” political pressure, even if only by way of representatives – with images of flooding. Denham describes the recklessness of “Husbandmen” who with “high rais’d banks” would “strive to force, / His channel to a new, or narrow course.” Such “striving” likely referred to recent exercises in parliamentary authority, which Denham saw as a dangerous provocation of Charles. *Coopers Hill* promised a swift response:

No longer then within his banks he dwells,
First to a Torrent, then a Deluge swells
Stronger, and fiercer by restraint he roars,
And knows no bound.⁶⁵

When cast in these terms, challenges to royal prerogative are shown to risk a dangerous reaction. Similar images of embankment and overflow appeared in Charles’s *Answer to the Nineteen Propositions* (1642). In their attempts to regulate royal practice, the provoking propositions plainly constituted a “restraint” along the lines of that imagined by Denham. According to Charles’s *Answer*, these incursions on royal prerogative risked disrupting the existing “Balance ... between the three Estates,” whereby each may “run jointly on in their proper Channel (begetting Verdure and Fertility in the Meadows on both sides) and the

⁶⁵ Denham, *Coopers Hill* (1642), 18.

over-flowing of either on either side raise not Deluge or Inundation.”⁶⁶ As in Denham, attempts to restrain the “channel” result in danger, disorder, and “Deluge.” A later poem, extant only in manuscript, applies the same vocabulary to Cromwell, who “with odds of number and of fate / Removed this bulwark of the King^{Church} and state.” Here the royalist poet observes much the same consequences as were feared in *Coopers Hill* and in Charles’s *Answer*: “when the bank’s neglected or overthrown / The boundless torrent does the country drown.”⁶⁷

These texts take part in a broader effort to represent oppositional politics as “tumult” – first among “the ills of Democracy” listed in the King’s *Answer to the Nineteen Propositions*.⁶⁸ Beyond the royalist statement in this document and in the poems discussed here by Denham, other authors expressed reservations about the threat of revolutionary rhetoric and political activity. Although parliament was imagined by many as the source of such expression, it was seen also as an increasingly common motivator for public writing. But at least one undeterred author downplayed the threat of clamorous, revolutionary rhetoric. The poem “To the house of Commons,” which circulated widely after the dissolution of the Short Parliament, also framed anti-royalist sentiment in terms of a flood, although more optimistically than others: “Kings like Noah’s ark are nearer to the skies / The more the billows under each them rise.”⁶⁹ There was some truth to this image, for the agitations in subsequent years obtained for Charles a similarly elevated place: to a

⁶⁶ Charles, *His Majesties Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of both Houses of Parliament* (Cambridge, 1642), 12.

⁶⁷ British Library MS Harley 6947, fol. 229^r.

⁶⁸ See Charles, *Answer* (1642), 12: “The ill of absolute Monarchy is Tyranny, The ill of Aristocracy is Faction and Division, The ills of Democracy are Tumults, Violence and Licentiousness. The good of monarchy is the uniting a nation under one head to resist invasion from abroad and insurrection at home; the good of aristocracy is the conjunction of council in the ablest persons of a state for the public benefit; the good of democracy is liberty, and the courage and industry which liberty begets.”

⁶⁹ Bodleian MS Tanner 306, fol. 290^v.

generation of his followers Charles's most enduring image was that of the *Eikon Basilike* (1649), whose frontispiece was graced by the late king in a martyr's pose.⁷⁰

II VOTERS, READERS, AND MEDIA LITERACY

Claims against public political writing – whether from poets, MPs, or the king – issued against a rising tide of such text. The model of “Nature” resolving “discord” that Denham hoped for in 1642 – reminiscent of the “hands off” approach to governance that Charles advocated to the Short Parliament – seemed to fail as civil war overtook England in the later years of that decade. And literature was not only “part of [this] crisis and the revolution,” but “was at its epicenter.”⁷¹ Recent scholarship observes that readers were fashioned into “revolutionary readers” in this period through their encounters with the writings of pamphleteers who “encouraged the public to view, and to take part in, revolutionary politics.”⁷² These authors depended on capable readers, and that they so often addressed them as such is said to have “implied the existence of – indeed, notionally at least called into being – an adjudicating public or publics able to judge or determine the truth of the matter in hand.”⁷³ However, in many cases the formation of ideal political readers depended upon their deeper engagements with authors who sought to qualify them for public participation in revolutionary politics. These writings, which stand as early examples of education in media literacy, indicate that the creation of the citizen reader involved more than a simple *fiat*, even if the prevailing vocabulary of modern scholarship on the public sphere suggests otherwise.

⁷⁰ Charles I, *Eikon Basilike: The Pourtrature of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings* (1649).

⁷¹ Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 1.

⁷² Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 32.

⁷³ Lake and Pincus, “Rethinking the public sphere,” 6.

With reference to poetry on affairs of state and formal elections advice literature, this section identifies methods used by politically-minded authors to construct their readers, beyond simple address or invocation. The process of instruction initiated in their writings may be shown to support “people’s public use of their reason,”⁷⁴ which criterion Habermas identifies as crucially supporting public sphere formation. These works directed attention to the problems of representation, exhorting readers to “invert the terms”⁷⁵ of propaganda they encounter. Other writings developed formal structures that bring into relief the problematic aspects of partisan culture. In prose, George Wither’s pamphlet *Letters of Advice* instructed readers how best to withstand aspiring political candidates’ attempts at persuasion. Such efforts aimed to bring greater purpose, if not greater order, to the “Babel” of political discourse that circulated during the Civil War; they aimed also to establish a model of rhetorically-driven citizenship, where reading could be a crucial support to political participation.

In particular, the literary exchanges between authors and readers recorded in manuscript miscellanies dating to the 1640s permit some detailed reconstruction of the function and formation of the public sphere that developed in this period. This method intends to account for a concern that motivated Habermas’s own development of an economically-determined model of the public sphere. He observes in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* a limitation of certain academic approaches to the phenomenon:

⁷⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 27. Habermas writes of reason (*Räsonnement*) that it “In our [German] usage ... unmistakably preserves the polemical nuances of both sides: simultaneously the invocation of reason and its disdainful disparagement as merely malcontent griping.”

⁷⁵ See Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, 163^r.

The historical excursions on the rise (in Great Britain and on the Continent) of a functioning public sphere in the political realm remain abstract as long as they are confined to the institutional interrelations of public, press, parties, and the parliament, and to the tension-charged field in which authority and publicity ... confronted each other.⁷⁶

Such “abstraction” may be turned concrete, Habermas argues, when the formation (or transformation) of the public sphere is considered in the context of the development of the bourgeois class. With this social development in view, the historian of the public sphere can do more than simply “document *that* the public sphere takes on political functions;” he may then also identify “the kind of function itself.”⁷⁷ The personal, literary responses that issued beneath the shadow of the wider “institutional interrelations” in revolutionary England reveal much about the specific political function that popular representations could perform.

Perhaps because the “public” exists notionally or conceptually, its theorists often imagine that its creation must be similarly immaterial. Accounts of this formative act describe it as taking place through the work of authors who seemingly “conjure” their readers, or “call them into being.” Thus readers are transformed into “audiences” and even into “publics” simply by their having been addressed as such.⁷⁸ This model of public formation through public address owes a specific debt to the work of literary theorist Louis Althusser, whose description of interactions between subjects and ideology provides a framework for our consideration of the relationship between authors and the readers they

⁷⁶ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 73.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁷⁸ See Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 72: “Literary studies has often understood a public as a rhetorical addressee, implied within texts.”

address – or, in Althusserian terms, “hail” or “interpellate.”⁷⁹ Althusser’s perhaps best-known demonstration of the phenomenon posits a police officer’s address to a public citizen: “hey you!” Once hailed in this way, the citizen turns to determine if the police officer is addressing him directly, or if he is speaking to another citizen. This exchange suggests that the citizen confirms his identity as a subject to the state at the moment of response to the voice of the agent of the state. As Michael Warner summarizes this episode, “in the moment of recognizing oneself as the person addressed... one is interpellated as the subject of state discourse.”⁸⁰

The Althusserian model of interpellation in its simplicity may overlook the more complex processes behind the creation of citizen readers. Warner acknowledges his own critique of this aspect of modern public sphere studies in that “the case Althusser gives” – of the police officer and the citizen – “is not an example of public discourse. A policeman who says ‘Hey, you!’ will be understood to be addressing a particular person, not a public.”⁸¹ An early-modern pamphleteer or poet who tells his imagined reader to think or to act (or to vote) in a certain way does not through this textual instruction actually create a group of such thinkers, actors, or voters, however much he might indeed like to. The prospect of calling public audiences into being is further complicated in the context of civil-war discourse because such moments of address from authority were frequent, and they issued from multiple and competing sources. Citizens may be addressed as subjects of the King, or as members of a malignant party, say, or of the godly elect. They may be addressed as a combination of these. Yet the more appeals a reader encounters, the less likely he may be to

⁷⁹ See Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

⁸⁰ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 77.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

respond to any one in particular. Many contemporary writers lamented the overabundance of political opinion that issued in the 1640s; as one such poet wrote,

The world is changed and we have choices
not the most reasons but most voices...
Thus once from chaos, order came,
but now their orders chaos frame.⁸²

Address alone is insufficient to arrest a reader, especially when addresses issue so frequently. The intention of authors to create more persistent, prolonged engagements between themselves and their audience – and between audience members themselves – provides an important influence on the development of revolutionary readers during the English Civil War.

To promote such engagement, some authors emphasized the reader's crucial textual work of responding to the competing partisan claims that issued during and after periods of political uncertainty. The "topsy turvydom" of "social disruption"⁸³ in this period, where "the lion's trod down by the mouse, / the lower is the upper-house,"⁸⁴ provided a framework of contraries dwelling together that poets used to develop the aptitude of their politically-minded readers. One scribally published poem explicitly instructed the reader following this model, and asked him to read between the lines of propaganda.⁸⁵ This poem begins with two questions for the reader, first that:

If Kings anointed Crowned & install'd

⁸² Worcester College MS 237, p. 10.

⁸³ Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 77.

⁸⁴ Worcester College MS 237, p. 10.

⁸⁵ The poem is given an awkward and lengthy title: "Charles the 2d. after he was crowned King of Scotland, was proclaimed Traytor, & all his Adherents Rebels: by the Rump-Parliament." See Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, 163^f.

By th'odious name of Traitor may be call'd
by what worse term shall subjects then be known
who live in treason 'gainst the King & Crown?⁸⁶

Second, it asks:

If rebel's stile be Parliament & state
what stile the honor shall we then create
for Loyal Senators & peers, whose blood
& wealth is spent for King's & country's good?⁸⁷

Like Denham, this poet – cited in the single extant manuscript copy as “E. P.” – lamented the problem of misrepresentation. Both poets claimed the language encountered in contemporary political writing was more often a servant to political will than it was to truth. A knowing reader, however, had some recourse when facing the conflicting representations that circulated during civil war. To read rightly, he must only “invert the terms, what though the sense intend.”⁸⁸ In the publication climate of the Civil War, “terms”, “names”, and “stiles” were altogether too shifty, and they could not be taken at their face value. In fact, they could often be switched between political opposites:

Let Traitor imply majesty not shame
And, then Let King become a vassals name
Rebel a stile of honor be't confirm'd
Each pack of Rogues a parliament be term'd.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibid., ll. 1-4.

⁸⁷ Ibid., ll. 5-8.

⁸⁸ Ibid., l. 9.

⁸⁹ Ibid., ll. 11-14.

The poet E. P. here recognized that disconnect between reality and representation, and, in frustration, looked for other, alternative markers of legitimacy. This poem's closing comment recalls Denham's earlier verse: "Tyrant and Slave, those names of hate and fear, / The happier style of King and Subject bear."⁹⁰

The poet acknowledged the possibility of right reading – by “inverting” the terms and so overturning Roundhead rhetoric – but, beyond this first principle of media literacy – “don't believe everything you read” – E.P. offered little to suggest the productive power of discourse. Despite his skepticism of public political media, the poet's concern about right reading and his fear of rhetorical persuasion reflect the significance of popular opinion at a time when England's peace was in the balance. Here, E. P. wished that it might be influenced by something more than rhetoric, such as grand deeds; the worthiness of a cause, he concluded, can be judged by the value of the things “spent” on its account, whether “blood,” “wealth,” or mere ink. His weighing in the opening couplet of things “anointed,” “crowned,” “installed,” against things “called” reacted against the possibility of slander to devalue established religious, legal, and social credentials. Partisan rhetoric proved antagonistic rather than productive, requiring “inversion” by a canny reader from the opposite side of the political spectrum. This deeper skepticism of language echoed earlier royalist dismissal of parliamentary debate at the beginning of the decade, and also the topos of “beholding” found in Parker and Finch, King's men both.

Despite E. P.'s skepticism about poetry, his poem reflects his own care as a poet. His “If Kings Anointed” poem strongly recalls the Italian sonnet, being 14 lines in length, and featuring a distinct volta that marks the sestet's response to the problem – of unreliable

⁹⁰ Denham, *Coopers Hill* (1642), 17.

representation – posed in the octave. E. P.’s apparent interest in the sonnet form invites comment because sonnets are virtually absent from contemporary miscellanies containing popular political verse. In other ways, however, the poem departs from the traditional sonnet form. E.P.’s lines are a foot short (tetrameter), and rhymed in heroic couplets instead of the more elaborate scheme. These deviations lead to a more workmanlike sonnet form. This more simple approach may reflect the author’s attention to characteristics of his audience, and also his expectations for the poem’s possible circulation. Whereas stylistic complexity was sometimes favoured for ceremonial or commemorative verses such as those Milton wrote for prominent figures such as Thomas Fairfax and Henry Vane, E. P.’s focus on the general reader may have inspired his more subdued approach. His form proves more activist than commemorative, having been tailored for the wider dissemination he may have imagined but did not seem to achieve for this work. The power of the simple couplet – easy to recall, and easy to recopy – was perhaps thought to be more compelling to the public ear than the more elaborate schemes of traditional sonnet forms.

E. P.’s reserve about public political discourse may not run as deeply as Denham’s own. Although he, like Denham, reacted to misplaced or inadequate “terms” and “stiles,” E. P. at least imagined the conditions of successful partisan reading practice that matched an appropriate text with a free reader. His poem implies that responsibility remains with the individual reader to judge rightly the texts he encounters, identifying partisan claims and also turning aside their rhetorical thrust. However, his broader conception of what political writing should accomplish would seem to perpetuate and maintain polarization, rather than suggest any benefit in drawing from the deeper well of contemporary writing that issued from authors on either side of the political divide.

Rhetorical or poetic influence on political opinion was a topic of lasting concern for politicians and authors in this period, but it received special attention during the lead-up to elections. In some instances, the issue's treatment demonstrates additional crossings over of parliamentary activity and expectations into the context of public political writing; some authors saw the work of preparing readers as similar to that of preparing voters. This elementary form of political activity – voting – was seen thus to depend upon a literate electorate,⁹¹ capable of withstanding “the flow of ideas, news, and rumour [that] now spread through the population with great rapidity.”⁹² The issue of elections advice may have gained additional urgency in view of the Levellers' later efforts “to extend to the country as a whole the franchise which already existed in those urban constituencies where the electorate was most broadly defined.”⁹³ The genre of elections literature had not yet fully developed by the outbreak of civil war, and would flourish more fully in a later era of regular and frequent elections.⁹⁴ However, widely read elections advice pamphlets, such as *A memento for the people, about the elections of members for the approaching parliament* (1654) and *A Caveat for my countrymen in general* (1660), appear to take for their model George Wither's earlier *Letters of Advice* (1644). Wither's pamphlet was written in expectation of the “recruiter” elections held to replace those MPs loyal to Charles who had quit the Commons after the outbreak of civil war.⁹⁵ He wrote on the assumption, shared also by his later counterparts,

⁹¹ “It has been estimated that by 1640 from 27 per cent to 40 per cent of adult males were eligible to vote.” See David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 141.

⁹² David Como, “Predestination and Political Conflict in Laud's London,” *The Historical Journal* 46 (2003), 293.

⁹³ For a brief introduction to that political context, see David Wootton, “Leveller Democracy and the Puritan Revolution,” in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 432.

⁹⁴ Mark Knights, *Representation and misrepresentation in later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 5.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

that “guidance was necessary to show where truth lay amid the torrent of lies that accompanied each campaign.”⁹⁶ This rhetorical side of political campaigning – where, as readers were warned, candidates will “fawn and court them”⁹⁷ – necessitated such fuller instruction of voters. Early in the *Letters*, Wither asked his readers to “become willing to be instructed.”⁹⁸ In the effort that followed he significantly exceeded earlier forms of elections advice that had circulated before the Short Parliament by appealing to the reader’s developing discernment and judgment rather than to his simple recognition of and response to recognized adversarial identities. The increasing sophistication of advice literature in the 1640s, with its appeals shifting from claims against affiliation to those against political spin, corresponded with changes in the expectations of the reading and voting public that took place in this period.

Extant examples of elections advice poetry that circulated in 1640 malign potential candidates rather than promote voters’ own discernment. One such poem, recorded in three manuscript copies, was reportedly “thrown out in Lincolnshire (before [the Short Parliament])” on “March 23, 1640.”⁹⁹ The rhetorical method of these verses is exemplified by their opening line: “Choose no court Atheist.” The poem continues with a growing list of additional exclusions:

Nor church papist

Nor fen drainer

Nor lords retainer

⁹⁶ Ibid., 179.

⁹⁷ George Wither, *Letters of Advice* (1644), 4.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁹ British Library Harl. MS 4931, fol. 8^v, which particular version begins “Choose no *court* atheist.”

Nor ship sheriffs.¹⁰⁰

This method found application in another contemporary example of elections advice. The poem “On the occasion of the Parliament, 1640 Apr.,” described by the copyist as “A Godly new song to the tune of George Goring, & Jack Jennit,”¹⁰¹ offered similar criteria for its audience:

Meanwhile we pray each country may
be wise in their election,
Both Papist shun, & Puritan
for fear of their infection.

These verses, like “Choose no Atheist,” promoted the shorthand of identity or affiliation politics rather than any more patient assessment of the candidates in terms of their individual qualifications or character. The imagined threat of “infections” anticipates Thomas Edwards’ similar concern in his massive heresiography, *Gangraena* (1646), and may suggest in the poet a political belief clad in religious raiment.

In contrast to this more general, ideologically- or institutionally-oriented strain of advice, some elections-advice poems were explicitly located in the particular boroughs in which they circulated, and made more direct demands of their readers. Citing individual candidates by name, these poems instructed the reader for whom to vote rather than how to choose for himself how to cast his ballot. One copy of the “Choose no Atheist” poem ends with such a reference: “But if you will fit the Pope’s Armory, / Choose Dallyson or Doctor Farmery.” It was Farmery who eventually carried the day; historian John Rushworth lists

¹⁰⁰ Bodleian MS Ashmole 36, 37; fol. 162^r. “Ship sheriffs” were those sheriffs appointed with the arduous task of administrating the collection of Ship Money; see Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 561-3.

¹⁰¹ British Library Harley MS 4931, 39^{r-v}.

“John Farmery Doctor of the Civil Law” as among the twelve members returned for Lincolnshire.¹⁰² Dallyson’s name is not recorded among them. A similar poem collected in the same manuscript volume denounced a candidate by incorporating his surname into an insulting rhyme: “If you choose Dell / You do no well.”¹⁰³ There is a rough practicality to these verses, whose simplicity would suggest their having been written in such a way as to promote their easy circulation and recall. That some rudimentary elections-advice literature issued in a ballad form indicates an alternative channel of publication that authors anticipated for such work.

Whatever his own sophistication of the elections advice genre, Wither perhaps took the poetic elections advice as a point of departure as he compiled his own *Letters of Advice*. Like the advising poets, Wither compiled his own list of qualifications – or disqualifications – for those seeking election to the Commons. These sixteen enumerated points excluded a wide range of potential candidates, from “*Notorious Gamesters*” and “*Men extremely addicted to Hunting or Hawking,*” to the “*irreligious,*” “*Male-contents,*” and “*Children under age.*”¹⁰⁴ Wither also resorted in his *Letters* to a strain of sloganeering poetry, interspersing his prose “Oration” with several brief verses.¹⁰⁵ These suggested to voters that candidates’ past conduct may guide their activities in the future, as

The Butterflies produce not Bees;
*Good-fruits grow not on evil-trees.*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² John Rushworth, “Historical Collections: 1640, April,” *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 3: 1639-40*, British History Online.

