HEADLONG HE RUNS INTO CIRCE’S SNARES: REPRESENTATION AND THE
RESTORATION ROYAL MISTRESS

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School-New Brunswick
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Program in History
written under the direction of
Professor Alastair Bellany
and approved by

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New Brunswick, New Jersey
October, 2012
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Dissertation Director:
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Headlong he runs into Circe’s snares: Representation and the Restoration Royal Mistress is an interdisciplinary study of the Restoration royal mistress. During the Restoration and for generations thereafter, the mistresses of Charles II (reigned 1660-1685) came to symbolize the court both for its apologizers and its critics. In becoming such symbols, the figures of these women were made to play a role within the many social, religious, and political concerns during this tumultuous period. In focusing upon representation, this dissertation does not look to recover the actual actions (political or otherwise) of royal mistresses such as Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland, Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, or Nell Gwyn – arguably the three most important and well-known of Charles’s many mistresses – but rather to see how the figures of these women were used to ‘think through’ contemporary issues. Bringing in various sources including poetry, libels, novels, histories, and medical books, this project examines how women were made to play central roles within political comment and rhetoric. In appropriating the faces and voices of women, the authors of these works demonstrate not only their opinions on English society and politics, but also the important underpinning
gendered assumptions which informed their uses of royal mistresses within their works, allowing this study to bring together political history, women’s and gender history, history of medicine, and the history of the body. This dissertation is structured thematically, and the hermeneutic nature of its analysis is not meant to be a definitive account of the meaning of its sources, but instead to investigate common themes among clusters of sources including the Ottoman ‘Turk’ and harem politics, diseased and reproductive female bodies, and the uses of the memory of royal mistresses into the early Hanoverian period. Such themes allow for the insertion of women onto the early modern English political stage.
Acknowledgements

Although I usually have a difficult time with the opening words of any writing project, big or small, these acknowledgements are special in that I simply do not know how to thank all of the people who have helped make this dissertation possible. So, I shall jump in and hope that I cover even a small number of the debts that I owe.

Thanks first goes to my committee, particularly my advisor Alastair Bellany. He pushed me, gently but resolutely, towards completion and always made me feel that reaching the finish line was possible. I knew each time I saw one of his comment bubbles on a chapter draft that I would have to grit my teeth and push myself harder, but that the chapter would be much better for it. I also thank him for allowing me to write this project in my own quirky style, and helping me to understand my own thought process better. Many thanks also go to my other committee members Jennifer Jones, Phyllis Mack, and Rachel Weil for their many insightful comments, questions, and suggestions on my work.

I also must thank the History Department at Rutgers University for a wonderful graduate school experience. It has not been easy, but the road has been much smoother thanks to the great community of faculty, staff, and grad students that I have been privileged to study and work with. Many faculty members, including some I never studied with, made the process that much better with their encouragement, while the staff answered my many questions over the years. Special thanks go to Dawn Ruskai for her endless patience and knowledge. My debt to my fellow graduate students is immense, and rather than list a few names I thank all of you that I have shared classes, work, drinks, and laughs with over the years. I especially want to thank Vanessa Holden, Melanie Kiechle, and Allison Miller for kindly allowing me to occasionally use their NJ
couches since my move back to Philly, letting me escape the shadow of a dreaded night in Van Dyck 013.

My work would not have been possible without the financial and scholarly support of various institutions. The Folger Institute accepted and funded me for the year-long dissertation seminar Researching the Archive, and the Mellon Foundation provided funding for summer archival research in England. I was fortunate enough to receive valuable feedback from conference presentations, including versions of two chapters, at the MACBS and NACBS. My first chapter benefitted from the advice of my Researching the Archives group at the Folger Library, headed by Professors Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker, and the seminar also provided me with invaluable access to the Folger Library itself. I must also thank the helpful staff at the British Library, Wellcome Library, and West Sussex Record Office. My archival work benefitted enormously from the generosity of those who gave me a place to stay while I researched in London, and so special thanks go to Mike Taylor and Jan Atkins for letting me invade their home in Leytonstone (and introducing me to the joys of Brick Lane), and Behram Kasad for letting me borrow his flat in Victoria. My research – and pocketbook – would be much the poorer without your help.