¹⁰³ Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 36, 37; fol. 87^r.

¹⁰⁴ Wither, *Letters of Advice*, 5-7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

Indeed, a candidate's own over-eagerness to run for election may also be sufficient cause for a voter's concern:

The cursed Bramble strove not to be chose

*The Forest-King, 'til some did him propose.*¹⁰⁷

Wither also requested that those “to whom these *Missives do come, (and among whom, better Oratory is wanting)*” would, “in private, or ... in public” convey “their words, or contents” to “illiterate persons.”¹⁰⁸ Addressing audiences beyond the reach of the written word proves a subject of some concern among those who sought to advise voters in the early 1640s. In this, these elections-advice poems follow an earlier tradition of “disseminating news and opinion to the illiterate and semi literate, employing a familiar form derived from the ballad traditions of popular culture.”¹⁰⁹ Wither cast his net broadly, including both poetry and prose, and inviting his printed pamphlet to be read aloud. Owing perhaps to these efforts, Wither's writing may have “reached the artisanal and military audience which Milton spoke for rather than to.”¹¹⁰

But the *Letters of Advice* also proves its more detailed engagement with readers and voters in their attention to the language issued in political campaigns: the first category of man who Wither “humbly advises [his reader] to avoid” is “*Men over-lavish in speaking.*”¹¹¹ Libel and defamation present an additional rhetorical obstacle for voters beyond would-be MPs' self-promotion, for even “the best are sometime traduced, and evil spoken of, by Malignants and wicked persons, without cause.” Such misrepresentations, Wither argued,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Cust, “News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England,” *Past & Present* 112 (1986), 67. In contrast, however, such earlier political-news poems “seem to preclude any serious political purpose.”

¹¹⁰ Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 140.

¹¹¹ Wither, *Letters of Advice*, 8, 5.

may “easily be discovered, by diligently examining who they are that speak evil of such... or by a prudent and charitable examination of testimonials given on their behalves, who are traduced.”¹¹² Wither thus cast voting and reading as “examination,” whether “Diligent” or “Prudent and charitable.” The reading practice he promoted depends on industry, care, and piety; such practice will prevent the “inconsiderate Elections”¹¹³ that Wither feared. His terms suggest that those who elect flawed candidates rather are as worthy of condemnation as the candidates themselves. In this model, readers were not only considered capable of right reading, but they were expected to do so for the nation’s own good.

There remains a third variable in Wither’s electoral calculus beyond the conduct of candidates and the sensitivity (and sensibility) of voters: each election’s outcome depends as much on providence as it does on voters’ better judgment. Wither recommended a selection process that resorted to the former influence, whereby “if two are to be chosen, let four of them, and if one, let two, which have the most voices, make trial by Lot, to whether of them God will be pleased to dispose the place, or places, to be supplied.” Although not strictly democratic, Wither derives from biblical precedent this method of formally inviting and deferring to divine choice: “the Tribe of *Benjamin* was chosen, and *Saul*, out of that Tribe, by Lot,” and so was Matthias, who took “the room of *Judas*, the Apostate Apostle.”¹¹⁴ Elsewhere in his *Letters* Wither described wayward MPs in the same terms – as “apostate” – and so imagined them as guilty of similar betrayal. His comparison may be justifiable inasmuch as, following his proposed model, the elected are also the elect.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹⁴ Wither, *Letters of Advice*, 9-10. See Acts 1:16-26.

Even with this potential in view, Wither remained discouraged by current political realities of division and conflict: he feared that England's troubled political state may dissuade men of quality from aspiring to "that *High-Calling*" against the so many unworthy men who "presumptuously intrude upon" it. Wither wondered

if we be not grown so corrupt a Body, that, we will not be represented, by good and discreet men; which, it seems, was, formerly, our fault, and made us choose a Representative Body, in corruptions and failings, like unto our selves.¹¹⁵

The results of an uninspired assembly were all too clear. An inspired one was required as a remedy. Such was Wither's hope as he contemplated the recruiter elections, which might "[replenish] the House of *Commons* with such Members, as shall be likely (by Gods blessing) to become Instruments of removing our present mischiefs, and of establishing a happy Peace among us for the future;"¹¹⁶ the peace Wither desired proved not just a "happy" end to civil strife, but even that "Peace which passeth understanding; and which shall prevail, to the establishing of Truth."¹¹⁷ But despite echoes of Pauline optimism, Wither's own voice took a darker turn in the verse that closes his printed pamphlet:

Much more I have to say: but, Sin and Pride

Yet, cannot well, the voice of Truth abide.

...

Malignant Falsehood, and Detraction, too,

Have parts to play, and some black works to do

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 12. See Philippians 4:7: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Which must be done, and undone, ere I shall

*With profit, publish that which must befall.*¹¹⁸

As important as it may have been to “choose no Atheist,” Wither situated his readers within a more complex political landscape marked by “falsehood” and “detraction.” Yet their “parts to play” may amount to more than the “black works” Wither anticipated.

In responding to the vicissitudes of partisan literary activity during the Civil War, some authors established for their reader an intermediate space between competing claims to authority. The unique poetic form of “equivocal verses” permits such alternative engagement. This strain of political writing aimed not to discredit the views of an opposing group, or to resolve differences between them, but rather to preserve and represent these differences to the reader. These verses are “intended to be read in a double sense,”¹¹⁹ either as two columns (which reading promotes the view of one faction), or across, as lines divided by a caesura (which promotes its opposite). One widely copied example has for its subject the between Roman and Reformed churches. Originally written in the sixteenth century, it was included in the popular printed miscellany *Wits Recreation, Selected from the Finest Fancies of Moderne Muses* (1640):

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹⁹ Stephen Collet, *Relics of Literature* (London: T. Boys, 1832), 169-70.

209 *Another.*

I hold as faith	What England's Church allows
What Rome's Church faith	My conscience difavowes
Where th' King is head	The Church can have no seame,
The Flocks misled	Where the Pope's supream
Where th' Alter's drest	There's service scarce divine
The peopele's blest	Where's table bread and wine
Hee's but an affe	Who the Communion flies
Who shuns the Masse	Is Catholique and wise
Who charity preach	Their church with error's fraught
They heav'n soon reach	Where only faith is taught
On faith t' rely	No matter for good works
Is heresy	Make's Christians worse then Turks

(fig. 3)

Containing its own rejoinder, the poetic form insists upon the reader's parallel consideration of competing views. The poem itself does not explicitly address the reader as subject of persuasion, or intend to incite his critique of an antagonistic party. Instead, it directs his attention to the very process of reading in a popular literary culture that was defined by opposition.

The equivocal verse that appeared in *Wits Recreation* perhaps inspired the energetic deployment of the form during the Civil War. According to manuscript and print circulation, equivocal verses gained popularity throughout the 1640s and 1650s. Few poetic forms would seem as well-suited to representing the impasse between parliamentarians and royalists. Civil War differences are ranged directly in one equivocal poem that addresses the difference between roundheads and cavaliers:

I love with all my heart	the warring cavalier
The independent part	so hateful doth appear
My conscience gives consent	to be on Charles's side

To obey the parliament	I ever have denied
For righteous is ye cause	to fight for such a king
To fight for Roundhead's laws	will England's ruin bring
The roundhead's you shall see	they shall be put to flight
True gallants they shall be	that for King Charles doe fight
Lambards gr ^t swaying hand	Lord to destruction bring
Let never man with stand	Charles's son to England's king
This is my word & heart	in this opinion I
Though none will take my part	resolve to live & dye. ¹²⁰

As in the “I hold as faith” poem, the same words, when arranged differently, are shown to serve both factions. Instead of the more partisan “inversion” of the opposite “terms,” the equivocal verse offered an uneasy settlement between the two sides, even if only on the page. The result stands neither as a royalist poem or a parliamentarian poem. Instead, the self-conscious political poet commented more generally on his trade as it was employed during the Civil War, and he took for his subject unsettled political discourse, discourse that is shared by royalist and roundhead alike. The poem may also have invited its reader’s own self-consciousness of his role as an adjudicator of political claims.

More than simply framing political division as a subject in itself, equivocal poems also demanded significant engagement and attention from their readers. Resisting partisan closure and sustaining differences, the equivocal poem’s meaning was perhaps situated in the space between political spin and partisan rhetoric, and arrived at by the especially demanding equivocal reading practice. The poet’s deliberate challenge to his audience could

¹²⁰ British Library MS Add. 34,362, p. 159 / f. 82.

itself serve a didactic purpose. Compared to most of the poetic libels penned in this period, the equivocal poetic form requires much more rigorous engagement and attention from its readers. This labour in reading speaks to the exercise of reason that Habermas imagined as a defining part of the public sphere. It too recalls that “virtue” that Milton “cannot praise” in *Areopagitica*, being “fugitive and cloistered”, and also “unexercised and unbreathed.”¹²¹ The equivocal reader could undertake such exercise through his progress through the poem’s unconventional form. These unusual verses evidently encouraged active reading and re-reading, which efforts seem often to have succeeded in eliciting more complex responses from readers.

In several manuscripts, instances of equivocal poems reflect that early-modern readers’ responses to the form could turn textual. This impulse attests to the form’s peculiar power to “provoke [the reader to] discussion with others.”¹²² In her comparison of various equivocal verses in manuscript, Janet Wright Starner concludes that almost all extant copies of the “I hold as faith” equivocal poem feature textual variations, whether in titles, spellings, and line order, or even in the inclusion of additional couplets. Copies are “found in nearly three dozen manuscripts... inscribed as late as 1789 and perhaps as early as 1600... [and] vary in length from eight to twenty lines.”¹²³ The persistent variations in these poems attest to an especially energetic scribal life, in which the poems are copied in haste and with interest – however certain or uncertain their significance it may be.

One textual response in particular proves the power of equivocal verses to prolong their readers’ engagement with the form and its message. In this instance – dated to the

¹²¹ Milton, *Areopagitica*, YP 2.515.

¹²² Janet Wright Starner, “‘Jacke on both sides:’ Appropriating Equivocation,” in *Anonymity in Early Modern England: “What’s in a Name?”*, ed. Janet Wright Starner and Barbara Howard Traister (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 69.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 44.

1650s – the reader responds to the poem by turning poet himself. The provoking poem’s opening lines balance the opposition between “The Navy of the Dutch” and “the English fleet,” following fears of a Dutch invasion of England during the Interregnum. In closing, the equivocal poet re-framed the opposition in terms of the previous decade’s divisions:

Smile gentle Fate - - On the Dutch Admiral

Upon our State - - The plagues of Egypt fall

Attend all health - - The Cavaliering part

The Commonwealth - - I value not a Fart

The poem preserves in a later political context the sense of indeterminacy or indecision present in much Civil War poetry. Two manuscript copies preserve also a reader’s reaction to the equivocal poem and the equivocal political culture it imitated:

Thus I my Curses and My Prayers divide

Betwixt the Rebel and the Regicide

Upwards and downwards thus I break my mind

Belching and farting. Both are breaking wind

O that the Proverb old would wheel about

True men may have their own now thieves fall out.¹²⁴

The competing claims “Betwixt the Rebel and the Regicide” are balanced by the reader’s own equivocal reaction, judging them as either requiring serious thought – “thus I break my mind” – or as deserving crass condemnation. The poetic response evokes other contemporary verses that cast political debate in similar terms. A very widely copied verse “On a fart let in parliament,” for example, flatly denounces the Commons’ debates as so

¹²⁴ Bodleian MS Rawl. D 317 A, fol. 200^v; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 246, fol. 15^r.

much hot air.¹²⁵ The poetic response to the equivocal poem on the English and Dutch navies applied the vocabulary of parliamentary criticism to the public arena of political verse in maintaining that rhetorical claims to authority – whether from “the Rebel” or “the Regicide” – often amount to no more than “wind.”

That political divisions were not reconciled here may also suggest early-modern readers’ and poets’ interest in creating a third term in between the extremes of partisan rhetoric. Writing of the equivocal verse on Roman and Reformed churches, Wright Starner claims that the form “provides a mechanism by which disorder can flourish” and that it leaves readers “free to imagine other selves and other ways of being in the world.”¹²⁶ These “other ways of being” need not reflect one partisan extreme or the other, “the Rebel” or “the Regicide.” Beyond the “disorder” of such confrontation, the reader may instead in distinguishing dissenting views conceive of a middle way between them. Other contemporary literary genres provided similar common ground: one critic has written of “civil war polemic” that it “allowed for varying perspectives while containing the conflict within the boundaries of its discussion,”¹²⁷ and another has of “Restoration tragicomedy” that it is “a genre which allowed multiple perspectives, which tolerated a sense of change and flux, and which encouraged experimentation.”¹²⁸ This same interest in indeterminacy or ambivalence informed politicized equivocal verses, whose preservation of some middle ground “Betwixt the Rebel and the Regicide” may have broadened or at least provoked their

¹²⁵ At least sixteen instances of this poem exist in contemporary manuscript miscellanies, under various titles: “On the Parliament Fart,” “The Parliament Fart,” “Epitaph on a fart,” “On a fart in the Parliament House,” etc.. For discussion of the poem in the context of humanist jest, see Michelle O’Callaghan, “Performing Politics: The Circulation of the ‘Parliament Fart,’” in *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69 (2006): 121-138.

¹²⁶ Wright Starner, “Jacke on Both Sides,” 46.

¹²⁷ Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 104.

¹²⁸ Nancy Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy, 1660-1671* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 42.

readers' political imagination. Just as the ambiguity of Restoration tragicomedy is claimed to have "inevitably contributed to the political method of the decade,"¹²⁹ the political method in revolutionary England was informed by poets whose mindfulness of media literacy led them to promote a "via media" in between dissenting views. The next section of this chapter demonstrates the activities of readers who sought to navigate such a course.

III MAKING MISCELLANIES, MAKING PUBLICS

Individual poems represent the address of a poet to his readers; miscellanies show these readers at work. Whereas political dialogue between multiple perspectives may have been portrayed in drama and modeled in polemic, it was actively undertaken by the reading public through the circulation and collection of poetry in manuscript miscellanies.¹³⁰ These volumes reveal that certain scribal practices in this period successfully created a forum for debate that proceeded through readers' responses to publicly available texts. Some poetic forms and engagements in particular reflect "the socially dialogic context" of miscellanies.¹³¹ Despite their constitution as an "intensely private arena,"¹³² select manuscript miscellanies assembled in this period repay their consideration also as distinctly

¹²⁹ Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, 42.

¹³⁰ Manuscripts under review in this section include especially those miscellanies containing political poetry held at the Bodleian and British Libraries. Resources such as Margaret Crum's *First-Line Index of English Poetry 1500-1800 in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library* (1969) and the Folger Institute's *Union First Line Index of English Verse* (available online at <http://firstlines.folger.edu/>) permit me to trace multiple recensions of poems in what proves a disparate body of documents.

¹³¹ Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 159.

¹³² Geoff Baker, *Reading and Politics in Early Modern England: the Mental World of a Seventeenth-Century Catholic Gentleman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 106: "Lockridge argues that commonplace books provided a forum in which 'the public self is rehearsed in this intensely private arena', as they offered contemporaries an opportunity to test arguments that would later be discussed in public;" see Kenneth Lockridge, "Individual literacy in commonplace books," *Interchange* 34, no. 2/3 (2003), 337-40.

public documents. Harold Love's description of these materials acknowledges their dual character, both private and public: "these collections can be read both centripetally as providing a unique context of interpretation for the individual item and centrifugally as a trace-bearing artifact of a site or community."¹³³ In the latter view, public or "communal" political dialogue could issue from miscellany-making practice. The extent of this dialogue depended upon the connections between the miscellany maker, the poems he encountered, and – in some cases – their previous copyists. The complexity of these relations invites the application of Michael Warner's analysis of public communication in his illuminating study of *Publics and Counterpublics*. This work supports the present analysis that construes more broadly these "dialogic" or "communal" relations between miscellanies and miscellany-makers, to the extent that they may constitute a kind of "public."

Although Warner's study does not examine in detail any early modern materials, it begins with a distinctly early modern question: "what is a public?" The characterization that follows this "curiously obscure question"¹³⁴ bears significant resemblance to the body of text presented by the manuscript miscellanies under review in this chapter. Warner identifies one sense of a "public" as "a crowd witnessing itself in visible space... [that] knows itself by knowing where and when it is assembled in common visibility and common action," such as "a crowd at a sports event, a concert, or a riot."¹³⁵ Although he distinguishes between this type of "concrete" public and a "notional"¹³⁶ public "that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation,"¹³⁷ both depend upon the "visibility" of their participants and of the communication that issues within the boundaries of their association: "only when a

¹³³ Love, *Scribal Publication*, 230.

¹³⁴ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 65.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

previously existing discourse can be supposed, and a responding discourse be postulated, can a text address a public.”¹³⁸ If we read miscellanies as Love suggests – as “trace-bearing artifacts” – then many such “traces” of the actors and their discourse may be observed.

Warner’s examples of publics suggest a plain like-mindedness among their members, whether they be sports fans, concert-goers, or rioters. That some miscellanies question this model of association that divides groups according to a visible, shared public identity draws attention to the deeper political roots of the discursive models that shaped miscellany-making practice. Although many contemporary printed “editions of poets’ works as well as poetry anthologies were largely a manifestation of Royalism,”¹³⁹ miscellany-making practice during the 1640s and 1650s suggests a significant interest in pairs of argument and rejoinder, either in individual poems that contain or perform division (such as equivocal verses), or in responses created through the arrangement of items in a miscellany. The selections of verse in many such volumes reflect the work of compilers who actively contextualized “in a parliamentary way” the poems they encountered, by directing attention to opposite views rather than aggregating items along a certain theme. Marotti observes similar interest in a strain of “answer poetry” that appeared in miscellanies dating to the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, but the practice takes on an overtly political aspect during the Civil War.¹⁴⁰ For example, Denham’s epitaph of Strafford – “Strafford’s Triumph Over All” – is accompanied by an answer in two miscellanies, “Strafford’s Fatal Fall.”¹⁴¹ A later miscellany casts the death of John Lilburne as twice “untimely” – in one epitaph “too soon”,

¹³⁸ Ibid., 90.

¹³⁹ Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 258.

¹⁴⁰ See Ibid., 159-171; among the examples cited there, one “witty exchange... concern[s] an unreturned borrowed cloak” (160), while others engage in “poetic competition” (161), or issue in “class antagonism” (163).

¹⁴¹ Miscellanies at Bodleian MS Douce 357 and Yale MS fb.106(9) contain both poems.

and another, too “late.”¹⁴² Additional examples abound of political verses that appear to have been matched with opposite, answering claims by miscellany makers.¹⁴³

This mode of scribal dissemination of political verse may have permitted a fuller probing of what Love terms “the fictions of authority”¹⁴⁴ than was possible in other deliberative assemblies that took shape in text. While similarly divergent views were indeed “[contained] ... within the boundaries of [the] discussion” in polemic,¹⁴⁵ authors often quoted from their opponents’ text primarily for the purpose of refutation, or to heighten the effect of their own rhetorical attack. Instances where poetry was circulated, recorded, and responded to in a parliamentary way, however, left greater latitude for the reader’s own consideration, and also for his participation in a public of fellow readers accessible through such media. If these readers sought actively to determine some balance between dissenting political views, they may have appreciated a “gestalt” effect of the items they arranged thus in their collections: many of the pairings prove more than an array of dissenting verses, or a simple argument and attending rejoinder, and rather gain hortatory or prescriptive significance in the copying or reading of the two separate verses, side by side, on the page. Some examples of bi-partisan groups of text may suggest only the reader’s facing up to the “Babel” of political discourse in the 1640s. Others, however, may suggest a developing understanding of more comprehensive political representation that depended upon a multiplicity of views and voices.

These pairings and groupings are crucial to public formation because “no single text can create a public.” If, as Warner suggests, “it is not texts themselves that create publics,

¹⁴² Both sides of this debate appear in Bodleian MS Ashmole 36,37, fol. 126^r.