Dissertations are often lonely exercises, but my wonderful support system over the years has been the backbone of getting the work done. I thank all the many teachers and professors, from St. Pius X to Kennedy High School to Mount Mercy University to Villanova University, who have inspired and encouraged me over the years. I am also fortunate enough to have a fabulous collection of friends, both near and far, who have helped to push me towards finishing, commiserated with me when I was frustrated, and
made me laugh everyday. My life would have been much less bright over the years without people like Ron Adkins, Alex Bethke, Brianna Koziol, Kelly Kunz, Kim Mason, Jana Rediger, Samantha and Sean Teaford (who also let me borrow their guest room when they lived in Metuchen many a time), and Mary and Jamie van Boven in it. The Fournier and Vyvyan families have also provided a lot of support and laughs over the last few years, and thanks to Bess, Jim, and Josh Fournier for including me in their family fun.

I must especially thank Dan Fournier for continuously telling me to finish, but also not allowing me to take things too seriously. Through the frustrations and the triumphs, he has been there cheering me on, and he makes me smile everyday. Thank you.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my family, both in the States and in England. Thank you to everyone for all their encouragement and I am looking forward to that celebratory drink when I get to England next! My brothers Eric, Paul, and Todd have always rooted for their little sister, but my biggest thanks go to my parents, Alison and Barry, for always being my biggest fans. This is for you Mum and Dad, and that little girl all those years ago who said that she was going to wear the ‘floppy professor hat’ one day. Well, I’m happy to say that that day has finally arrived!
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Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ECS</td>
<td>English Clandestine Satire, 1660-1704 Popular Culture, Entertainment and Information in the Early Modern Period (Microfilm Collection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon</td>
<td>Unnamed Poetry Collection, Avon, Badminton House – Muniments Collection Fm E 3/12, Vol. 2 [Reel 1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL Add</td>
<td>Unnamed Poetry Collection [marked with Samuel Dangers, 1664] British Library Additional MS 34362 [Reel 1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kungl</td>
<td>Collection of English Poetry principally Political Satyrs from the last years of Charles II, Stockholm, Kungl.Biblioteket MS Vu. 69 (Gyldenstolpe MS) [Reel 20]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEBO</td>
<td>Early English Books Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODNB</td>
<td>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OED</td>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary, online version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POAS</td>
<td>Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714</td>
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lose wrapt in Portsmouth’s Smock his Senses are;
headlong he runs into Circe’s snares,
and by her Charms is so besotted grown,
rather than quit her he will lose his Throne.
eave her for shame, cast off those idle Charms;
employ your self, like neighbouring [sic] Kings, in Arms,
secure your Nation and your self from harms.1

Introduction

On the face of it, Peter Lely’s c. 1663 portrait of a woman and child seems devoid of political meaning, simply a pretty picture hanging on the walls of the National Portrait Gallery in London. The placement of the portrait within Room 7, dedicated to the reign of Charles II (1660-1685), gives the first clue that this painting is more than it seems, and the caption indicating that the woman in the painting is Barbara Palmer, then Countess of Castlemaine and favorite mistress of the king, gives the modern viewer pause to consider the full implications of this painting. The posture and clothing of the woman and child recall images of the Madonna and Child, particularly meaningful since the child is believed by art historians to be Charles Fitzroy, one of the five children that Castlemaine bore the king. Julia Marciari Alexander argues that both Lely and Castlemaine worked together on the imagery of this painting – along with an earlier portrait which depicted Castlemaine as Mary Magdalen – concluding that Castlemaine deliberately represented herself as the Virgin Mary with Charles Fitzroy as the Christ Child. Not only was a royal mistress equating herself with the Virgin Mary, but also, by implication, the king, her

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2 The changing names and titles of Restoration court people, such as Barbara Palmer and Louise de Kéroualle, can cause confusion, but for accuracy’s sake this dissertation will use their current title during a given year or event. Barbara Palmer will be called Countess of Castlemaine for events occurring from 1661 and Duchess of Cleveland from 1670 onwards. Louise de Kéroualle is simply de Kéroualle until 1673 when she becomes Duchess of Portsmouth. See the Appendix for brief listings of the major titles, children, etc of Palmer, de Kéroualle, and Nell Gwyn.


4 Alexander, Painted Ladies, 124 and “Painting a Life,” 178. Castlemaine’s portrayal as Mary Magdalen played upon ideas of beauty and the penitent whore – when it was painted ‘she was patently the most reputed beauty of the day; she led the life of an openly sexual sinner; and she was openly reveling in her role as the king’s acknowledged favorite. Moreover, the role of the repentant was one that suited her political purposes,’ those political purposes being to ‘right’ her reputation as a rival’ to the newly arrived queen, Catherine of Braganza, “Painting a Life,” 168-170.
lover and father of her child, with God. Alexander further claims that Castlemaine’s act of artistic self-representation was intended to ‘create a vision of herself as the consort of the king,’ with her child as the continuation of a royal dynasty.\(^5\) With the serious connotations of dynasty, Alexander argues, were also aspects of humor since this portrait ‘necessarily subverts its subjects’ implied piety, flaunting the very preposterousness of mistress and bastard as Madonna and Child,’ made more apparent by Castlemaine’s apparent pregnancy in the portrait.\(^6\) Castlemaine was aware of how she was ‘sending-up’ the ‘very Catholic pictorial traditions it [her portrait] immediately invoked,’ mixing in a sense of play amidst the dynastic and political connotations.\(^7\)

In his famed diary, Samuel Pepys wrote about his observations of the world and people around him, including the audacious Castlemaine. Deeply attracted to yet also critical of Castlemaine, he describes her impact upon Charles II: “the King do mind nothing but pleasures, and hates the very sight or thoughts of business; that my Lady Castlemaine rules him, who, he says, hath all the tricks of Aretin that are to be practised.”\(^8\) An entry from 15 May 1663, Pepys reveals concerns early in Charles II’s reign that the king was indolent and ruled by his mistress who used sex to keep him enthralled. As Pepys’s diary entry indicates, Castlemaine’s daring self-representation as the Virgin Mary existed within a wider context of far more troubled images of the royal mistress which did not consider issues of religion, sex, or female influence as playful but serious issues that detrimentally impacted the nation. Portraying herself as the Madonna

\(^5\) Alexander, “Painting a Life;” 178
\(^6\) Alexander, *Painted Ladies*, 125
\(^7\) Ibid
\(^8\) Samuel Pepys, *Diary and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Richard Lord Braybrooke and Rev. Mynors Bright, Volume II (London: Bickers and Son, 1876), 208. Entry from 15 May 1663. Aretin refers to Pietro Aretino (1492-1556), an Italian writer famed in England for the poems he contributed to the second edition of the sexually explicit *I Modi* (‘The Ways’) (1527), which was published in England as *Aretino’s Postures*. 
and Mary Magdalen, Castlemaine used a multi-layered system of interpretation to ‘construct a public persona,’ but that persona was often reduced by her critics to that of a Catholic (non-repentant) whore.\(^9\)

Castlemaine’s attempts to create her own persona reveal the importance of representation. The painting which seemed devoid of political content comes alive when understood within its broader social and political context.\(^10\) Her portrait also points to the broader context of representations of the Restoration royal mistress which like Pepys’s diary entry censured her for her use of sex and influence, providing a strong indication of the role that the court mistress was to play throughout the Restoration and into the early Hanoverian periods. These representations are the focus of this project. Anxieties about social, religious, political, and gender issues are evident in depictions of the mistresses of Charles II who came to be seen as ‘emblems of the court.’\(^11\) Focusing on these representations allows for a deeper understanding of Restoration concerns but also the ways in which women and gender were utilized in rhetoric because in constructing the figure of the royal mistress these representations show how concepts of gender were used and shaped in early modern English discourse.

**Historiography**

Placing Restoration royal mistresses within a political context is an important contribution to the study of high politics during the period. Works by John Miller, K.H.D.

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\(^9\) Alexander, “Painting a Life,” 165

\(^10\) See Michael Baxandall’s *Painting & Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A primer in the social history of pictorial style*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Even though discussing a different nation and time period, Baxandall provides an interesting argument about the importance of ‘reading’ paintings within their historical and social contexts.