¹⁴³ See Bodleian MS Rawl Poet 26, fols. 96^r & 98^r for a ballad and a “counter-ballad” (fol. 99^r) “upon the Parliament”; Princeton MS Taylor 34: “Upon the parliament” (p. 74), “The Answer” (p. 85)

¹⁴⁴ Love, *Scribal Publication*, 160.

¹⁴⁵ Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 104.

but the concatenation of texts through time,”¹⁴⁶ then the readers who collected and arranged political poems in manuscript miscellanies contributed through their own “concatenation” to the cohesion of a text-based deliberative assembly construed in verse. The very existence of a miscellany – a concrete result of a reader’s willingness to receive and aggregate various texts – is a testament to that basic but “indispensable” form of public participation, which Warner terms “active uptake.”¹⁴⁷ And while an interaction as limited as “the direction of our glance can constitute our social world,” more thoughtful textual engagements create a more complex relationship between reader and text. That in some instances the copyist deliberately set texts in dialogue with each other, or “concatenates” them, reveals another aspect of the miscellany’s public character: these arrangements constitute the more “reflexive circulation of discourse” that gives structure to “social space” of a public.¹⁴⁸ The “reflexivity” of the scene derives from the copyist’s conscious effort to mount a claim in response to the assertion in verse. It is “social” because it stems from his direct encounter with the original text as well as his encounter – direct or indirect – with the text’s disseminator, whether a stranger who has “affixed,” “dropped,” or “thrown out” the verse in public, or an associate who himself recorded and then shared the verse in view.

That this work could establish lasting associations between texts through successive copying adds greater depth to the “social space” that is constituted by the circulation of public poetry in manuscript. In some instances, certain poems are brought together often enough in the scribal record that they can come to constitute a single circulated unit, perpetuating the editorial decisions of one compositor through successive generations of

¹⁴⁶ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 90.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 88-89: “Because their threshold of belonging is an active uptake... [publics] can be understood within the conceptual framework of civil society; that is, as having a free, voluntary, and active membership.”

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 90: “A public is the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse.”

copying and recopying. It is perhaps this particular dissemination practice that most strongly recalls Warner's observation of a public as "a crowd witnessing itself in visible space," one "assembled in common visibility and common action" through the texts they respond to.¹⁴⁹ Such interactions are difficult to trace given the constraints of current manuscript indexes and catalogues, but some examples have been observed during the course of this study. The competing epitaphs of Strafford twice appear in the same manuscript, which placement may suggest their having been already encountered as a circulated unit.¹⁵⁰ An earlier example also attests to a similar legacy of one compositor's work, where a poem "To the Lower House of Parliament" comes to circulate with a stanza taken from a popular contemporary poem "On the dissolution."¹⁵¹ This unfolding of scribal context sophisticates the poems' further reception, and reveals one way that readers' responses to texts could be dependent upon others' earlier practices of reading and response. Just as politically-minded authors writing in these years framed relations between readers, poets, and parliament, the readers too established connections between the materials they encountered.

Readers were not solely responsible for ensuring the "concatenation of texts through time." Some strains of political writing would seem to encourage and facilitate such collective witness. One body of verse in particular shows the great extent that political writing itself may depend upon an author's awareness of contemporary reading practices. This interest finds conspicuous expression in poetic "advices to a gamester." Broadly comparing political process to gambling at cards, this mode flourished after the end of

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 66.

¹⁵⁰ See Bodleian MS Douce 357, fol. 8, which includes both poems; see also Yale MS fb.106(9).

¹⁵¹ The single version appears in British Library MS Add. 6411, fol. 43^r and in John Rous, *The Diary of John Rous*, ed. Mary Green (London: printed for the Camden society, 1856), 90. The "concatenated" version appears in three Bodleian Library manuscripts: MS Ashmole 36, 37, fol. 87^r, MS Douce 357, fol. 6^v, and MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 95^r. These materials are discussed at length in Chapter 1, section III.

Charles' personal rule. Groupings of poems in this style appear in politically-oriented miscellanies, while isolated scenes of gaming propagate further through inflection of other poems on affairs of state. That these items share a vocabulary to some extent reflects their authors' awareness of fashionable poetic practice. In certain cases, it may also suggest poets' deliberate use of a common idiom to associate their works with verses already in circulation by tagging the connections between them, and so encouraging the likelihood of their being read and copied together. Such texts were not meant to be read in isolation but in view of a larger – and ever-growing – body of political verse and satire.¹⁵²

The readily exchanged “advices to a gamester” offered an idiom in which to debate political opportunity against political hazard. They also offered an *ad hoc* forum in which to do so, inasmuch as the associations between the verses were strengthened deliberately by the poets who used this shared vocabulary. Such resort to an already-common idiom may have presented a way of more surely linking occasional poems in a textual forum where transmission was unreliable. Numerous manuscript miscellanies that focus on the notable parliamentary comings and goings at Westminster in 1640 include collocations of this strain of verse. Three volumes contain pairings of gamester verses, and three such poems are copied in the collection at Bodleian Library MS Rawl. Poet. 26. The copyist of this miscellany set two of the gamester verses there in contrast: the poem “To the [Long] Parliament” (*Beg.* “The stake’s three crowns”) shares a page with the Short Parliament poem “To the Lower-House” cited in chapter one (*Beg.* “My masters, you that undertake the game...”; short version).¹⁵³ Although both of these “advice to a gamester” poems cast the

¹⁵² See Elizabeth Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution, 1642-1660* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 35: “Literary historians now recognize that many works of the period are indeed what Quentin Skinner calls ‘heteronomous.’ That is, their full meaning depends on the reader’s awareness of specific political contexts.”

¹⁵³ Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26; fol. 95^r.

meeting of Parliament as subject to “Odds”, these prove the longer in the November assembly: “The stakes, 3 crowns: 4 nations, Gamesters are: / These, 3 to one; and yet no man that dare / take those great Odds.”¹⁵⁴ The Long Parliament poem takes a darker view of the assembly than that offered to the Short Parliament in the poem “To the Lower-House,” noting that “some Gamesters think, / T’were but in jest, & play our Cards & wink.”¹⁵⁵ In this view, Charles had called the November Parliament in bad faith, or “in jest.” Against the hope of a new parliamentary session, and indeed against the optimism of the “My masters” poem recorded only just above in the manuscript, the author warned that “The sett goes hard, when gamesters think it best.”¹⁵⁶ That these two competing poems should share a collection – and even share a page – is a result of their common political context of the dissolving and assembling of parliaments in 1640.

It should not surprise a modern reader that political poems responding to a central issue or event would be copied together in a miscellany. But the frequency of the collocations of gamester poems may reflect contemporary poets’ intention to link their political statements in verse to an already unfolding discussion, to a visible and “previously existing discourse.”¹⁵⁷ In this way, these clusters of “advice to a gamester” poems exemplify how genre and idiom in political verse might significantly assist in organizing political writing and thought by encouraging textual and conceptual associations between poems, whether in filling a copy book or weighing political opinion. By setting his verse in this register, a poem may tag his own comment to a specific context and occasion, such as the

¹⁵⁴ “To the Parliament,” ll. 1-3; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 95^r.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ll. 5-6.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 7.

¹⁵⁷ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 90: “Only when a previously existing discourse can be supposed, and when a responding discourse can be postulated, can a text address a public.”

parliamentary context in 1640. Resort to a significant idiom may even ensure a poem's association with ongoing discussions that had developed over a prolonged period of time.

One "advice to a gamester" poem demonstrates the longevity of literary associations in the context of political events. The verse beginning "We are a game at cards" met with significant popularity in poetry collections focusing on the early to mid-1640s, but its original composition would seem to predate Charles's personal rule.¹⁵⁸ It is inconsistently titled, but appears in one instance as "The state's a game at cards":

We are a game at cards; The Council deal,
The Lawyers shuffle, & the clergy cut,
The king wins from the loosing commonweal,
The Duke keep's stakes; the courtiers work, & put
the stock far from the city: thus all frump
still cross; for why? Prerogative is trump.¹⁵⁹

The verse's later appearance proves some poets' powers of recollection, or of record keeping; one copyist situates the verse "On England, 1629."¹⁶⁰ Already in 1629 – when Parliament had last met before the ill-fated session in spring of 1640 – observers made sense of political chance and opportunity in the gamester's terms. Perhaps owing to its re-appearance in response to the Short Parliament, the "game at cards" poem was pressed into yet wider service: a later, Restoration-era version (only infrequently copied) remarks that it is "the Cabal" – not "The Councell" – who "deale." Even so, the "common weal" still loses, and the prerogative still trumps, just as in 1629 and in 1640.¹⁶¹ The latest poet or copyist

¹⁵⁸ This poem is extant in at least ten different manuscripts.

¹⁵⁹ Bodleian MS Tanner 465, fol. 100^r.

¹⁶⁰ Folger MS V.a.319, fol. 26^v.

¹⁶¹ This later version appears in British Library MS Add. 34,362, p. 99/fol. 52^r.

must be permitted at least some of his cynicism, for the changes to England's politics over the 1640s and 1650s may not have appeared at that Restoration moment to have amounted to very much. Such iterations of this longstanding "gamester" poem could encourage civic-minded readers to consider changing political contexts also in relation to historic precedent. They also invoke a specific satiric precedent, leveling like critique at similar political arrangements.

Across political eras and the manuscript collections that attended them, the "advice to a gamester" poems represent the ever-shifting balance between opportunity and hazard that defined parliamentary politics during the assembly's transition "from an event to an institution."¹⁶² This strain of poetic advice proves the lasting association between card playing and parliament, even if it at times finds more limited expression in motif rather than in genre. Several poems written during the 1640s include brief political expressions in the gamester's terms, taking on the vocabulary for a couplet or for a stanza before leaving it behind. A satiric epitaph of "Jack Pym," for example, after dissatisfiedly observing that Pym's grave (in Westminster Abbey) lies very near to that of a king, comments thus:

But let not Roundheads in their story
Boast his lying here a Glory
For in a pack of cards you see
'Mongst Kings and Queens knaves shuffled be

The gains of one hand may be undone in the next, for "when Charles' game proves well... He'll then turn up this Knave of Clubs."¹⁶³ In these closing lines the poet turns prophet, as the "Knave" was indeed "turned up" before long; "after the Restoration," as Pym's

¹⁶² See Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire*, p. 56.

¹⁶³ Princeton MS Taylor 5, p.144

biographer observes, “it was decided that [Pym’s] burial was unauthorized, and the body was dug up and flung into the ditch.”¹⁶⁴ Beyond adding colour to the satiric epitaph, the card playing imagery here voices no insignificant political view, and one reiterated in other instances of such advice: although dissenting voices are unavoidable – always “shuffled” in – they are also most often subordinate to the high cards, to the “Kings and Queens.”

This imagining of political gamesmanship reiterated earlier claims of such poetry, reminding the reader that against the sense of opportunism and chance, of a gamble and potential for a payoff, was that of limited dissent, and opposition that remained only a diversion. No matter what the MPs’ ambitions, the rules of the game would seem to have ensured that the king will always trump the knave, and “the prerogative is trump.” The only way to overcome this challenge was to play “a new game,” one with a purged deck:

You gallants that delight to play
At Cards to pass the time away
I can tell you of a new game
If that you please to play the same
It is such a game as you have not seen
To play with all the Cards without King or Queen¹⁶⁵

Whatever his revolutionary interest, this poet suggests a political arrangement that foregoes dissent, where opposing cards are removed from play. Like the “Jack Pym” epitaph, it too is in its own way prophetic, forecasting a new state of political play that proved no game, but deadly serious.

¹⁶⁴ “Pym, John (1584–1643),” Conrad Russell in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Bodleian MS Ashmole 36, 37; fol. 105^r.

IV CONCLUSION

The materials reviewed in this chapter demonstrate authors' increasing self-consciousness about the aims and achievements of political writing during England's revolutionary decade. Wider interest in right reading was matched by an anxiety about the many impediments to public judgment. To some, these were insurmountable. But whatever their conclusion, such broad concerns reflect the significance of influencing popular opinion at a time when England's peace was in the balance. That such balance was as the Civil War continued more plainly subject to the weight of opinion, whether "public" (elected representatives in parliament) or "private" (grandees in the New Model Army), spurred poets and polemicists to support their respective causes with even greater energy and wit. Their efforts confirm that "voting was only one form of representative practice."¹⁶⁶ Public writing also proved itself capable of influencing public political activity and shaping private political identity during the Civil War.

Parliament did not in these years hold a monopoly on state debate. The discursive ideals that were shaped there after the return to Westminster in 1640 also informed certain strains of public political writing. Authors who oriented readers toward collaborative as well as combative rhetoric answered those who maintained the futility of public political discussion, and their attention to media literacy helped to establish a place for public reason even in the "Babel" of conflicting opinion that disseminated in this period. At times, the textual engagements promoted in this strain of political writing look curiously like those

¹⁶⁶ Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, 67.

imagined by Milton in his early prose tracts, where “truth... is best seen against the ablest resistance.”¹⁶⁷ Yet these currents in literary activity and political thought could not equal the sea change at Westminster, where factions eventually reduced the parliament. Finally, a “Rump” remainder of the purged Commons ended the Civil War with a judicial murder recalling that which had set England on course for revolution almost a decade previously. Although this immediate result looked to many more like loss than gain, the final chapter of this study describes a different outcome within the longer legacy of England’s revolutionary decade. From this perspective, it was clear how far wider expectations of public political discussion had developed through the Interregnum and into the Restoration. At that later political moment, critics and readers could trust that “what servants will conceal, and counselors, spare / To tell, the poet, and the Painter dare.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Milton, *An Apology Against a Pamphlet* (1642), YP 1.869.

¹⁶⁸ “To the King,” Princeton MS Taylor 34, p. 27. The poem is attributed sometimes in some manuscripts to Denham, and in others to Marvell.

4. Post-partisan Reflections, 1650-1660

I hate these following rhymes,
Yet keep them for president of the times.

John Rous, *Diary*¹

Although the execution of Charles brought the Civil War to a conclusion, it did not create consensus. Regicide proved only a partisan victory, the death of the other party symbolized in the death of its figurehead. In the context of this study, the regicide must be considered also as a towering failure to accommodate political dissent, both in the means – being permitted by a parliament purged of dissenting members – and in the bloody end of this event. However, the newly victorious party, once itself considered “dissenting” or oppositional, soon met its own opposition. And once it had gained power in England, it resorted to exclusion and force to maintain itself. The early 1650s marked a significant closing down of dissent in the wake of the revolutionary decade. The period also saw particular instability in the Commons, witnessing the dissolution of the Rump (1653), the establishment and dissolution of the Nominated Assembly or “Barebones Parliament” (also 1653), and a succession of Protectorate Parliaments (1654-55, 1656-58, 1659).

¹ John Rous, *Diary of John Rous*, ed. M. A. E. Green (London, 1856), 140.

Focusing on the writings of Sir Thomas, third Lord Fairfax and the clergyman Thomas Hall, this chapter identifies instances where the partisan strain of rhetoric that defined much of the political writing during the Civil War met with significant revision in the Interregnum. These writings constitute an oppositional discourse in transition as the adversarial literary culture, where “he highest builds, who with most Art destroys,”² elicited a response from authors who imagined more productive forms of public political rhetoric. Largely unexplored in modern scholarship, the religious poetry of Thomas Fairfax demonstrates how far that political thought might be determined by private reading and writing. The writings of this major political figure are most revealing of his own transition from hero of the parliamentary cause to supporter of the Restoration. This transition entailed much more than Fairfax’s exchange of one set of loyalties for another. His writings in this period may be termed “post-partisan” inasmuch as Fairfax strove in them to describe a new political landscape that was not defined by combative Civil War ideologies, and also to abandon pointedly any partisan-style vilification of the King or parliamentarians.

The second author under review in this chapter, the King’s Norton clergyman Thomas Hall, based his political comment upon classical texts instead of scripture. This was perhaps an unconventional approach for a minister. But the active and long-running debate that had surrounded one myth in particular – Ovid’s account of Phaeton and Phoebus – urgently invited Hall’s corrective to the partisan writing that sought to fix this oft-cited fable’s place in the contemporary political vocabulary. The writings of Fairfax and Hall reflect what has been described as a gradual shift in this period from readers’ “adherence to a

² Andrew Marvell, “To his Noble Friend Mr. Richard Lovelace, upon his Poems,” in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Nigel Smith (London: Longman, 2007), 21.

particular creed” to their “adoption of particular assumptions and sensibilities.”³

Consideration of these texts reveals the ways that these authors promoted such “sensibility,” which required a retreat from the impasse of partisan rhetoric in favour of a moderate politics that were not defined by the more conspicuous ideological certainties of the revolution. Theirs was not the simpler hermeneutics of partisanship, the likes of which had been proposed by some authors writing from within the civil-war context.⁴ Rather, the authors under review in this section pay special attention to the modes of reading that marked one’s fitness for participation in public political life.

England’s revolutionary decade left an uncertain legacy to its politically-minded authors and readers. That public political discussion might serve a good cause was itself a matter of debate. *Eikon Basilike* gave voice to such reservation, where Charles lamented the effect of “rude and scandalous Pamphlets (which like fire, in great conflagrations, fly up & down to set all places on like flames).”⁵ Like Charles before him, Cromwell proved no friend to his opposition. In general, the support for popular political debate that marked that revolutionary decade of the 1640s waned in the post-war years. And “in 1650 the pressures of polarization had taken a new and intense form.”⁶ Proponents of the Engagement, which oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth was by 1650 “made mandatory for all males,”⁷ sought to seal an end to civil war and to consolidate political support, but its enforcement

³ Phil Withington, “Andrew Marvell’s Citizenship,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Andrew Marvell*, ed. Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 106.

⁴ See in particular chapter 3, section II: “Promoting a reading public through media literacy”

⁵ Charles I, *Eikon Basilike* (1649), 122.

⁶ Blair Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England: John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Nedham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 84.

⁷ Ronald Fritze and William Baxter Robinson, eds., *Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603-1689* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 180-181.

threatened to silence voices critical of the new regime.⁸ From the Parliamentary acts “against dissenting opinions and practices,” which “curtail[ed] not only speech, but other forms of political or religious dissent,”⁹ to the deployment of “the intelligence apparatuses of Secretary Thurloe and Thomas Scott [that] were geared to rooting out potential subversion,”¹⁰ early Interregnum politics would seem to follow concerns in the Council of State that “insurrections and commotions usually begin, and are fermented by, seditious language.”¹¹ Parliament itself fared ill during the Interregnum, and was “scattered” by Cromwell. Even if he indeed “saw in Parliament part of the natural order of things,” Cromwell plainly struggled in these years to achieve this desired order.¹² These several conditions justify consideration of political reading and writing practices that were shaped by, and in response to, the difficulty in achieving settlement after the Civil War.

Translations of scriptural and classical texts by Fairfax and Hall reveal the approaches taken in such literary work. Their chosen mode was “relatively safe” in that political climate,¹³ but as their work demonstrates it did not restrain them from commenting – sometimes critically – on current affairs of state. Both writers were public figures who

⁸ See John M. Wallace, *Destiny His Choice: the Loyalty of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 43: “Naturally, the House felt an oath of allegiance was necessary for anyone entrusted with public office, but it proved to be difficult to get anyone except the regicides to swear approval of what had been done.”

⁹ Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 82; see “An Act against several Atheistical, Blasphemous and Execrable Opinions,” in C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (Holmes Beach, Fla.: W. M. Gaunt, 1972), 2.409-10.

¹⁰ Lloyd Bowen, “Seditious speech and popular royalism, 1649-60,” in *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum: Politics, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. J. McElligott, and D. L. Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 58.

¹¹ Qtd. in Bowen, “Seditious speech,” 60.

¹² Hugh Trevor-Roper, “Oliver Cromwell and his Parliaments,” in *Religion, The Reformation, and Social Change* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 345-6. Cromwell was aware of the grim precedent set by the parliament work of the 1640s: “he scattered all his parliaments and died in his bed, while [Charles’s and Laud’s parliaments] deprived them of their power and brought them both ultimately to the block.”

¹³ Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 53-4: “Translation had a double satisfaction for a royalist writer. Not only was it relatively safe, it was proof of the essential applicability and truth of words from the past.”

attempted in this period to reconcile their duties to the state and the church with their private duty to conscience. For his part, Fairfax exemplifies how the regicide might mark a crisis of conscience, even for those who had supported the parliamentary cause. Perhaps owing to his unsettled spirit, Fairfax offered a response to partisanship in his retirement writings that repudiated the model of adversarial political writing. In his main literary work, a translation of the book of Psalms into verse, he retreated entirely from secular poetry on affairs of state. Close reading of this text, as well as of a newly surfaced manuscript miscellany containing political poems apparently gathered by Fairfax, argues a comparable contrast between his reading practice and his political identity in the 1640s and 1650s. Through distinct inflections in his verse paraphrase of the book of Psalms, Fairfax represented a non-agonistic relation between opposing parties. The character of Fairfax's Psalter derives from the patterns that develop in such departures from original psalm texts. Much is gained in the verse translation: Fairfax achieved a balance between revolutionaries, kings, and their causes in the wake of his disappointment at Charles's death.¹⁴ And that Fairfax's literary activities in the Interregnum period differed significantly from those of the previous decade reflects his eventual repudiation of a former way of reading. His retirement writings help predict his return to public life on the eve of the Restoration.

In contrast to the private work of "musing, searching [and] revolving"¹⁵ modeled in Fairfax's poetry, Thomas Hall promotes a similarly careful reading practice to a much wider audience through print publication. In his grammatical translations from Ovid's

Metamorphoses, which issue in the pamphlets *Wisdoms Conquest* (1651) and *Phaetons*

¹⁴ Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature*, 52-53: "Free translation [and] adaptation was becoming commoner in the period." Some contemporary authors held that translation stood "for transcendence, the healing wholeness that removes controversy and contradiction rather than using it as a basis for construction."

¹⁵ John Milton, *Areopagitica*, YP 2:554.

Folly (1655), Hall promoted rhetorical training as a necessary component of civic duty. The reading practice he demonstrated moderated partisan discourse in a way that might equip readers to withstand the arrogations of authority they faced. Avoiding the oppositional framework of adversarial rhetoric, and offering general, interpretive advice to his readers, Hall rejected the common partisan world view and also the assumptions of partisan reading, which encouraged the “consumption of other men’s ideas” more than they did dialogic political critique.¹⁶ Hall modeled a revised, post-partisan interpretive practice distinct from the traditional responses to political representation that had aimed deliberately to generate sympathy and fashion individual political identity during the Civil War. In particular, his approach to the character of Phaeton demonstrated how the forward reader might reassess a fable that had through competing treatments become over-burdened with political signification.

The writings of Hall and Fairfax under review in this chapter look back to the preceding decade’s debate about the legitimacy and use of political writing, which had first addressed discussions in parliament, and then political texts that circulated in print and manuscript. Both authors assumed that truth may very well be textually mediated. But the perspective furnished by their later context in the Interregnum permitted them also to surpass the terms of the preceding debate in their confident claims for the capabilities – and even, now, the duties – of citizen readers. To this end, these works countered the Cromwellian quest for settlement that limited the accommodation of dissent in public discourse. They are not “royalist” per se, although “royalism during the 1650s was a ‘broad

¹⁶ Mark Knights, “How rational was the later Stuart public sphere?”, in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, eds. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 252: “Habermas argues that reason was *the* characteristic of the first public sphere... It is the degradation of reason, he suggests, in favour of passive consumption of other men's ideas, that characterises the decayed modern public sphere.”

church' with no monolithic ideology."¹⁷ They do, however, reflect to some extent the trope of "secrecy" popular in royalist literary practice (and political thought) in the Interregnum.¹⁸ As much as Fairfax and Hall acknowledged the promising capacity of published texts to transform and even to unite their various readers, they privileged a private, more patient reading practice to be undertaken at a critical distance from the main currents of public political writing.¹⁹

If literature was part of the revolution, it was part of the resolution too: the authors under review in this section performed and promoted the textual work that could permit a reader's own coming to terms with dissent, which exercise in negotiation between opposites supported new forms of political settlement. The "literary public sphere" that Habermas imagines supporting "people's public use of their reason"²⁰ depended upon these "more rational, critical habits of thought, [that] made it 'a sphere of criticism of public authority,'"²¹ as Hall and Fairfax might have argued, the "public authority" most worthy of criticism was that of the prevailing representations in political media. In this view, a properly functioning literary public sphere must be capable of policing itself.

¹⁷ Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, "Introduction: Rethinking Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum," in *Royalists and Royalism During the Interregnum*, ed. Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 3.

¹⁸ Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 133: "Potter argues that royalist literary practice in the Interregnum cultivated a 'philosophy of secrecy,' in which Royalists chose the only means available to a suppressed group, 'enabling communication and consolidating its sense of itself as an elite,' thus agreeing with Patterson's formulation of censorship as a determining condition of such writing ... yet secrecy also appealed to royalist political thought – politics was a private matter."

¹⁹ Marvell, who had by the mid-1650s developed his credentials as a republican poet, may have participated also in a royalist-leaning literary coterie centred on Thomas Stanley; see Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 267. Fairfax, too, may have had access to this literary circle.

²⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 27.

²¹ David Zaret, "Religion, Science, and Printing in the Public Spheres in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 216.

Bibliophiles both, Fairfax and Hall shared a significant devotion to literature. In his lifetime Fairfax gathered manuscript volumes to supplement the family library at Denton, as well as a quantity of his own poetry large enough to have been measured in “baskets.”²² Although Hall lacked the means of a lord, his wage as clergyman and schoolmaster seems to have stretched further than it ought: that Hall’s own library included such a great number of volumes has led one biographer to speculate “he must have starved himself of all other comforts in order to get them.”²³ But both Fairfax and Hall did more than entertain an antiquarian interest, where the pleasures of the page were confined to the estate library or to the quiet parsonage. Instead, they conceived of private reading as social act, one with wider relevance. These authors asserted and exemplified the importance of England’s citizen readers, and the increasingly important connection between literacy and public life.

I THOMAS FAIRFAX AND THE TEXTUALITY OF THOUGHT

Among the pantheon of English revolutionaries, few contributed as much to the victors’ cause as did Thomas Fairfax. He served in the 1640s as General and architect of the New Model Army, whose successes in the English Civil War ensured parliament’s ascendancy over the King, and established “Black Tom’s” reputation as an inspired battlefield commander. Such was the extent of his fame that many contemporaries considered Fairfax within reach of the crown after Charles I’s execution. However, the regicide also marked the beginning of the trajectory that defines Fairfax’s modern reputation: it has been observed

²² Bodleian MS Fairfax 38, p. vii; see “The Transcriber to the Author.” These collections have since been scattered; see W. J. Connor, “The Fairfax archives: a study in dispersal,” *Archives* 11 (1973-4).

²³ Frederick Powicke, “New Light on an Old English Presbyterian and Bookman: the Reverend Thomas Hall, B.D., 1610-1665.” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 8 (1924): 177.

that “one of the ironies of English history is that the man who as much as anyone was responsible for the ruin of Charles I was the same man who played an essential part in restoring that king’s son to the throne.”²⁴ That Fairfax would resign from his position as General so suddenly after leading the parliament’s army to victory, and would later come to support the cause of Charles II, invites questions about the circumstances of his changing political views between the “ruin” of 1649 and the Restoration in 1660.

The literary context that informed Fairfax’s political thought during the Interregnum (1650-1660), a decade that corresponds with his own retirement from public politics, ultimately supported his brief return to prominence at the Restoration. It is no great exaggeration to refer to this as a lost decade in an otherwise much recorded life. The paper work that accompanies affairs of state richly documents Fairfax’s military career in the 1640s. But his resignation in 1650 from his post as lord general more or less silenced the public recording of Fairfax’s life. Where the public records end, a private record begins that invites much fuller scrutiny. It was during retirement that Fairfax pursued in earnest his literary interests. Analysis of his main written work, a metrical translation of the entire book of Psalms, reveals how far his political thought was supported by private practices of reading and writing that permitted him to test the new political settlement after the regicide. Fairfax’s distinctive habits in paraphrase reveal much about his developing religious and political beliefs in these years. This work deserves critical attention in its own right. It also combines with Fairfax’s other literary efforts to show his growing interest during the

²⁴ “Fairfax, Thomas, third Lord Fairfax of Cameron (1612–1671),” Ian J. Gentles in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

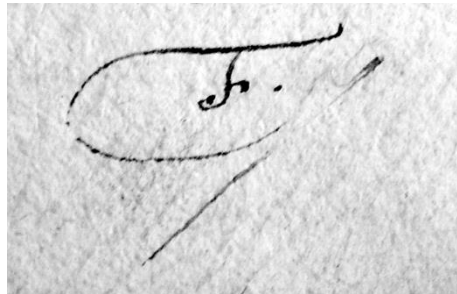
Interregnum in moderate political thought, and to demonstrate his repudiation after the 1640s of the partisan literary culture of that decade.

The wide reading and reflection that inform Fairfax's Psalter followed from the range also of Fairfax's earlier literary interests. For that background we have new evidence in a hitherto anonymous manuscript miscellany containing popular political verse dating to the 1640s. This volume takes us far into his diverse political, literary, and military interests. The collection of verse is Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson Poetry 71, described in the library index catalogue as containing "Poems on public affairs." The manuscript also contains sufficient information about private affairs to confirm its ownership by Fairfax. Features of its transcription as well as stylistic evidence indicate that this was of Fairfax's gathering. Claims for his ownership are supported by the initials that mark the exterior and interior of the collection, which correspond with the Fairfax family and its relations. As the Bodleian summary catalogue notes, the volume's cover bears an elaborate "V" initial, and many of the poems it contains are "signed as 'F'." The "V" stands likely for Vere, which family was doubly connected to Fairfax. As a young man he "learned the art of war under Horace Vere, Baron Vere of Tilbury,"²⁵ and in 1637 married Horace's daughter, Anne. Either Anne or her father may have provided Thomas with the volume, or may have arranged its binding if the contents were copied beforehand. Such books or gatherings of paper were sometimes exchanged as wedding gifts. For example, Henry Sibthorpe gave to Ann Southwell "at the time of their wedding" the folios that have come to be known as "The Southwell-Sibthorpe commonplace book."²⁶

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Jean Klene, "Introduction," *The Southwell-Sibthorpe Commonplace Book: Folger MS. V. b. 198* (Arizona: Renaissance English Text Society, 1995), xi.

But it is the other attributive initial that most persuasively links the volume to Fairfax. This characteristic of the Rawlinson volume conspicuously resembles a distinct feature of other Fairfax poetry collections in manuscript. Although the Bodleian manuscript catalogue identifies the further initial as “F”, in many instances that initial more plainly represents a monogram of the letters “T” and “F”:

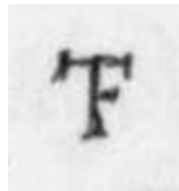


(fig. 4; p. 145)



(fig. 5; p. 146)

An identical sign of attribution – although in mock serif, instead of italic – appears in almost all other extant Fairfax poetry collections compiled by amanuenses. In Brotherton Library MS Lt 105, for example, a fair copy of Fairfax’s poetry that features corrections in the hand of his cousin, Charles Fairfax, almost all poems are followed by a combined “TF” initial:



(fig. 6; p. 409)

In both the Brotherton and the Rawlinson volumes, the TF monogram is placed directly beneath the poems recorded there, and almost always toward the right-hand margin on the page. The copyist of Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 38 includes the same monogram after many of its items. In British Library MS Add. 11744 the same attribution appears throughout, although not as often as the other Fairfax-owned manuscripts cited here.

Although identifying initials are frequently appended to individual or groups of verses in other similar contemporary manuscripts, collections owned or commissioned by Thomas Fairfax are unique in featuring them so prominently and consistently. I have yet to observe such particular initialing practice in any other miscellanies dating to this period.

That the handwriting itself and the provenance of the Rawlinson volume have not pointed directly to Fairfax reflects the circumstances of the collection as well as the later dispersal of his papers. As General, Fairfax had relied heavily on secretaries, especially during the Civil War. It is difficult to uncover the identities of the men Fairfax had in his employ during this period.²⁷ Other Fairfax papers confirm that he relied on numerous scribes to record the poetry he himself collected and composed. The provenance of Fairfax's papers and library is similarly difficult to track. W. J. Connor's article on this subject neatly summarizes the increasing disarray of Fairfax's library, even in its title: "The Fairfax Archives: A Study in Dispersal."²⁸ And although many of Fairfax's books and papers "reached the Bodleian," as he writes, "they were clearly depleted on the way."²⁹ However, at least some of these depletions may be identified. After Fairfax's death, his papers were acquired by the family of Ralph Thoresby (1658-1725).³⁰ Ralph's father, John Thoresby (1626-1679), had served under Fairfax in the English Civil War.³¹ Brian Fairfax, a beloved cousin of Thomas, also records the interest of one "Mr. Thoresby" – likely Ralph – in the

²⁷ The handwriting does not appear to match that of John Rushworth, John Clarke, or Marvell as of 1650, all of whom had served Fairfax

²⁸ W. J. Connor, "The Fairfax Archives: a Study in Dispersal." *Archives* 11 (1973-4), 76-85.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁰ See Joan Faust, "'Upon Appleton House': Marvell's Creation of a Liminal Realm." *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 35 (2009), 65, n. 6.

³¹ "Thoresby, Ralph (1658–1725)," P. E. Kell in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

publication of Fairfax's memoirs,³² which expression of interest surely corresponded with Thoresby's own stake in the Fairfax archive. *The Annals of the Bodleian Library* lists Thoresby's as one of the many collections acquired by the eighteenth-century book-collector Thomas Rawlinson,³³ whose own collection was not long afterwards dispersed through a series of auction sales. However, his brother Richard repurchased as much of Thomas's collection as was possible. Those items that were retrieved Richard left to the Bodleian library upon his death.³⁴ It is likely this indirect channel, from the Fairfax estate to Thoresby, and then from Thoresby to Rawlinson, that this Fairfax miscellany made its way to the Bodleian, and so eventually shared a repository, if not quite a shelfmark, with other items from Thomas Fairfax's original collection.

The Rawlinson volume may be read as a distinct counterpart to Fairfax's later interest in devotional poetry. Records of Fairfax's extensive literary collections do not include many materials in the register encountered in the miscellany, which comprises secular, occasional, and even bawdy political verse. Even so, it features poems whose themes and authors accord with what is known of Fairfax and his interests. Two pieces in the miscellany are attributed to Abraham Cowley, who later wrote an epithalamium for Fairfax's daughter, Mary.³⁵ One poem is linked to Thomas Stanley, who for several years benefited from the tutelage of the second cousin of Thomas Fairfax, William Fairfax.³⁶ Nicholas McDowell speculates that Andrew Marvell's connection with Fairfax family may have been

³² See correspondence dated Sept. 5, 1712. Collected in Robert Bell, ed., *Memorials of the Civil War: Comprising the Correspondence of the Fairfax Family* (London: Bentley, 1849), 2:237.

³³ See William Dunn Macray, *Annals of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, 2nd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1868), 251.

³⁴ "Rawlinson, Thomas (1681–1725)," Theodor Harmsen in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

³⁵ Nancy Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy, 1660-1671* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 36.

³⁶ "Stanley, Thomas (1625–1678)," Warren Chernaik in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

facilitated by Stanley.³⁷ Many of the poems gathered in the miscellany reflect Fairfax's personal interests and circumstances. One poem takes for its subject "the Lords mustering their forces at York,"³⁸ which county provided a base of power for the Fairfaxes and other northern gentry during the Civil War. Another item refers to soldiers gone without wages, a lasting concern in Fairfax's career as general.³⁹ By 1643, for example, his soldiers had fought for a year without receiving pay.⁴⁰ And most Fairfaxian is a short poem on a particularly fine horse named Gregory:

Of all the horse that ever I see
theres none like that of Gregory
in him your honour may confide
therefore my lord get up & ride
some horses wince but you & Pim
may all depend & hang on him.⁴¹

This poem in particular reflects the interest and ownership of Fairfax, a cavalry general and a meticulous breeder of horses. It also resembles his later poetry. He frequently employs iambic tetrameter couplets in six-line stanzas, including in his brief poem "Upon Appleton House."⁴² Moreover, the description of the horse here anticipates an equine moment in his metrical translation of the Psalter. There too the uncommon "confide" and "ride" rhyme features again, if in support of an opposing sentiment, when Fairfax concludes that "the

³⁷ McDowell, *Poetry and allegiance in the English Civil Wars*, 50. Another critic speculates that 'perhaps it was [Robert] Witty who recommended Marvell to Fairfax as a tutor for his daughter;' see Nigel Smith, *Andrew Marvell, Chameleon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 89.

³⁸ "On the Lords mustering their forces at York," Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, p. 89.

³⁹ "A ballad from the English camp," *ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴⁰ Andrew Hopper, *'Black Tom': Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 210.

⁴¹ Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, p. 4.

⁴² Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 593.

prancing horse in whom vain men confides / Cannot with strength save such as on them rides.”⁴³ The inclusion of such poetry in the Rawlinson miscellany, with its characteristically Fairfaxian preoccupations, argues Thomas Fairfax’s hand in the editorial practice behind it.

One strain included in the volume seems less characteristic of a parliamentary general. Poems supporting the “Roundheads” are interspersed with, and even in certain sections overwhelmed by poems supporting Charles’s cause. This variety may invite the modern reader to consider the volume as a snapshot of the general’s wartime reading, reflecting his interest in the poetic claims for and against his own side. But which side was it that he most strongly supported? “If you know well the life of the keeper of a commonplace book,” one critic observes, “you soon find that the seemingly routine selections from his or her readings incorporated there, are startlingly revealing of that person’s current crises and issues of identity.”⁴⁴ Although the volume may be considered in the terms proposed in the previous chapter of this study, where opposing political views are actively gathered and arranged by an individual reader as a support to his own political thought, the concatenation of texts in this volume certainly also suggests a “crisis” or “issue of identity” when considered in relation to Fairfax’s known political views. The prevalence of royalist poetry might also point to Fairfax’s sympathy for Charles, which he maintained even as he capably led an army to oppose him. But when faced with the prospect of regicide, Fairfax finally balked. He boycotted Charles’s trial. The Rawlinson miscellany thus already captures in that

⁴³ “Psalm 33.” Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 70.

⁴⁴ Lockridge, “Individual Literacy in Commonplace Books,” 338.

decade the “irony” of the general’s life⁴⁵ that comes most plainly into relief much later through his participation in the Restoration of Charles II.

Fairfax’s sympathy for Charles’s plight – especially in the later years of the 1640s – is amply documented in other sources. The Clarke papers record Fairfax sending money to Lieut-Col. Cobbett for the King’s safe-keeping in late 1648.⁴⁶ After the Army purged the Long Parliament and so paved the way for the regicide, Fairfax met with Dutch ambassadors in an attempt to circumvent Charles’s execution.⁴⁷ In his apology for the part he played in the Civil War, titled *A Short Memorial of some things to be cleared during my Command in the Army*, Fairfax expressed sympathy with the ill-fated Charles. As Fairfax described it, his own lot as a general deceived by his army council in some ways resembled the King’s own, where he was betrayed by ill-meaning counselors. An even clearer statement of such sympathy issues in Fairfax’s poem “On the Fatal day Jan. 30.”⁴⁸ Its opening quatrain records the general’s regret at Charles I’s execution:

Oh! Let that day from time be blotted quite,
Out of belief, In after-Age be waved
That in deep’st silence Th’ Act concealed might
That so the Kingdoms Credit might be saved.⁴⁹

The closing couplet tempers this lament following the poet’s sense of the “Fatal” event:

But If the Power divine permitteth this

⁴⁵ “Fairfax, Thomas, third Lord Fairfax of Cameron (1612–1671),” Ian J. Gentles in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

⁴⁶ William Clarke, *The Clarke Papers: Selections from the Papers of William Clarke, Secretary to the Council of the Army, 1647-1649, and to General Monck and the Commanders of the Army in Scotland, 1651-1660*, ed. C. H. Firth (London: Printed for the Camden society, 1891-1901), 2:67.

⁴⁷ Hopper, *Black Tom*, 103.

⁴⁸ “On the Fatal day Jan. 30,” Bodleian MS Fairfax 38, p. 265.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ll. 1-4.