Haley, Gary De Krey, Tim Harris, and Anna Keay all briefly state that Charles II had women around him that caused concern amongst the English populace because of their expense, influence (including use of the patronage system) through their proximity to the king, and overall detrimental impact on Charles’s ability to rule. Writing political histories and biographies, these scholars note the mistresses but do not weave them into the political landscape of the Restoration. As Nancy Klein Maguire argues in her study on Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, ‘many historians ignore her completely’ and even those historians who discuss Portsmouth’s ‘domestic power’ through patronage and ‘regulating access to the king,’ ‘they fail to examine her influence systematically and for the most part disregard her political impact.’ According to Maguire, dismissing Portsmouth is a mistake because her ‘own contemporaries could not afford to ignore her’ as borne out by ‘numerous reports of her power.’ In viewing Portsmouth’s perceived political role through the eyes of her contemporaries, Maguire breaks political history’s ‘nineteenth-century traditions’ which focus ‘upon bureaucratic and parliamentary structures of power [rather] than […] those of the court’ often leading to a discounting of women in the ‘masculine activity’ of politics because it is thought to be ‘divorced from the concerns of women and relations with mistresses.’ Instead, Portsmouth held an ‘informal power’ akin to ‘male favourites in other reigns,’ and Maguire argues that such a

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14 Ibid

15 Ibid 248
power allows for a gendered reading of politics, inserting women and mistresses back into the early modern political world.\textsuperscript{16} Like Maguire, this project looks to place Restoration royal mistresses back within their political context, offering political history not only the inclusion of women and gender, but also a broader plane in which to view the political. For Maguire, ‘the proliferation of scurrilous (and anonymous) attacks on Portsmouth makes a prima facie case for investigating her,’ meaning that often repeated criticisms of a court woman found in sources like libels and pamphlets were a clear indication of concern about the role of a particular woman, revealing to Maguire the importance of investigating the political involvement of Portsmouth.\textsuperscript{17} This project began in the same place as Maguire – the representation of women – but follows a different impulse. Rather than moving from representation to the movements of actual court women, these chapters instead focus on the representations themselves and what they reveal about Restoration society. Studying representation does not mean being divorced from the issues of actual people during the Restoration, but instead allows for a deeper understanding of the social, political, and gendered realities of early modern England.

Even if marginalized in most mainstream political histories of the reign, royal mistresses have not been completely neglected. Biographical studies of Charles’s mistresses have long been a staple and continue to appear in print. These biographies, however, often place their subjects in sentimental, aggrandizing, or censorious frames. Charles Beauclerk’s \textit{Nell Gwyn: Mistress to a King} (2005) paints Gwyn in sentimental terms announcing from the start that, ‘This biography portrays the life of Nell Gwyn (1650-87), the most renowned and popular of the mistresses of Charles II, whose

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid 250
seventeen-year relationship with the King is one of the great love stories of our history.\(^1^8\)

Such a characterization is perhaps unsurprising given that Beauclerk is himself a descendant of Gwyn and Charles, but in certain ways it parallels the aggrandizing tone of Bryan Bevan’s 1972 biography of the Duchess of Portsmouth. Bevan’s biography is not as sentimental as Beauclerk’s since Bevan characterizes Portsmouth as sly and arrogant, but he too makes a grand statement about his subject: “Louise-Renée de Penancoët de Keroualle, who was to acquire more influence and power than any of Charles II’s other mistresses, was born in Brittany.”\(^1^9\) Both biographies showcase a tendency to argue that their particular subject was the best-loved or most powerful of Charles II’s mistresses, and both denigrate other mistresses, with Beauclerk often attacking Portsmouth, while Bevan is merciless towards Castlemaine (now the Duchess of Cleveland) whom he describes as a nymphomaniac.\(^2^0\) As Sonya Wynne notes in her study of Restoration mistresses, these popular biographies ‘have the merit of attempting to represent the subjective experience of the mistresses but often embroidered with a wild mixture of fact and fantasy, and simply reproduce traditional stereotypes.’\(^2^1\)

Wynne’s work represents a much more ambitious attempt to assess the political significance of Charles II’s mistresses by exploring them as political agents and, in recuperating their agency, broadening historical understanding of the scope of political activity and the nature of political power and influence in Restoration court culture. As Wynne notes, there is not much evidence from the mistresses themselves about their


\(^{20}\) Ibid 47

political views or movements, and contemporary writings about them are biased. Wynne thus turns to alternative sources, such as ambassadorial reports, to get a better handle on the role of court women within Restoration politics. Much of Wynne’s study focuses on Portsmouth, whom Wynne considers ‘the one most politically involved,’ which perhaps reflects the sentiments of the Restoration itself, and she pours over manuscript and print sources to support her overarching claim: “It will be shown that women did participate to the highest level in court politics and, in the case of the mistresses, any separation of favour and influence with regard to them faded and was greatly diminished during the reign.” Maguire uses similar sources as Wynne to document Portsmouth’s political activity, placing particular emphasis on her use of access to the king which made her important ‘in mediating relations between the king and leading political figures.’