His Will's the Law, and ours must acquiesce.⁵⁰

However, in its aftermath the event proved more difficult to “conceal” than the poet had dared hope. Additional writing from Fairfax’s retirement confirms the author’s retreat from public politics but it by no means marked his retreat from political thought. One modern reader of Fairfax’s family correspondence describes a darker, less certain tone in the general’s letters after the regicide.⁵¹ Such alteration corresponds with the sorrowing verses “On the Fatal day.”

Even though his participation in the English Civil War overshadowed Fairfax in the Interregnum, the views that pushed him to the edge of London politics, dominated after the regicide by Cromwell, and not long after into retirement at Nun Appleton, met with alteration in the following decade. The change between the earlier horse Gregory, “in whom your honour may confide,” and the later “prancing horse... in whom” only “vain men confides,” exemplifies the broader shift between Fairfax’s writings from the 1640s to the 1650s. In the latter, Fairfax largely avoided the kind of political poetry gathered in the Rawlinson miscellany. Aside from his poem on the regicide and a later verse upon Charles II’s coronation, Fairfax’s political writing does not resemble the partisan style. He omitted the stock figures that populate the civil war miscellany, both of Charles (whether “wronged”⁵² or “that only may be blamed”⁵³) and his Cavaliers (“whose cuckolds you’ll be”⁵⁴), and of parliament (whether “grave”⁵⁵ or “crafty beggars”⁵⁶) and their Roundheads

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, ll. 5-6.

⁵¹ Robert Hodge, *Foreshortened Time: Andrew Marvell and seventeenth century revolutions* (Ipswich: Rowman & Littlefield, 1978), 138-9.

⁵² “An invitation to arms”, Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, p. 71.

⁵³ “A true description of the malignant party of England”, Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, p. 19.

⁵⁴ “The public faith”, Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, p. 110.

⁵⁵ “The soldiers complaint”, Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, p. 73.

⁵⁶ “Hamdbdens speech in parliament”, Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, p. 46.

(“not short of wit”⁵⁷). In his later works, Fairfax instead focused predominantly on biblical texts, and on the Psalter in particular. The scope of his metrical translation of this work proved broad enough to include rich contemporary political comment.

Although the apparent tension between the glory of Fairfax’s military career in the 1640s and the strain of royalist poetry in the Rawlinson miscellany does not feature nearly as prominently in the general’s retirement writings, the broad strokes of Fairfax’s response to the revolutionary politics are visible in his distinct habits of versification in paraphrase. Some passages in Fairfax’s Psalter suggest that he worked from English sources. Fairfax manipulated his source text to achieve rhyme, yet often did so with very little alteration of its original meaning. In one Psalm, Fairfax maintained the rhyme already present in the English translations: his version of Psalm 114 features the “rams” and “lambs” present in both the King James and Geneva translations.⁵⁸ Most of Fairfax’s psalms are shorter than other translations, and some are even shorter than their sources. In his *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature*, Hannibal Hamlin compares various verse translations of Psalm 1 (15 lines in the KJV). He notes George Sandys’s “quite compact” paraphrase of 16 lines, versus George Withers’s longer version of 20 lines.⁵⁹ Milton too uses 16, while the Sidneys use 18. For his part, Fairfax manages it in only 14. With only one exception, Fairfax’s paraphrases are all of fewer lines than other contemporary paraphrases of those same chapters in Hamlin’s “representative sample.”⁶⁰ As becomes clear from such comparisons, the poet Fairfax most often chose economy over lyric grace.

⁵⁷ “On the lords mustering their forces at York”, Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, p. 93.

⁵⁸ See Psalm 114:4; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, pp. 294-295.

⁵⁹ Hamlin, *Psalm Culture*, 67.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 52, n. 4. A representative sample includes psalms 1, 22, 84, 100, and 148. The “one exception” is Psalm 100, which Mary Sidney rendered in sonnet form.

Fairfax's textual alterations in his metrical translation practice were slight, but also significant enough to have given his work an anecdotal quality. Collation and comparison of the translated verses with their Biblical counterparts reveal moments of subjectivity within an otherwise conservative translation practice. In this light, Fairfax may be shown to develop habits and patterns in the infrequent departures he made from the source texts.⁶¹ As a whole, the emendations constituted a secular as much as a spiritual theodicy,⁶² prompted by the difficult years of civil war and the "confusion" that Fairfax observed in Cromwell's republican government. In his miscellany, Fairfax had framed competing partisan poems. In his Psalter, he arrived at a vision of moderate politics by posing new political questions – and even accommodating new political realities – in existing, authoritative texts. Inasmuch as such textual "repetitions and recursions – often lost to view in the linearity of biography – [might] give unusual access to the imagined life,"⁶³ recurring images in Fairfax's Psalter reveal how far his support for the parliamentary cause met with revision as he tempered this support with a plea in his retirement for moderation and even toleration. Under this analysis, the text also invites its consideration in terms proposed by recent scholarship on early modern metrical psalmody, where "the kind of specific personal, even social occasion that was an essential component of the Renaissance lyric"⁶⁴ may give a Psalter translation an autobiographical, or anecdotal quality.

⁶¹ For the purposes of this study, the source text is assumed to be an amalgam of the Geneva and King James translations.

⁶² Hannibal Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 123, defines "theodicy" as "a deliberate thinking through of the problem of evil in the world and the burning question ... 'Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?'"

⁶³ See Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1; Hirst and Zwicker cite Leonard Barkan's *Michaelangelo: A Life on Paper* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) as "a model of the ways in which the analysis of recursive habits of expression can reveal the preoccupations of a psychology and an aesthetic sensibility."

⁶⁴ Hamlin, *Psalm Culture*, 114.

Fairfax explicitly styled his retirement as “solitude,” a trope that took on significant political association among disenfranchised royalists in the Interregnum period.⁶⁵ For his part, the retired general titled his private writing in this period the “Recreations” and “Employments of my solitude.” In many of his psalms, Fairfax added or elaborated upon images of retreat and reclusion. In one such expansion of source text, he referred to having been “with thy mercies ... impaled,”⁶⁶ and in another he expressed his thanks that God “as in a walled town hath kept me safe.”⁶⁷ Fairfax emphasized terms of solitude also in Psalm 55, where he described his situation as “some place retir’d from noise,” and as in “wandering deserts far remote.”⁶⁸ This level of topographical detail is absent from the source texts. Exile and solitude were familiar topics in royalist writing during this period, and Fairfax addressed these themes in his Psalter with extraordinary attention.

In poetry that celebrated Fairfax, the solitude of retirement was cast – and further politicized – using pastoral terms. Andrew Marvell’s employment of this vocabulary pervades the best-known tribute to Fairfax in verse, “Upon Appleton House,” which presents “images of ... landscapes that reflect the [Fairfax] family.”⁶⁹ Marvell’s poem “Upon the Hill and Grove at Bilbrough,” also written to Fairfax, relies upon green imagery to represent the subject’s interest and perspective in his new, private life:

Therefore to your obscurer seats

From his own brightness he retreats:

⁶⁵ For a brief summary of this literary activity, see Philip Major, “Introduction,” in *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and its Aftermath, 1640-1660*, ed. Philip Major (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). Katherine Phillips, like Fairfax, translated “La Solitude” by French poet Marc-Antoine Girard de St Amant; see George Saintsbury, ed., *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1.601-4.

⁶⁶ Psalm 27; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 57.

⁶⁷ Psalm 31; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 66.

⁶⁸ Psalm 55; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 123.

⁶⁹ Faust, “Upon Appleton House”, 55.

Nor he the hills without the groves,
Nor height but with retirement loves.⁷⁰

But it is mowers, not shepherds, who feature centrally in Marvell's pastoral vision and his pastoral art.⁷¹ In this shift away from traditional form and also in other ways Marvell's Nun Appleton poetry troubles its pastoral scenes. In his "Damon the Mower," for example, the eponymous mower mistakenly wounds himself with his scythe.⁷² In "Upon Appleton House" a working mower accidentally kills a bird nesting in the grass of the field.⁷³ In that poem Marvell also mixes mowing and military images. There, the central pastoral scene resembles a battlefield. Marvell writes, "these [mowers] massacre the grass along,"⁷⁴ and continues,

the mower now commands the field;
In whose new traverse seemeth wrought
A camp of battle newly fought:
Where, as the meads with hay, the plain
Lies quilted o'er with bodies slain:
The women that with forks it fling,
Do represent the pillaging.⁷⁵

The blending of these two vocabularies in Marvell's poetry creates a "surreality where the reader reels with the allegorical possibilities, all of which may be seen to possess reference

⁷⁰ Andrew Marvell, "Upon the Hill and Grove at Bilbrough," ll. 77-80, in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Nigel Smith (London: Longman, 2007), 209.

⁷¹ Donald Friedman, *Marvell's Pastoral Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 135.

⁷² Andrew Marvell, "Damon the Mower," ll. 77-8, in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Smith, 139: "The edged steel by careless chance / Did into his own ankle glance."

⁷³ Marvell, "Upon Appleton House," ll. 395-6, in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Smith, 227: "While one, unknowing, carves the rail, / Whose yet unfeathered quills her fail."

⁷⁴ Marvell, "Upon Appleton House," l. 394, in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Smith, 227.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, ll. 418-24, in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Smith, 227

to the civil war.”⁷⁶ These scenes seem intended to question the reader’s “impressions of possible pastoral perfection,” as “the landscape for all its beauty [is] presented as unsettled and disturbing.”⁷⁷ If that reader was Fairfax, then the military images would recall the violence that loomed in recent memory, and – if the poem is dated correctly to the summer of 1651⁷⁸ – that still continued beyond his quiet retreat at Nun Appleton.

Just as the pastoral takes on a political edge, intending to legitimate a retreat to truth in a “green world”⁷⁹ away from the destructive influences at the centre of society, so too the darkened pastoral justifies a political reading. In “Upon Appleton House,” Marvell amplified a familiar political allegory of the royal oak: “Who could have thought the tallest oak / Should fall by such a feeble stroke!” In the fall of this great tree, the scene of Charles I’s execution repeated itself in the environment of the Fairfax estate. But Marvell also expands the green scene. The fall may have been avoided, Marvell claimed, “had the tree not fed / A traitor-worm, within it bred.”⁸⁰ In his sophistication of this natural allegory that unfolded at Nun Appleton, Marvell demonstrates his interest in “the delicacies of pastoral”, and also in those “more fearful possibilities threatening the most paradisaal landscape.”⁸¹ Such threat might come within the landscape itself.

Fairfax evidently shared Marvell’s belief the pastoral could include “much more of human experience than prior examples of the genre allowed for.”⁸² For his part, Fairfax

⁷⁶ Patsy Griffin, *The Modest Ambition of Andrew Marvell* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 46.

⁷⁷ Rosalie Colie, “My Ecchoing Song” *Andrew Marvell’s Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 35.

⁷⁸ Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker, “High Summer at Nun Appleton, 1651: Andrew Marvell and Lord Fairfax’s Occasions,” in *Historical Journal* 36 (1993), 247. On 3 September 1651, “Cromwell destroyed the last external challenge at the battle of Worcester;” *ibid.*, 250.

⁷⁹ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 182.

⁸⁰ Marvell, “Upon Appleton House,” lines 551-554.

⁸¹ Colie, “My Ecchoing Song,” 35.

⁸² Friedman, *Marvell’s Pastoral Art*, 9.

demonstrates in his translations of biblical texts a surprisingly broad pastoral vision. Like the poet Marvell, he could embellish and complicate natural imagery to convey a political message. In his Psalter, Fairfax often did so to emphasize of statements of difficulty voiced by the original psalmist. Fairfax added references to “clouds of trouble,”⁸³ “wrath as lightning,”⁸⁴ and to those “whose hatred to me swelled its banks.”⁸⁵ These and other emendations combine to associate nature with Fairfax’s own distress.⁸⁶ Such representations of threat may reasonably be imagined as arising from his resentment of “the king killers.”⁸⁷

But the troubled pastoral that appears in Fairfax’s and Marvell’s verse may have arisen from other causes as well. Elsewhere in his psalms, Fairfax further developed natural scenes already present in source texts to represent a pastoral retreat that was never quite out of sight of the political context outside the Appleton estate. These expansions suggest that Fairfax’s Interregnum anxiety derived from the rule of Cromwell as well as from the demise of Charles. One letter records Fairfax’s complaint that “since the dissolving of the [Long] Parliament which was broke up wrongfully, there was nothing but shifting and a kind of confusion.”⁸⁸ Such concern features prominently in Fairfax’s translation of Psalm 137, a notable psalm of exile. The brief psalm describes the scene of captive Israelites “by the rivers of Babylon,” where, although asked to sing, they leave their harps hanging on a willow tree. In Fairfax’s translation of this psalm, basic nature imagery already present in the scene’s rendering in English texts is intensified, and directly connected to the poet’s

⁸³ Psalm 31; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 65.

⁸⁴ Psalm 76; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 172.

⁸⁵ Psalm 55; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 124.

⁸⁶ See also Psalm 102, where natural scenes are darkened through heightened emotional appeals: the “pelican in the wilderness” described there is made here to “sit alone” and “make my moan”, and its “sparrow on a housetop” is newly described as having “late ... lost her mate;” ; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 247.

⁸⁷ Hopper, *Black Tom*, 93.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Hopper, *Black Tom*, 117-8. That this quotation originally appears in a report to John Thurloe confirms that Cromwell’s spymaster took an interest in Fairfax’s political thought in the 1650s.

condition: “So great excess of tears flowed from our eyes / As swelled Euphrates streams above her banks.” The scene is further detailed by his description of the wind in the willows, which “in doleful noise our sighs did imitate.” Fairfax added threatening “wolves” to the already existing pastoral scene, as well as “bulls” and even “tyrants worse than tigers” to go with them.⁸⁹ In this, as in the examples cited above, Fairfax created a darkened pastoral, where nature imagery could signify the poet’s sense of his own distress. In Psalm 137, its embellishment served to emphasize the very present discomforts of exile, beyond the simple memory of a peace no longer enjoyed.

Fairfax’s treatment of Psalms 95 and 104 confirms his interest in situating reflective comment into the Psalter by means of altering the imagery present in his sources to reflect his present condition. In rendering the simple pastoral scene in this psalm, Fairfax first referred to the “pasture” and the “sheep” of the original text, and once again intruded material: a reference to the menacing “the wolves” from which they are to be kept.⁹⁰ Thus in his version the threat was made explicit and visible, elaborating the already existing scene. Alterations to Psalm 104 show Fairfax’s awareness of trouble that exists beyond an ordered and beautiful pastoral scene. Here, the translator embellished the already rich, bestiary-like passage: he added “fertile meadows” and “crystal currents”; recorded the sound of birds who “tune their warbling lays”; he referenced the passing of time as “Th’moon, seasons rules by alternate change / days & years by suns un-erring course”; he delved underground, adding “minerals under” the earth; and also under the waves: adding the “crook’t dolphin” to the “leviathan” already present in the source. In the second to last stanza, however, the lively, detailed scene is arrested by sudden “revolt”:

⁸⁹ Psalm 137; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, pp. 353-356.

⁹⁰ Psalm 95; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 233.

to fury then was his wrath provoked
when he saw they to revolts inclined.⁹¹

Overturning the preceding scene, this “revolt” has no equivalent in the source texts. The translator’s previous emphasis on perfection and order in nature only makes the unexpected revolt more striking. This psalm, alongside the embellished scene in Psalm 137, laments that nature, once sustaining, rich, and orderly, is threatened or even lost by disorder and “revolt.” The translator’s expected comforts were not to be found, whether in nature or in song. These psalms are among the most revealing of Fairfax’s own poetic voice. They present the anecdotal scenes – marked by heightened detail and emotion – that are most revealing of the translator’s character.

These images may have intended to overshadow Protectoral politics, but their shade perhaps extended also to the ideal retreat that Fairfax sought after the Civil War. The privacy that Fairfax then desired was susceptible to more than the incursions of English politics. Hannah Arendt has claimed that such “inner migration” remains a personal delusion: “seductive though it may be to... hole up in the refuge of one’s own psyche” upon realizing great disappointment with the world and its ways, “the result will always be a loss of humanness along with a forsaking of reality.”⁹² An understanding in Arendt’s *The Human Condition* that “the curious sterility of utopias comes from the absence within them of any scope for initiative, any room for plurality”⁹³ corresponds with Fairfax’s much earlier reflections on the high costs of reclusion. Marvell may have in his own attentions to Fairfax represented “retreat” as a form of “abandonment” or even as a “hallucination.”⁹⁴ Marvell

⁹¹ Psalm 104; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, pp. 255-261.

⁹² Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times: Thoughts on Lessing* (New York: Harcourt, 1968), 23.

⁹³ Margaret Canovan, “Introduction,” in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), xviii.

⁹⁴ Hirst and Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane*, 22

acknowledged Appleton as “an inn to entertain / Its Lord a while, but not remain,”⁹⁵ which pious sentiment on the expectation of “eternity” appears (or had appeared?) also in Fairfax’s brief poem “Upon Appleton House.”⁹⁶ But Marvell perhaps imagined already in the early 1650s his patron’s eventual return to public political life. The limits of “pastoral perfection” they explored in their writings may then have reminded Fairfax and Marvell both of that most “fearful possibility” of all: following political disappointment into reclusion, and so removing one’s voice from the exchange of “words and persuasion” that Arendt considered as the most valuable currency in a *polis*.⁹⁷

The bitterness of partisanship drove Fairfax to retirement, but a different sort of politics invited his return. In exploring political themes, and even in reflecting on his self-imposed solitude, Fairfax’s translation practice resembles his older miscellany text in its attention to competing claims to authority. That document reveals Fairfax’s own attempts to “navigate [his] way through the . . . welter of claim and counter-claim, plot and counter-plot, conspiracy and counter-conspiracy”⁹⁸ that featured so prominently in print and manuscript publication. However, his Psalter ultimately achieved a resolution that his miscellany had not. In questioning the delusion of retreat and further assessing the circumstances that led to his retirement, Fairfax in his devotional writing represented a moderated political settlement. In this effort he plainly conceded ground to those who had deposed Charles, and conceded right to their chief. But he also maintained the credit of the vanquished party. In addition to their devotional quality, Fairfax’s psalm translations also represent Fairfax’s interest in

⁹⁵ Andrew Marvell, “Upon Appleton House,” ll. 71-72.

⁹⁶ Brotherton Library MS Lt. 105, p. 409: “Think not O man that dwells herein / This house a stay, but as an inn, / which (for a season) fitly stands / in way to one not made with hands / But if a time here thou take rest / yet think eternity’s the best.”

⁹⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 26-27.

⁹⁸ Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, “Rethinking the public sphere,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, eds. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 22.

rapprochement as much as they do his reaction to partisan differences. The range of this synthesis of Interregnum politics reflects Fairfax's own hope that a private, religious duty of discernment might inform his public, civic duty.

The Psalter's framing of the moderate politics that could support a return to public life derives in part from a distinct series of inflections that suggests Fairfax's sympathy toward opposition. Despite the frequent embellishment of military images already present in the source texts,⁹⁹ the Fairfax Psalter recast or omitted the Psalter's darker scenes of violence and of revenge. What has been described as the book's "most violent curse"¹⁰⁰ – "he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked" – does not appear in Fairfax's translation. Nor do other such strong statements of retribution or violence. Fairfax also omitted "I will beat down his foes" (Psalm 89), and omitted "given the necks of mine enemies: that I might destroy them that hate me" (Psalm 18). Such translation practice suggests the translator's reluctance to take on this vocabulary. Marvell later complained of the partisan rage that "no weapon-salve but of the moss that grows on an enemies skull could cure."¹⁰¹ In his characteristic practice of metrical translation, Fairfax resisted the very same model of oppositional discourse. His emendations to other psalms seem to have been informed by the translator's ambivalence towards his recent military career, even if only in his resisting a comfortable categorization of his opponents as "enemies."

⁹⁹ In the Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 40 text, Fairfax added references to the implements and technologies of war, such as to "Ramparts strong" (Psalm 130; p.342), helmets (Psalm 140; p. 362); references to swords are often embellished, whether they are "newly whet" (Psalm 64; p. 141), "cutting" (Psalm 144; p. 373), or "devouring" (Psalm 144; p. 373). Death is characterized as a "grim sergeant" (Psalm 33; p. 71).

¹⁰⁰ Hamlin, *Psalms Culture*, 48.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Marvell, *An Account of the Growth of Popery*, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Annabel Patterson, Martin Dzelzainis, Nicholas von Maltzahn, and N. H. Keeble (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 2.238.

Fairfax's expressions of remorse may undermine his reputation as champion of the parliament's cause. Where he subdued notes of revenge and violence in the Psalter, he also amplified in his renderings the psalmist's own descriptions of guilt. His frequent inflections and emendations to this end combine as Fairfax cast himself as a figure repentant for his part in bringing about Charles I's execution. This sense of guilt may be discerned in the rendering of Psalm 89, which culminates in one of the clearest notes of self-condemnation in Fairfax's Psalter. The source, reading "they have reproached the footsteps of thy anointed," was turned into a much more specific and more personal scene: "thine anointed King's traduc'd by foes / But blest be God my wrongs thou knows."¹⁰² Here, the possibility of personal failings proves as real as the workings of "doom" or fate. Other emendations support this mood, where the translator amplified the terms of distress. In his translation of Psalm 88, Fairfax embellished the original source with added references to "sighs," "complaint," "cries," "deep groans."¹⁰³ His translation of Psalm 142 features a more elaborate scene of distress, representing "sighs," "tears," "groans," and "sad moans."¹⁰⁴ Considered collectively, these inflections could suggest the translator's discouragement with the political settlement after the regicide, and with what he perceived as his own direct contribution to that "fatal" outcome.

Although he questioned his military achievements upon reflection in retirement, Fairfax did not vilify the parliamentary cause in his political shading of Psalter materials. In these writings he explored post-partisan politics through what they might endorse as well as what they exclude. Several departures from source texts in Fairfax's metrical translation

¹⁰² Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 219.

¹⁰³ Psalm 88; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, pp. 209-212.

¹⁰⁴ Psalm 142; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, pp. 366-368.

attest to his support for Cromwell's political authority after the regicide. One rendering seems an affirmation of populist political sentiment, where "For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the just men" is turned in verse to "the wicked in his strength doe boast, but he / when good men stands upright shall outed be."¹⁰⁵ Elsewhere Fairfax pointedly avoided terms confirming filial succession, and so perhaps aimed to justify an England without a king. The psalmist's request in Psalm 72, "Give... thy righteousness unto the king's son," is rendered more indeterminately by Fairfax, as "justice grant to him that doth succeed."¹⁰⁶ Fairfax's correction to his own line in Psalm 95 reveals the same intent. There, he emended "A King no King else can parallel" to read "A King none else can parallel."¹⁰⁷ That Fairfax expanded the scriptural texts in his Psalter to reflect a break from monarchy suggests his belief that alternative routes for succession were evidently worth testing. Even so, a king's failure might result from factors other than his own inability or incompetence. Where one source of Psalm 107 reads "he poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness," Fairfax's version of these lines condemns evil counselors instead: "He princes to contempt did bring / In counsels dark th'are carried in."¹⁰⁸ These lines may anticipate the sympathy for Charles on display in Fairfax's *Short Memorials*.¹⁰⁹

Recent scholarship finds significance in Fairfax's choice to translate the medieval fable of Barlaam and Josephat, "a study in malign, but not irredeemable, kingship."¹¹⁰ Such interests correspond with Fairfax's own retreat from partisan turmoil (malignancy), and then

¹⁰⁵ Psalm 37:17; Geneva translation; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 81.

¹⁰⁶ Psalm 72:1; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 161.

¹⁰⁷ Psalm 95; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 233.

¹⁰⁸ Psalm 107:40; Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 279.

¹⁰⁹ See Thomas Fairfax, *Short memorials of Thomas, lord Fairfax*, ed. Brian Fairfax (London, 1699).

¹¹⁰ Phillip Major, "Jumping Josaphat," *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 July 2006, 15.

his later return to public life to promote and even to preserve a new king (redemption). In late 1659, Fairfax chose again to “appear in arms,”¹¹¹ at this time in support of General George Monck’s plan to begin a transition between the protectorate government that had fallen to Richard Cromwell (son of Oliver) and a restored monarchy. Fairfax’s role in this work was “critical,” even though the Restoration would not likely have been “impossible” without his assistance.¹¹² The reflective, deliberative textual work of Fairfax’s devotional writing, undertaken in the decade between his retirement and his return to arms, recalls Hamlin’s identification of the psalm as “a theodicy, a deliberate thinking through of the problem of evil in the world.”¹¹³ In their confrontation of political as well as spiritual concerns, the characteristic features and lacunae of Fairfax’s metrical translation constituted a similar “thinking through” both of matters of guilt and providence, and of public and private responsibility. The fruits of this labour may prove in Fairfax’s ready return to politics once the way forward presented itself: “having refused to serve in the parliaments of 1653, 1654 and 1656, at the first opportunity after Cromwell’s death, Fairfax terminated his political retirement and returned to the House of Commons.”¹¹⁴ Fairfax’s return to public political life at this time was motivated by his “hopes for healing, settlement and a broad, inclusive government.”¹¹⁵

Such “settlement” and “inclusion” depended upon preserving the range of political interests and possibilities that emerged during the English Civil War, although not the partisan divisions that determined its outcome. Monck himself shared a similar interest, and

¹¹¹ A 1657 report to Protectorate spymaster John Thurloe cites Fairfax’s claim “that he knew not but he might choose ... to appear in arms on behalf of the people of these nations.” Qtd. in Hopper, *Black Tom*, 118.

¹¹² Hopper, *Black Tom*, 120.

¹¹³ Hamlin, *Psalm Culture*, 123.

¹¹⁴ Hopper, *Black Tom*, 118

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 121.

on the eve of the Restoration he urged the recalled Rump Parliament to “fill itself up swiftly and to protect the nation from both royalists and religious radicals.”¹¹⁶ An occasional poem from Fairfax’s hand likely dating to this year reflects his own reluctance to embrace Charles II as an image of Charles I, and encapsulates the range of his Psalter’s theodicy. This brief poem proves no simple poem of praise to the returning monarch. It addresses not Charles II but “the Horse which his Majesty rode upon at his Coronation,” which had been presented to him as a gift from Fairfax:

Hence then despair! My hopes why should it bury
Since this brave steed bred first was in my [e]querry
Now thus advanced with highest honours laden
While his that bred him, on by most men’s trodden.¹¹⁷

The final four lines centre on the irony underlying the scene, one that Fairfax himself had designed. The horse chosen for Charles II descended from “Chesnutt,” the horse Fairfax himself rode in his decisive defeat of Charles I at the battle of Naseby:

But ‘tis no matter since th’ hast got th’ Advance
Then please the Royal Rider with thy prance
So may thy Fame much raise thy Praises higher
Than Chesnutt that begot thee or Bridladore his sire. (ll. 4-8)

Fairfax’s presumably earlier poem on Charles I’s death asked that the “fatal” day be “blotted out,” and forgotten.¹¹⁸ However, in the later, “Coronation” poem, memory of the old king

¹¹⁶ “Monck, George, first duke of Albemarle (1608–1670),” Ronald Hutton in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, September 2012.

¹¹⁷ “Upon the Horse which his Majesty rode upon at his Coronation,” ll. 1-4; Brotherton Library MS Lt 105, p. 409.

¹¹⁸ “On the Fatal Day, Jan. 30 1649,” Bodleian MS Fairfax 40, p. 600.

and his defeat is preserved, even as the new king is crowned – one cannot be had without the other. Fairfax’s political writing and thought then take on a moderate, and even a post-partisan, quality because he questioned both the rebel and the royal cause, fashioning a broader conception of the shared history, and even the irony (not just the antagonism) that existed between England’s returning king, his government, and his people.

II THOMAS HALL, PUBLIC RHETORIC, AND POST-PARTISAN POLITICAL MYTHOLOGY

The political tumult that followed the English Civil War proved to one contemporary critic that an abundance of public political writing did not in itself necessarily promote public learning and literacy. “Although the complaint be just,” as he wrote,

that the Presses were never more oppressed with frivolous
filthy Pamphlets, to the great dishonour of our Nation in the
sight of the Nations round about us; yet of such Books as tend
to facilitate learning (in this way of Grammatical Translation)
there is a scarcity, if not a deficiency.¹¹⁹

This critic – parson and schoolmaster Thomas Hall (1610-1665) – came in his own writing to redress such deficiency. His complaint of presses “oppressed” did not refer only to the quantity of contemporary publications: in that year the number of titles printed was at its lowest level in a decade.¹²⁰ Hall reflected instead upon a notable shift in the output of

¹¹⁹ Thomas Hall, *Wisdoms Conquest* (1651), sig. A2^{r-v}

¹²⁰ See Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 163-165. For a visual representation of publication levels as measured by the number of titles in the English Short Title Catalogue, see Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 16.

London's presses between 1630 and the early 1640s, where publishers and readers appear to have privileged "short and highly topical" publications over longer, more discursive works.¹²¹ These conditions constituted "oppression" to Hall because "in this great proliferation of titles, the combination of press freedom and constraint shortened the average publication and anything over a sheet or two became harder to place."¹²² The presses were thus largely closed to those who sought to publish more substantial works. This "significant" – albeit lamentable – "change in the nature of public discourse"¹²³ subsided in the late 1640s, but its legacy was visible enough to invite Hall's response in the Interregnum. That political problems were often attributed to deficiencies in public literacy made the kind of instruction he offered ever the more needful.

In response to such need, Hall published politically-charged grammatical translations of selections from the poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, titled *Wisdoms Conquest* (1651)¹²⁴ and *Phaetons Folly* (1655).¹²⁵ Hall emphasized in these works the importance of public citizens obtaining an education in rhetoric that they may bring to bear on the ongoing pamphlet debates over the nation's religion and politics. He also addressed problems of representation and misrepresentation that had arisen from the partisan discourse of the revolutionary

¹²¹ See D. F. McKenzie, "Printing and Publishing, 1557-1700: Constraints on the London Book Trades," in *The Cambridge History of the Book. Volume IV 1557-1695*, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 561: "Most [of the Thomason tracts] are short and highly topical pamphlets which, while adding up to an impressive number of titles, did not necessarily increase the actual volume of production... and being as they were ephemeral, their day's life probably demanded only a small edition."

¹²² Nicholas von Maltzahn, "John Milton: the Later Life (1641-1674)," in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 34: "there were few substantial publications that in thoroughness, system, and elaboration resembled the works Milton had spent the previous decade and more studying."

¹²³ McKenzie, "Printing and Publishing, 1557-1700: Constraints on the London Book Trades," 561.

¹²⁴ Thomas Hall, *Wisdoms Conquest or, an Explanation and Grammaticall Translation of the Thirteenth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, Containing that Curious and Rhetoricall Contest Between Ajax and Ulysses, for Achilles Armour* (1651).

¹²⁵ Thomas Hall, *Phaetons Folly, or, The Downfal of Pride Being a Translation of the Second Book of Ovids Metamorphosis, Paraphrastically and Grammatically* (1655).

period. In particular, Hall's latter pamphlet responded to problems presented by such discourse. By questioning the already rich association between Charles's kingship and Ovid's tale of Phoebus and Phaeton,¹²⁶ Hall invited his readers to reconsider a myth whose reception had hitherto been dominated by partisan interpretation, encouraging a reading practice that permitted them to resist the claims of "ambitious, ignorant men, who affect great power"¹²⁷ – whichever party they represented.

Hall envisioned the promotion of public education as a work of many hands, even if they were then as yet only too few who undertook it. What great result, he imagined, could be achieved if only "some of those thousands in the Kingdom which have both time and parts might do an acceptable service to the public to set on the work" of setting into English the texts of the "many useful authors" who yet languished "untranslated"?¹²⁸ Several impressive endorsements in Hall's own pamphlets emphasized the importance of such works. For one, "the Renowned Dr. Usher" attested to "the very great blessing to be hoped for, both to Church and Common Wealth," if such aids to reading be "rightly put in practice."¹²⁹ In addition to such support, Hall also acknowledged in *Wisdoms Conquest* and *Phaetons Folly* his debt to the fifteenth-century Italian humanist Raphael Regius – whose own "central pedagogical interest [was] the art of rhetoric."¹³⁰ Regius's politically-focused model of rhetorical instruction was intended to support public citizenship through the development of what Milton later described as "minds worthy to enjoy" the civil liberties they possessed.¹³¹ Although based on schoolroom practice, the qualities that Hall encourages

¹²⁶ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Elmville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Book II.

¹²⁷ Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, 22.

¹²⁸ Hall, *Wisdoms Conquest*, sig. A2^v-A3^r.

¹²⁹ Hall, *Wisdoms Conquest*, sig. A4^v.

¹³⁰ Kathryn McKinley, *Reading the Ovidian Heroine: "Metamorphoses" Commentaries 1100-1618* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 128.

¹³¹ John Milton, *The Judgment of Martin Bucer* (1644), YP 2.438.

in his pupils have significant application in the political sphere as well. They recall the Regian model of pedagogy where rhetoric “was as much a political, as literary, art,” and so “intended to equip [students] to be servants of the state.”¹³² Facility with language is thus seen to permit such service, whether that owed by a ruler or by a citizen.

Hall advertised the triumph of this ethos in the section of *Metamorphoses* that provided the basis for his first published translation in *Wisdoms Conquest*. His chosen scene, where Ajax and Ulysses “plead their cause” before an “Assembly,”¹³³ appears to have been informed by the contemporary culture of animadversion that brought controversies before the eyes of an adjudicating parliament (or an adjudicating public). Hall noted approvingly of Agamemnon’s decision to leave judgment to this assembly rather than to take it on himself, this “to avoid the stroke of Envy.”¹³⁴ Turning to the claimants, Hall passed his own judgment on their respective styles of speaking, as well as the causes that motivated them. In outlining the “Substance of the Fable,”¹³⁵ Hall made Ulysses out to be not only an excellent orator, but also an exemplary public citizen. Contrary to Ajax, who “*in the language of a Soldier boasts of his own valour,*” Ulysses employed his “rhetoric” – not mere “language”, as Ajax was said to use – to show “*how by his Counsel and Courage... he had been helpful to the Common-wealth of Greece, &c.*”¹³⁶ Revisiting *Metamorphoses* as a manual of statecraft, Hall’s exposition of “the Morall and use” of the story of Ajax and Ulysses confirmed the lasting relevance of Regius’s preoccupations in seventeenth-century England: “The scope and drift of this Fable and fiction,” Hall concluded in his introduction to the text,

¹³² McKinley, *Reading the Ovidian Heroine*, 128.

¹³³ Hall, *Wisdoms Conquest*, 2.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

“is, to show the folly of those, who prefer Strength before Policy, Warriors before Scholars, and Weapons before Wisdom.”¹³⁷

This definition of statesmanship derived from Hall’s own interest in rhetorical excellence as well as from his reaction to the violence of civil war – the culmination of which proved a failure to achieve the potential of “Rhetoricke,” “Wisdom,” and “Eloquence,” which virtues Ulysses exemplified.¹³⁸ They also supported Hall’s efforts as schoolmaster and clergyman. In his duties as the former, he was surely conscious of proper eloquence and style, while the latter role required him to be aware of the vocation or calling behind them. Hall maintained that successful rhetoric could only be that which is properly motivated – whether it intended to support affairs of church or of state. In the same year that *Wisdoms Conquest* was printed, Hall also published *The Pulpit Guarded* (1651), where he described the threat posed by public preachers whose eloquence was not backed by divine authority. These speakers amounted to no less than “false prophets” in his description. As Hall observed, “if every *Phaeton* that thinks himself able, may drive the Chariot of the Sun, no wonder if the world be set on fire.”¹³⁹ In terms both of preaching and of politics, Hall acknowledged the crucial connection between language and power.

By the time that Hall again took up the story of Phaeton in 1655, England’s political situation had shifted significantly. Many changes had occurred since the publication of *Wisdoms Conquest* (1651), and the months that preceded the publication of *Phaetons Folly* were especially lively. As one historian summarizes:

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³⁹ Hall, *The Pulpit Guarded* (1651), 13.

No one before the end of 1652 had plotted or even desired what actually happened in 1653: the forcible expulsion of the Rump by the army, its replacement by a pseudo-parliament nominated by the Council of Officers, and after that failed the establishment of a quasi-monarchy with Cromwell as head of state under a written constitution.¹⁴⁰

The publication of Hall's pamphlet followed not long after another political change: "in January 1655 [Cromwell] dissolved Parliament, and returned to rule by Ordinance, or decree."¹⁴¹ Correspondence and popular publications dating to this year show a heightened pitch in the discussions of Cromwell taking up the crown.¹⁴²

These new political realities invited new critical comment from England's political observers, and especially from those who now saw in Cromwell's political career vestiges of the tyranny alleged of Charles by his opponents in parliament. From its outset, *Phaetons Folly* was situated deliberately within plain view of the contemporary political context at the midpoint of the Interregnum. The book collector George Thomason dated his copy of the pamphlet to 20 December 1655, a date that suggests the pamphlet's publication was intended to coincide with the Protectorate's anniversary, 16 December.¹⁴³ This timing confirms that Hall's intentions in *Phaetons Folly* were motivated as much by politics as they were by his love for Ovid and good grammar. The pamphlet may have been penned in response to claims

¹⁴⁰ Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 523.

¹⁴¹ Angus Stroud, *Stuart England* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 136.

¹⁴² See Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645-1661* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 110-112.

¹⁴³ See Edward Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate: Culture, Politics, and Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 103. Holberton's analysis addresses Marvell's poem "The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector." *Phaetons Folly* coincides with the second anniversary.

that issued after Cromwell's dissolution of parliament "without warning"¹⁴⁴ earlier that same year. One poetic satire likely dating to 1654 or 1655 invoked the figure of Phaeton – long associated with Charles – in reference to Cromwell,¹⁴⁵ who by that time resembled a king in all but crown. Commenting on a riding accident that befell Cromwell in November 1654,¹⁴⁶ this poet observed that

Some slander my Lord with a bugbear word

That he did like Phaeton drive.

But his Lordship tried 6 horses to guide

And Phaeton had not five.

That this well-established strain of monarchical critique linking Phaeton with Charles I now reappeared in opposition to the Protector perhaps gave Hall cause to renew the earlier claims in *Wisdoms Conquest* for the importance of public literacy. In *Phaetons Folly* he wrote directly in support of its improvement.

Ovid may seem an unlikely support to the parson Hall for such work, given that the Root and Branch Petition had singled out the Roman poet from among "the swarming of lascivious, idle, and unprofitable books and pamphlets, play-books and ballads... which

¹⁴⁴ "Cromwell, Oliver (1599–1658)," John Morrill in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2008. The dissolution did not violate the terms of the Instrument of Government. Its apparent suddenness owed to Cromwell's claim that "the reference to five months as the minimum duration of a parliament in the 'Instrument' meant five lunar and not calendar months."

¹⁴⁵ An untitled version of the poem appears in Bodleian MS. Rawl. Poet 26, fol. 153r. In print publication, presumably later, it is titled "A jolt on Michaelmas day 1654."

¹⁴⁶ See Laura Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645-1661* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 95: "Cromwell's riding accident ... provoked a representational as well as a political crisis, underscoring the malleability and vulnerability of the protectoral image. In contrast to the early protectoral ceremony that had displayed Cromwell ... as a returning Caesar, the riding accident appeared to be an anti-triumph. The public participated actively in offering (mostly negative) interpretations of the event."

came out at the dissolving of the last Parliament.”¹⁴⁷ But that Hall endorsed the poet so wholeheartedly – he claimed in one place that “I may call it, not *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*, but *Ovid’s Master-piece*”¹⁴⁸ – may suggest something of his own status as a moderate. Granted, as a clergyman with a passion for pagan poetry, and a Presbyterian with Puritan leanings, Hall perhaps had some right to a conflicted existence. But in terms of doctrine rather than those of tradition, Hall’s priorities more strongly suggest his having been gifted with what might be described as an accommodating spirit. Hall sought out and articulated his vision of a balance between “Moral and Divine” in aiming for a proper settlement between the affairs of church and those of state, “these two pillars of Magistracy and Ministry.”¹⁴⁹ Ovid’s verse then proved of little concern when compared to “those Heresies and confusions into the Nation, which have overspread it like a leprosy.”¹⁵⁰ Threats to England’s government and piety were contemporary and immediate, and not posed from the depths of antiquity. Hall answered concerns among the godly with the argument that “’tis not Learning, but the want of it which breeds errors and heresies.”¹⁵¹ In his memoir Hall associated susceptibility to persuasion as a sign of ill favour or of weakness. There he recalled his tutor at Oxford as having “wasted his body and brain (with what I shall not say) [and having] grown so idle and sottish that every sophistry would baffle him. Not long after he died of consumption.”¹⁵² Fitness to withstand sophistry depended upon the kind of rhetorical facility that Hall

¹⁴⁷ “The Root and Branch Petition” (1640), in Henry Gee and William John Hardy, ed., *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 537-45. See also Don M. Wolfe, “Introduction,” *YP* 1.63.

¹⁴⁸ Hall, *Wisdoms Conquest*, sig. A5^v

¹⁴⁹ Hall, *The Beauty of Magistracy* (1660), sig. A3^r

¹⁵⁰ Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, 3.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A2^v.

¹⁵² Qtd. in Powicke, ““New Light on an Old English Presbyterian and Bookman,” 170.

celebrated in *Wisdoms Conquest*, and promoted more patiently in his later publication, *Phaetons Folly*.

The story of Phaeton was at that time particularly fraught with “confusions” and perhaps also “errors,” if not quite with “heresies.” Hall’s selection was deft and well-informed: he thus took on one of the most aggressively politicized classical tales of his generation. His own reading responded to the lively undercurrent in public poetry, pamphlets, and political commentary that had established deep cultural associations between Ovidian characters and contemporary figures in English politics. But in its approach and intent Hall’s treatment of the story stands apart from the clamour of representation that already surrounded it. He instead presented an account of Ovid’s fable removed from its partisan associations, and he made no obvious attempts to settle its shifting associations by definitively associating a specific political figure or group – whether Charles, Cromwell, or parliament – with the over-reaching Phaeton, or with his father, the reluctantly permissive Phoebus. Thus avoiding the more targeted, accusatory register to which partisan discourse so often resorted, Hall framed the fable in a way that applied across the partisan divide. His pamphlet *Phaetons Folly* thus presented a reading practice that mitigated the political spin of sophisticated popular representation, and that attempted to instill in the reader some more general skill of discernment and sense of political awareness.

The rhetorical contest over Phaeton as it proceeded in Civil-War polemic likely urged Hall to offer his own corrective, but the controversy has deep roots in the political mythmaking of an earlier generation. That association between the story of Phaeton and Stuart politics was in some ways Charles’s birthright, arising from a strain of royal allegory dating back to the sixteenth century. In art and literature Queen Elizabeth “played many

parts,” but among them was that of “Cynthia,” a Greek goddess associated with the moon.¹⁵³ Aemilia Lanyer described her in this way at the outset of her poem “Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum.”¹⁵⁴ But once Elizabeth was succeeded by James, a new representation rose. King James stood in the cultural imagination as the figure of the Sun. His association with the “Sun King” was not long in the making: the image was “lavished on James I on his first progress southward from Scotland to become King of England in succession to Elizabeth.”¹⁵⁵ If James was viewed thus – a Phoebus in his own right – then the figure of Phaeton, the Sun’s son, might have fallen justly to the prince Charles.

Naturally, the king Charles saw himself differently. When questions of political power arose at the end of his personal rule, he relied on the same mythic vocabulary to state his claim to authority. However, through the Lord Keeper John Finch’s opening remarks before the Short Parliament, Charles promoted his better likeness as Phoebus, not Phaeton. In his speech, Finch framed the relationship between king and parliament first with reference to the Old Testament ark of the covenant, and then to Ovid’s tale:

His Majesty’s kingly resolutions are seated in the Ark of his sacred breast;
and it were a presumption of too high a nature for any Uzzah uncall’d to
touch it.

Yet his Majesty is now pleased to lay by the shining beams of Majesty as
Phoebus did to Phaeton that the difference betwixt sovereignty and
subjection might be discerned, but might not barre you of that filial

¹⁵³ “Elizabeth I (1533–1603),” Patrick Collinson in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2012.

¹⁵⁴ “Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum,” ll. 1-4: “Sith *Cynthia* is ascended to that rest / Of endless joy and true Eternitie, / That glorious place that cannot be exprest / By any wight clad in mortalitie.” See *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer; Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, ed. Susanne Woods (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 51.

¹⁵⁵ Eran Shalev, “A Republic Amidst the Stars: Political Astronomy and the Intellectual Origins of the Stars and Stripes,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (2011): 40.

freedom of access to his person and councils; Only let us beware how with
the son of Achimania we aim at the guiding of the chariot.¹⁵⁶

Both allusions warned the MPs gathered in the Short Parliament about the consequences of reaching for what was not rightfully theirs. When that parliament failed, Charles once again used language recalling Ovid's fable to explain the present circumstances of that newly disturbed balance of power. He complained in print that the gathered MPs "have taken upon them to be the Guiders and Directors."¹⁵⁷ These early attempts by Charles to control the fable's moral signification suggest his understanding of the requirements of a political culture that required "princes and protectors ... to make their words and images the dominant ones."¹⁵⁸ The lasting controversy that developed over the image of Phaeton would prove, however, that this dominance Charles desired was not easily achieved.

Whichever role more properly belonged to him as the second Stuart king, later writing complicated, and sometimes overturned, the association that Charles sought to establish before and after the Short Parliament. An active exchange of claim and counter-claim invited Hall's later reaction to the resulting partisan impasse. As they proceeded and proliferated further, these writings demonstrated the "instability of meanings"¹⁵⁹ and of political associations in the period. One politicized allusion to Ovid's fable appears in a brief pamphlet titled *The Poets Recantation, Having Suffered in the Pillory the 2 of April, 1642 With a Penitent Submission of All Things That Have Been Written Against the King and State* (1642), where the offending poet, John Bond, compared his actions with those of

¹⁵⁶ See Esther Cope, ed., *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977), 116.

¹⁵⁷ Charles I, *Declaration* (1640), 50.

¹⁵⁸ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603- 1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xvi.

¹⁵⁹ Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, 46.

Phaeton. Having, as he wrote, “been too saucy in my Quill,”¹⁶⁰ he conceded that “‘Tis not expedient that a Vulgar eye, / Should gaze upon superiour *Maiestie*.”¹⁶¹ “Was Phaeton too bold,” he asked, “into the ayre,”

Whose thoughts aspir'd, to sit in *Phoebus* Chayre?

As rash, as temerarious then was I

Who touched *Charles* his *Wayne* too loftily.¹⁶²

Bond’s terms in the closing line defined his ill-chosen subject as one well beyond reach. The “wayne” referred to the chariot in Ovid’s fable, one that was rightfully driven only by the king. But the phrase “Charles his Wayne” referred also to the constellation known as “Charleswain.” In the time of Ovid, the constellation was known as “the freezing Bear,” and in his account this was the first constellation annihilated by the careening chariot once Phaeton undertook his fatal ride.¹⁶³ Hall also referred to this constellation in his translation of the passage, where “cold Charles-Wane waxed hot with the beams of the Sun.”¹⁶⁴ Other contemporary verses confirm the association between Charles and Phoebus using astrological terms. John Rous recorded in his diary the poem “On the dissolution of the short parliament of 1640,” whose anonymous author asks of the dissenting MPs “will you harm, / And pluck the sun from Heaven that makes you warm?”¹⁶⁵ A poem appearing in the Fairfax miscellany similarly asks of the parliamentarians “will none but *Sol*'s own Chair, please your desire? / Take heed bold Stars you’ll set the world on fire.”¹⁶⁶ Thus political opposition to a

¹⁶⁰ John Bond, *The Poet’s Recantation, Having Suffered in the Pillory the 2 of April, 1642 with a Penitent Submission of All Things That Have Been Written Against the King and State* (1642), 2.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁶² Bond, *The Poet’s Recantation*, 4.

¹⁶³ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 29.

¹⁶⁴ Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, 35.

¹⁶⁵ Rous, *Diary*, 89.

¹⁶⁶ Anon., “An invitation to arms,” Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 71, pp. 71-2.

king was represented as upsetting a natural order: “th’ inferior orbs aspire & doe disdain / to move at all unless they may obtain / the highest room in Charles his waine.”

Contemporary historical comparisons between Charles and earlier English kings further perpetuated the association between Phoebus and Charles. Edward Chamberlayne, a “Dr of *Laws* and Fellow of the *Royal Society*,” invoked Phaeton in *The Present War Parallel’d, or, a Brief Relation of the 5 years Civil Wars of Henry the third* (1647). His proves a sidelong approach to connecting the ill-fated charioteer with England’s ill-fated monarch. First, he compared Charles with Henry III through a description of the earlier king’s own struggle with parliament:

When the King saw there was no other remedy, he throws himself into the bosom of his people for relief, and advise in Parliament, where they undutifully... outbrave him publicly, with a Catalogue of all the mistakes, and all the mis-fortunes of his former government; which coming to the peoples ears soon stole away their hearts, and alienated their affections from their Sovereign, and left him wholly to the mercy and will of his Parliament.¹⁶⁷

At this point in the account Chamberlayne recalled Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, observing that Henry III’s parliament, once

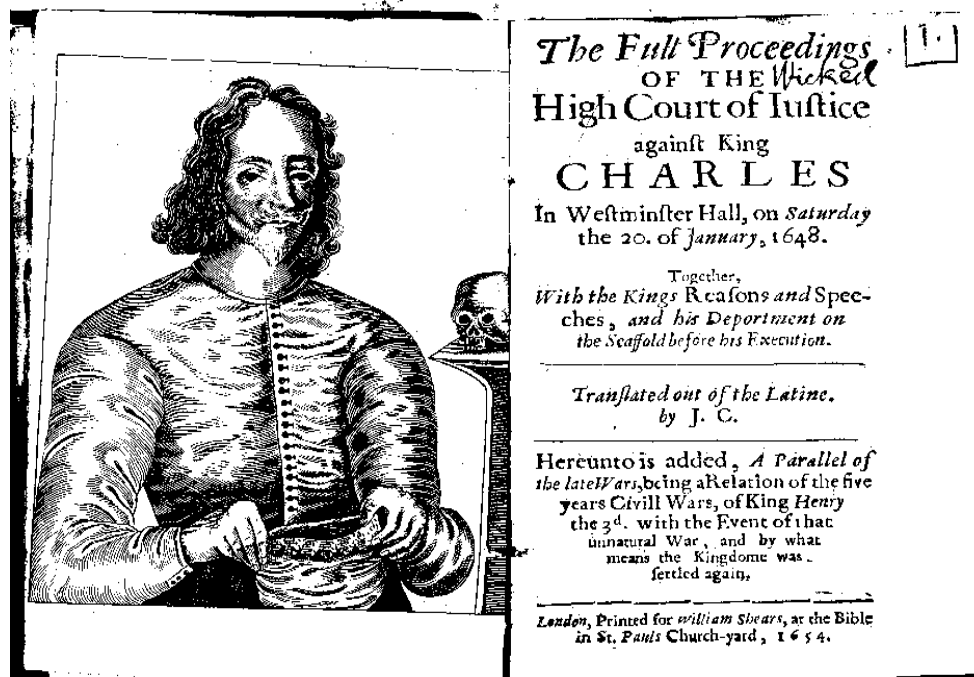
sensible hereof, and that the reins of Government were now cast upon their necks, (like *Apollo’s* Horses, when *Phaeton* had the driving of them) ran violent by-courses, till they set the whole kingdom on fire.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Edward Chamberlayne, *The Present War Parallel’d, or, a Brief Relation of the 5 years Civil Wars of Henry the third* (1647), 1-2.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

Chamberlayne's comparison between Charles and Henry III also connected present fact and Ovid's fable. Charles was not explicitly vilified here through direct association with Phaeton, even though his were the hands that had failed to maintain their hold upon the "reins of Government." His credit in the account was owing to his placement there as a Phoebus figure, one in whose hands these reins rightfully belonged. Chamberlayne's implication thus condemned the opposing parliament, who – like "Apollo's Horses" – ignited the nation's strife.

The debate over Charles's allegorical significance as either Phoebus or Phaeton continued into the Interregnum, and broadened there also to include the character of Cromwell. The late king's posthumous reputation was bolstered in *The Full Proceedings of the High Court of Justice against King Charles* (1654), in which pamphlet was reprinted the Chamberlayne's sympathetic *Parallel*. These proceedings reveal significant sympathy toward Charles, as one reader's short but telling marginal comment to the pamphlet's title page attests:



(fig. 7)

This sentiment was surely provoked by the publication of *Eikon Basilike* (1649), in which document Phaeton's appearance resembled references in Chamberlayne's history and in the Lord Keeper's speech to the Short Parliament. Following his wry observations of how well the "young States-men... can Govern themselves," Charles wrote:

I should be very foolish indeed, & unfaithful in my Trust, to put the reins of both Reason and Government, wholly out of my own, into to their hands, whose driving is already too much like *Jehues*¹⁶⁹; and whose forwardness to ascend the Throne of Supremacy portends more of *Phaeton* then of *Phoebus*; God divert the Omen if it be his will...

The passage ends with a final note of defiance:

They may remember, that at best they sit in Parliament as My Subjects, not my superiors, called to be my Counselors, not Dictators. Their Summons extends to Recommend their advice, not to command my Duty.¹⁷⁰

From the royal perspective, the parliamentarians' reach for the "reins of Government" was just as misjudged as Phaeton's similar reach in Ovid's fable, and in both fable and in fact these efforts had led only toward destruction. Charles once again situated himself in the place of Phoebus, the chariot's rightful master: he could do nothing but watch as the consequences of misplaced ambition are realized.

Charles's lasting conviction of his rightful place in the fable, as well as his emerging status as a martyr following the publication of *Eikon Basilike*, were soon countered. In response to the pamphlet, Parliament commissioned a reply from Milton, who was by then

¹⁶⁹ See 2 Kings 9:20: "the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he driveth furiously."

¹⁷⁰ Charles I, *Eikon Basilike*, 71-2.

an experienced prose controversialist. His image-breaking tract *Eikonoklastes* (1649) directly reversed the king's allusion to Ovid's fable. For Milton, Charles was no passive observer or victim of civil strife, but instead proved himself to be quite busy

discontenting and alienating his Subjects at home, weakening and deserting his Confederates abroad, and with them the Common cause of Religion. So that the whole course of his reign by an example of his own furnishing hath resembl'd *Phaeton* more then *Phoebus*; and forc'd the Parliament to drive like *Jehu*; which *Omen* tak'n from his own mouth, God hath not diverted.¹⁷¹

This explicit identification of Charles with Phaeton reflected the king's failures in interpretation as well as in governance: it resulted, as Milton claimed, from Charles's own actions that parliament was "forc'd" to "drive like Jehu." Milton further condemned Charles for his Phaeton-like aversion to sound counsel: "When he heard that Propositions would be sent him, he sat conjecturing what they would propound; and because they propounded what he expected not, he takes that to be a warrant for his denying them."¹⁷² Phaeton appeared for but a moment within *Eikonoklastes*, as Milton's overturning of the allusion or "Omen" he encountered in *Eikon Basilike* was made to support his broader condemnation of the late king's failings in his own response.

Hall approached the story of Phaeton from within this context of lively, conspicuous, and longstanding discussion in various media of its allegorical significance. We cannot know for certain if Hall had encountered the writings of Chamberlayne, the opposing tracts of *Eikon Basilike* and *Eikonoklastes*, or the poetic lampoon of Cromwell in "A Jolt on

¹⁷¹ John Milton, *Eikonoklastes* (1649), 105.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

Michaelmas Day.”¹⁷³ Although none of these titles appears in Hall’s “Catalogue of those Books which are Given to the Library at Birmingham,” the list did not reflect the schoolmaster’s entire collection. In his will, he wrote of his books that “the best of them I give to the Library... the rest, being ordinary books and not so fit for so public a Library.”¹⁷⁴ By all accounts Hall was an avid reader, and one with a taste for controversy. Such interest, considered alongside his political views and the extremely wide reach of *Eikon Basilike* (which saw dozens of editions), suggest the likely possibility that Hall had encountered in his reading at least some aspects of the rhetorical contest over Phaeton.

Phaetons Folly provided a novel contribution to this discussion, but not by launching another salvo either for or against Charles. Hall did not aim in this work to settle the ongoing controversy over the fable by presenting an authoritative reading of its true political meaning. The pamphlet instead suggested its author’s retreat from – and perhaps also his tacit repudiation of – the preceding partisan debate over the fable’s signification. In guiding his reader through the lessons in Ovid’s tale about the nature of power and government, Hall named neither Charles nor Cromwell as an exemplary or a cautionary figure. Instead, he chose instruction over persuasion: aiming to end the controversy with a conclusive identification of Phaeton’s contemporary counterpart would have achieved less than would Hall’s fitting his readers to participate more capably in the greater arena of political controversy. This approach acknowledged the limitations of partisanship, whereby an author’s promotion of a purportedly definitive interpretation could leave little scope for the reader’s judgment. Hall resisted this tyranny of opinion presented by partisan discourse, which in its more extreme forms resembled a form of censorship inasmuch as it precluded

¹⁷³ Bodleian MS. Rawl. Poet 26, fol. 153^r.

¹⁷⁴ Qtd. in Powicke, “New Light on an Old English Presbyterian and Bookman,” 178.

independent thought and expression. But such “railing” against Cromwell grew more common in late 1655, when “the fortunes and morale of the protectorate were at their lowest ebb.”¹⁷⁵

Hall formally dedicated the work to a specific student, but he imagined his part as a teacher also to a wider audience. *Phaetons Folly* was dedicated “To the Ingenious Gentleman, and his much honored Friend, Col. Richard Greaves,”¹⁷⁶ who, as Hall observed, “God hath now blest ... with a Son.”¹⁷⁷ As he wrote, “I have dedicated these my labours unto you, for the benefit of your Heir, so soon as he shall be able to use them.”¹⁷⁸ But in his preface to the reader Hall imagined a much broader use for his pamphlet, which contributed “to the building of the house of God, in the land of my Nativity.” Hall’s contribution to this work of building promised to “make Learning easy, familiar, and common and if Learning be good, the more common it is, the better.”¹⁷⁹ To this end, Hall promoted a reading practice determined by conscience (“the house of God”) and duty to the state (“the land of my Nativity”).

The achievement of such reading practice relied upon a “candid reader” – one “free from bias; fair, impartial, just.”¹⁸⁰ This quality reflected the spirit with which Hall would have a reader approach a text, and especially one as overdetermined as the tale of Phaeton. Such “impartiality” necessarily avoided the shading and presumption of a particular partisan ideology. With such a goal in view, Hall offered to his own “candid readers” certain criteria or “rules” against which they might judge any who would be their teacher. Hall’s language

¹⁷⁵ Worden, *Literature and Politics*, 308; see also 310.

¹⁷⁶ Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, sig. A2r.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A3^v.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. A4^v-A5^r.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A2^{r-v}.

¹⁸⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition, s.v. “candid” #3.

in his exposition of this point reveals the wider application of his work. Here, he drew a parallel between the “Government” of a schoolroom and that of a kingdom:

in the Government of your Scholars keep a Medium; be not too familiar...
but carry an awe and majesty in your place, or you mar all... yet be not too
austere... Governors are called Fathers in Scripture, to put them in mind of
those tender affections which should be in them towards their inferiors.¹⁸¹

That governors are like schoolmasters or teachers, and that an author like Hall might undertake to teach publicly through pamphlet publication, acknowledges the political function of such writing. This implication recalls Milton’s anti-prelatical tract *Animadversions Upon the Remonstrants Defence* (1641), where he wrote in favour of he who would “not ... be a member, yet a teacher, and persuader of the Parliament.”¹⁸² Those on the periphery of parliament – whether bishops, in Milton’s view, or poets and polemicists, in Hall’s – may yet serve in such a fashion.

The marginal commentary that features alongside the text of Hall’s translation further confirms his interest in candid reading. *Phaetons Folly* may be considered post-partisan inasmuch as it treated the generalities, rather than the particulars, of English politics. Compared to the hasty work – hatchet-work, even – of much partisan rhetoric, Hall’s more patient reading reversed the “figure-ground” relationship between political commentary and classical text. Whereas *Eikonoklastes*, *Eikon Basilike*, and even *The Present Warre Parallel’d* all witness politics first, and then recall pertinent moments from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* to supply emphasis or support critique, Hall witnesses fable first, and determines a politically-oriented moral following his reading thereof. Through his

¹⁸¹ Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, sig. A3^r.

¹⁸² John Milton, *Animadversions Upon The Remonstrants Defence* (July 1641), YP 1.722.

analysis, Ovid's story of Phaeton served to "set forth the glory and beauty of Government: by the chariot is signified high power; by the horses, the common people; by the reins, Government."¹⁸³ Annotations throughout *Phaetons Folly* addressed each element in turn, and with Hall's characteristically acerbic plainness – "Government is a Divine thing, and therefore every green head is not fit for it."¹⁸⁴ But the author did reveal his modest sympathy for Phaeton. One marginal note reminded the reader that "The common people are not easily ruled, but are like to head-strong horses, which run away with the rider."¹⁸⁵ Phaeton could not hope to match their strength.

Hall's experiences during the civil wars gave him good cause to complain of mistreatment: Cavaliers twice had him imprisoned, and – even worse – twice sacked his library at King's Norton. Even so, the commentary he offered in *Phaetons Folly* resembles secularized wisdom literature more than it does an Ovidian jeremiad against the ills of Royalism. Hall's promotion of moderation in government runs throughout the pamphlet, beginning in the preface where he advised schoolmasters (and Governors) to "keep a Medium."¹⁸⁶ This ethos issues in marginal comments alongside translated passages later in the pamphlet. Phoebus's advice to Phaeton that he "drive not too low, nor yet too high" signified that "Governors must keep the mean and moderation in their government, as being neither too rigid, nor yet too light;"¹⁸⁷ his "admonitions" that Phaeton "spare the whip... but reign them hard" signified to Hall that "we learn how to rule the Vulgar... not with cruelty and rigor, but with a moderate gravity, and grave moderation: Mildness and Majesty do

¹⁸³ Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, 23.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁸⁵ Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, 20.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A3^r.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

adorn a Prince.”¹⁸⁸ These comments could have diverted the reader’s attention away from current politics, and promoted general advice both to authorities and to citizens who would judge those who seek to govern them. They also presented ancient “Morals” or truths to support the reader’s judgment of the political figures and opinions that he or she encountered in daily life.

Hall imagined readers who were subject to a stronger influence than the pressures of partisan representations. In his pamphlet *The Pulpit Guarded*, Hall claimed that “*public preaching, and expounding the Scriptures*” ought not to be undertaken “*without a call.*” According to this belief, right reading and speaking depend upon divine inspiration. In *The Beauty of Magistracy* (1660), Hall spoke of an “Ordination” by which man is “gifted” with “eternal Wisdom of the Father.”¹⁸⁹ Perhaps in response to such views, one of Hall’s contemporaries referred to him as “an enthusiast”¹⁹⁰ – no compliment to a Presbyterian. That he expected this lofty reading practice to apply also to secular texts followed Hall’s imagining of English society as supported equally by “these two pillars of Magistracy and Ministry.”¹⁹¹ The same constraints Hall placed on biblical reading or preaching therefore invited their application also to Ovid’s text. In this too, *Phaetons Folly* overturned partisan practice, as it sought to balance these twinned considerations, both “Moral and Divine”, rather than issue a critique of contemporary politics.

The specific instructions Hall gave here reflected his interest in allowing “divine” virtues to guide reading practice: “Get a meet and tractable spirit,” he wrote, for “the best Metals are the most ductible.” Such expectation stood in contrast to that for a “sacred

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹⁸⁹ Hall, *The Beauty of Magistracy* (1660), 14.

¹⁹⁰ See Powicke, “New Light on an Old English Presbyterian and Bookman,” 169.

¹⁹¹ Hall, *The Beauty of Magistracy*, sig. A3^r.

parliament” whose decision-making was directed by providence, or for right reading guided by revelation. The spirit of a “meet” or meek reader also opposed the self-conceit of those who Hall terms “opinionists”:

Nothing worse in a School-master than self-conceitedness, to think their own by-ways the best ways... a man had better be ignorant, than conceited of his own knowledge: for this opinion of knowledge keeps out true knowledge.

Not only Instruction, but Correction is lost of such Opinionists.¹⁹²

In this view the attitude of such “Opinionists” threatened political discord. It also wasted the potential benefits of popular publication that Hall hoped for after his long disappointment with the apparent flood of ephemeral publication that he faced. The meekness Hall proposed instead need not be a form of weakness, as it had been in the case of his own “sottish” and easily swayed Oxford tutor. It here connoted readers’ responsiveness to the guiding authorities available to them (especially textual ones), whether moral or divine, and willingness for forms of learning that exceeded a simple “consumption of other men’s ideas”¹⁹³ in favour of more applicable rationality and sensibility.

Through his translations of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Hall developed a hybrid political document: part handbook of government, part cautionary tale. It also served as a model and guide for authoritative reading and for rhetorically driven citizenship. His treatment of the stories of Ulysses, Ajax, and Phaeton framed them as devotional texts, and also as relevant secular treatises in their own right. As preacher and teacher, Hall acknowledged his duty as due to both Christian and classical text, which depend upon his awareness of the contemporary climate of representation and misrepresentation in the popular press. *Phaetons*

¹⁹² Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, sig. A3^v.

¹⁹³ Knights, “How rational was the later Stuart public sphere?”, 252.

Folly was thus doubly corrective: first to “rash, ambitious, inconsiderate Rulers,”¹⁹⁴ as a parable of good governance; and second to authors and readers beholden to partisan ideology, as an example of rightly read allegory offered in the face of numerous, competing allusions.

III CONCLUSION

Jesus’s warning in the gospels that “if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand” was echoed often during the 1640s in sermons and in more overt forms of political commentary.¹⁹⁵ In publications such as John Brinsley’s sermon *The healing of Israel’s breaches* (1642) and Edmund Calamy’s pamphlet *An indictment against England because of her self-murdering divisions* (1645) the verse sounded a stark warning of the results of civil war. But the prominence of a kingdom’s political divisions may overshadow the more private divisions of its inhabitants. The verses that follow the often-cited scriptural admonition sophisticate somewhat its message: both the “household” and the individual – albeit Satan, in this case – “cannot stand” if either “be divided against itself.” The Engagement oath responded to fears of such division, expressing the wish for subjects of integral, undivided loyalty.¹⁹⁶ For Fairfax, who initially resisted the Engagement, these three spheres of responsibility – kingdom, household, and individual – were lastingly connected. Political intrusions into Fairfax’s devotional writing were thus justified not only because, for

¹⁹⁴ Hall, *Phaetons Folly*, 2.

¹⁹⁵ Each of the three synoptic gospels records the saying: see Matthew 12:25, Mark. 3:24, and Luke 11:17.

¹⁹⁶ Even so, “it was ... difficult to see how any but the most cynical could now justify taking oaths of paying allegiance to the Commonwealth, the very power which had deprived the king of his life.” See Quentin Skinner, “Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy,” in *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement*, ed. G. E. Aylmer (London: Macmillan, 1972), 79.

Fairfax, English politics had long proved to be an intensely personal matter. His retirement writings reflected also his own concerted efforts to reconcile claims of “a merely *de facto* and usurping political power”¹⁹⁷ with the expectation of ordained magistracy.

It was Fairfax’s own connection to both sides of the dispute between king and parliament, and also to that between Cromwell and his critics, that permitted him to explore the terrain between their competing claims and creeds as fully as he did in his retirement writing. In so doing, he sought to counter a “fundamental weakness” of the Commonwealth government, namely that which “arose from what is perhaps a more generic feature of the sectarian mind, and especially of the radical intellectual in politics: a reluctance to compromise, or to settle for half a loaf.”¹⁹⁸ The day after Cromwell’s death, Thomas Fairfax wrote in a letter to his cousin James Chaloner that

Yesterday and this day hath seen great changes on the one the
Lord Protector died on the other his son the Lord Richard
proclaimed Prot but all things so quiet as if neither were
happened. The Lord look upon this nation that when we are
weak he may be our strength ‘til he hath perfected Peace &
Truth amongst us.¹⁹⁹

Although he did not take his seat in the Protectorate parliaments, “at the first opportunity after Cromwell’s death, Fairfax terminated his political retirement.”²⁰⁰ The unexpected “quiet” at this time may have suggested to Fairfax that the possibility of compromise was

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 79.

¹⁹⁸ G. E. Aylmer, “Introduction: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660”, in *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement*, ed. Aylmer, 28.

¹⁹⁹ British Library Add. MS 71448, fol. 36^r. Qtd. in Hopper, ‘*Black Tom*,’ 118.

²⁰⁰ Hopper, ‘*Black Tom*,’ 118.

then within reach, one whose terms he had long rehearsed in “the recreations of [his] solitude.”

For Hall, political progress depended on discourse, and a specific kind of discourse. He supported the Commonwealth, but he did not do so blindly. In fact, Hall’s greater allegiance may have been to its foundational principle of “people’s right to set limits to the power of governments.”²⁰¹ This belief led Hall in his writings to emphasize the rhetorical aspect of political participation, for the exercise of a “people’s right” over its government required its ability to determine what good government might look like. Although “guidance was necessary to show where truth lay amid the torrent of lies that accompanied each [election] campaign,”²⁰² the guidance Hall offered was intended to teach his readers how to respond to a wider range of partisan political representations – not only in the context of a formal election campaign. With such an aim in view, Hall remained fundamentally optimistic about the use of public political discourse, despite his darker view of the “oppression” of the presses during the Civil War. Even a tale as over-worn with competing significations as that of Phaeton could be redeemed through further reading and re-reading. Hall, like Fairfax, demonstrated that political participation could be supported meaningfully by reading practices that responded to representations from either side of the political spectrum, and even moderated their competing claims.

²⁰¹ Skinner, “Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy,” 80.

²⁰² Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, 179.

Conclusion: Revolutions Remembered

I trust, after so many experiences, your understandings are, by this time, more refined, than to be so grossly imposed upon.

A Caveat, for my Countrymen in General (1660)¹

In advance of elections to the Restoration parliament, London readers encountered the broadsheet *A Caveat, for my Countrymen in General* (1660), whose anonymous author ventured the cautiously optimistic statement quoted above. His comment acknowledged that the returning monarch would indeed preside over an altered public, one whose sensibilities had been lastingly altered – even “refined” – by the politics of the 1640s and ’50s. The political tumult of the revolution, as well as the literary public sphere that grew up around it, had done its work on the author’s countrymen. And whatever the “ebb and flow”² of the public sphere in mid-seventeenth century England, the political culture of the Restoration came to reveal “that many had accepted the normative value of the public sphere.”³ Charles

¹ Anon., *A Caveat, for my Countrymen in General, the Assessors and Collectors of Public Taxes, in Particular* (1660).

² Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*. ed. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 11: “the Restoration period, of course, did not always exhibit the feverish levels of public discussion characteristic of the 1640s and 1650s. The public sphere continued to ebb and flow.”

³ Steven Pincus, “The State and Civil Society in Early Modern England: Capitalism, Causation and Habermas’s Bourgeois Public Sphere,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*. ed. Lake and Pincus, 217.

II's "act of oblivion" could facilitate a transition between the old regime and the new, but it could not undo the lasting impression made upon those who had come through the revolution and its aftermath, those "children of the civil war."⁴ Their coming into their own in the 1660s changed London's political landscape.

That public opinion came in the Restoration to be taken for granted as a political force in its own right owed a great deal, as this study has argued, to earlier political and literary work that had established the legitimacy of political discussions. In particular, the efforts of politically-minded authors to instruct their readers, to acclimate them to partisanship, and to develop their awareness of the promise and perils of political discourse all provided such "experiences" as could fit citizen readers for productive participation in a wider public sphere. Readers had also been taught to handle political poetry "in a parliamentary way" through textual engagements that brought them into dialogue with other readers. It was this discursive work, a function of rhetoric, poetry, and media, that supported so crucially the more robust reading public of the Restoration, that "big, politically conscious electorate that could sway power first one way and then another."⁵

Public reason plainly had its detractors in the Restoration, just as it had in the 1640s. The author of the *Caveat* cautioned his readers that "Some Hotspurs will, perhaps, incite you to assert your Liberties by Tumults," and condemned such disorderly expression as a poor substitute for more deliberate political action: "Your Game is sure, if you lift yourselves, and will you venture it at Dice, among the Rooks?"⁶ This same vocabulary of hazard and chance had informed the political imagination in the "advice to a gamester" poetry that

⁴ Leo Hollis, *London Rising: the Men Who Made Modern London* (New York: Walker, 2008), 10.

⁵ J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England: 1675-1725* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 35: this was "a unique feature of English politics from 1660 to 1715 and, of course, is the reason for the vast proliferation of political propaganda of this period."

⁶ Anon., *A Caveat, for my Countrymen*.

greeted the return to parliament after Charles I's period of personal rule, but the author of the *Caveat* promoted alternative methods of political progress. Critics of public reason called into question the political discussions of "the fourth estate"⁷ by condemning that most popular Restoration institution, the coffeehouse:

In no coffee house I dabble
Where the rude rabble
Of trade & religion & bawdy doe gabble
There they sit like tan'd Jewes
And talk treason for news
And their lewd lying
Is the dirge of some kingdom that's dying.⁸

These venues grew in popularity after the Restoration, where they fostered a most active culture of political discussion based on the circulation of news, rumours, and cheap print. Samuel Butler considered the coffeehouses "a kind of Athenian school,"⁹ but not all observers celebrated them thus. *The Ale-Wives Complaint Against the Coffee-Houses* (1675) observed that "all the neighborhood swarm [to them] like bees, and buzz there like them too."¹⁰ Other sources acknowledge the lingering skepticism among High Churchmen of any public exercise of reason.¹¹ "The invocation of the public as arbiter was ... seen as

⁷ See Brian Cowan, "The Rise of the Coffeehouse Reconsidered," *The Historical Journal* 47 (2004), 44: "It could be argued that [the] successful rise of the coffeehouse offers strong evidence for the gradual acceptance of a permanent 'fourth estate.'"

⁸ British Library MS Add. 34, 352; p. 99.

⁹ Quoted in Steven Pincus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture," *The Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): 820.

¹⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 812.

¹¹ See Pincus, "Coffee Politicians Does Create," 829.

problematic” also more generally in the 1670s, when a climate of partisan publication threatened to “mislead the public.”¹²

Despite these anxieties, during the reign of Charles II public reason was properly “integrated into the formal and informal mechanisms of the state.”¹³ This later integration resembles the parliament’s establishment as an “institution” in the 1640s,¹⁴ just as the poetic critique of “rude rabble” in the coffeehouse issued in terms that prove interchangeable with those appearing in the satires of parliamentary speech from that earlier period. And just as it had been with the Commons, the coming of age of the public sphere was supported by politicians and authors who worked actively to safeguard it. Their writings preserved into the Restoration the memory of that revolutionary political moment and of all that had come as a result. England’s parliament already “had developed to an extraordinary degree an institutional memory.”¹⁵ The body of public political comment that had been growing since the 1640s gave opportunity to critics to prove their own powers of recollection, as well as their facility for “fashioning, distributing, and deploying public knowledge.”¹⁶ Recent criticism posits Andrew Marvell in particular as a figure well-placed and well-suited for such work, and one “in the vanguard of what we have come to think of as the Habermasian project of modernity.”¹⁷ He is further pictured “just where Habermas might have him: in the rush of political traffic and news, and in the coffee house, one of the defining social

¹² Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 381.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 3

¹⁵ Chris Kyle, *Theater of State: Parliament and Political Culture in Early Stuart England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 181.

¹⁶ Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 104.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 105.

institutions of emergent modernity.”¹⁸ But even at that early modern moment, Marvell seemed often to glance backwards to survey the specific political and literary work that had preceded it.

Beyond his awareness of and participation in Restoration media networks, and his “deep commitment to the ideal of a participatory public order,”¹⁹ Marvell may be even more fully imagined as a proto-Habermasian figure in his resisting the “degradation of reason” in this nascent early modern public sphere. Marvell spoke out against the deterioration in the sophistication and impact of political discourse as he encountered it both in public forums and in parliament. Such concern anticipates Habermas’s own interest in charting the “decayed modern public sphere.”²⁰ In his response to this issue, Marvell’s writings attest to the legacy of deliberative practices that had developed out of the parliamentary and public contexts of the 1640s and 1650s. In *The Rehearsal Transposed* (1672), Marvell wrote against clergymen who opposed the processes of representative government in seeking to secure their own influence over political matters, claiming that “the former Civil War cannot make them wise, nor his Majesties Happy Return, good natured... they seem to have contracted no *Idea* of wisdom, but what they learnt at School.”²¹ In the same pamphlet, he chided his opponent in prose controversy directly for proposing fallacies akin to those that kindled the regicide, then some “four and twenty years ago.”²² Such complaint reflects Marvell’s understanding of the influence that politics of England’s revolutionary decade had

¹⁸ Ibid., 106.

¹⁹ Hirst and Zwicker, *Orphan of the Hurricane*, 104.

²⁰ Mark Knights, “How Rational was the later Stuart public sphere?”, in Lake and Pincus, eds., *The Politics of the Public Sphere*, 252: “Habermas argues that reason was the characteristic of the first public sphere... It is the degradation of reason, he suggests, in favour of passive consumption of other men’s ideas, that characterises the decayed modern public sphere.”

²¹ Andrew Marvell, *The Rehearsal Transposed*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 1.162

²² Ibid., 1.167.

on the contemporary debates regarding public reason and private conscience. Like the author of the *Caveat*, Marvell imagined a readership made more sensible and more capable through the education it had received during the radical political changes of the 1640s and 50s. But his opponents, in his view, had failed to learn from the revolutionary decade and its aftermath.

This study has aimed to describe what took place in those intervening decades to bring about the alteration in the public sphere acknowledged in the Restoration. The ephemeral political writing that circulated in manuscript, which provides one of the main bodies of evidence for this study, provides a uniquely rich view of “revolutionary readers” in this period. These materials record what these readers were told to do by politically-minded authors, what these readers actually did as interpreters and copyists of political writing, and how their actions brought them into view and into more direct contact with other readers. In this way dissenting political perspectives were gathered together, and even set in dialogue. Granted, this textual forum for public political dialogue did not always proceed in an orderly or civil fashion. During the Interregnum, poets and critics actively reassessed the public literary culture. Some sought to ensure that partisan claims did not preclude the more productive forms of public political discourse that they imagined, a task that surely seemed ever the more urgent after the shock of the regicide. Their writings sought further to develop forms of media literacy that could help citizen readers navigate the wider sea of public opinion and face a vast multiplicity of competing political voices. Only in this “refined” state, as the *Caveat* put it, could the literary public sphere be expected to have positive political influence at Westminster.

But the longer story told here of England’s coming to terms with dissent begins in parliament. The unprecedented critical spirit that animated popular political writing during

the 1640s would scarcely have been possible without the renewed questioning of royal authority in the parliaments that met after Charles I's personal rule. There, MPs and attendant polemicists sought a balance between rhetorical deliberation and decision, and set new expectations for deliberative discourse as a legitimate means of directing political action in dissent from the Crown. Given the unique climate of religious and political reformation, as well as the developing political media, it was perhaps inevitable that the higher parliamentary standard that developed there came also to be applied to political discussions outside of Westminster. However complex its formation, this standard's broad influence led to a distinct growth in the capabilities and also the wider expectations of politically-minded readers. Andrew Marvell's much later efforts to preserve public politics along these lines in the 1670s perhaps anticipate the later "Whig campaign of the 1690s: to consolidate what was won in the Revolution, to push for what had not been accomplished, and to salvage what was in danger of being compromised away."²³ Such grand narratives of political progress have come under scrutiny in modern scholarship.²⁴ A more modest narrative is proposed here: that that quintessentially modern question "what is a public?" could only be answered – and answered well – once that earlier, and perhaps quintessentially Stuart, question had been first settled: "what is a parliament?"

²³ Annabel Patterson, "Marvell and Secret History," in *Marvell and Liberty*, ed. Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 33.

²⁴ Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England*, xvii: "There is a general folk-belief, derived largely from Burke and the nineteenth-century historians, that political stability is of slow, coral-like growth; the result of time, circumstances, prudence, experience, wisdom, slowly building up over the centuries. Nothing is, I think, farther from the truth."

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