Maguire goes on to argue that even if historians do not believe that Portsmouth played an important political role, ‘she certainly regarded herself as someone who influenced government actions, and important figures of the time agreed with her,’ meaning that Portsmouth’s political agency should not be ignored. Wynne’s stated goal of placing royal mistresses within high politics, a place often denied them by political histories of the Restoration, echoes Maguire’s idea to follow the evidence of criticism of Portsmouth to discover her role in politics. Wynne and Maguire exemplify an important historiographical attempt to recuperate Restoration mistresses as political agents, and to expand our definitions of the political. Certainly expanding the definition of politics allows for a broader concept of what it meant to be politically active, as James Daybell

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22 Ibid 3
23 Ibid 10
24 Maguire 266
25 Ibid
notes, and makes it possible to study how court women could be politically active in the
Restoration court even though they were ‘excluded from formal politics.’\(^{26}\) Such an
approach is important for political history and women’s and gender history, but this
project attempts something different: to explore the political significance of the court
mistress as a focus of contemporary anxiety, and to do so through close readings of a
series of representations of court mistresses produced during the reign of Charles II and
the decades that followed. Frances E. Dolan argues that ‘representations had material
consequences, shaping as well as being shaped by early modern cultural practices,’ and
those material consequences are also seen in the study of representation in political
historiography.\(^{27}\) Representation is defined as ‘a slippery concept, never completely
under the control of either the individual (or group) depicted or the creator of the image,
or indeed the viewer,’ making the attempts to build or attack representation of central
importance in a time full of ‘pervading uncertainty and an anxious desire to create new
order.’\(^{28}\) In studying representation, political historiography looks to issues surrounding
authority – attempts to gain it, and attempts to destabilize it.

\(^{26}\) James Daybell, “Introduction: Rethinking Women and Politics in Early Modern England,” in Women and
Politics in Early Modern England 1450-1700, ed. by James Daybell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) and for the
quote see De Krey 62. The expansion of definitions to further include women can also be seen in
performance history with some scholars pushing for the broadening of the meaning of ‘performance’ to
include female performance outside of the traditional theatre in England from 1500-1660, years often
associated with the infamous ‘all-male’ stage. See Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, eds, Women

\(^{27}\) Frances E. Dolan, Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700

\(^{28}\) MacLeod and Alexander, “Introduction,” xviii-xix. See also Kevin Sharpe’s Image Wars: Promoting
Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) for
discussion of the impact representation and counter-representation could have on authority. Other examples
of political historiography that studies representation are Harold Weber’s Paper Bullets: Print and
Kingship under Charles II (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996) and The politics of the public
sphere in early modern England, ed. Peter Lake and Steven C.A. Pincus (Manchester: Manchester
University Press, 2007). For other examples of historians studying representation see Anthony Fletcher’s
Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), Thomas
Laqueur’s Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,
1990), and Laura Gowing’s Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London (Oxford:
Representations of royal mistresses have already proven fruitful sources of study for literary and art historians. The literary critic James Grantham Turner, for example, uses a ‘broad range of representations from lampoons and pamphlets’ but also physical manifestations like riots and charivari, to argue that a gendering of sexual transgression occurred in London during the early modern period, making it ‘female even when the wild libertines are ostensibly male.’ In this analysis, Turner discusses what he terms pornographia and seeks to answer the question ‘What does it mean to call somebody a whore, or, more precisely, to write prostitution across a person or institution?’ Using representations to study the construction of sexual transgression, Turner turns to the figures of royal mistresses to examine their political importance but also the ambiguities felt by contemporaries about the king’s mistresses. Samuel Pepys, Turner notes, felt both ‘indignation and arousal’ about Barbara Palmer, highlighting issues of ‘public-private’ and ‘status-hierarchy that separated courtesans from countesses.’ As Turner points out, the label ‘whore’ cut across social boundaries, and it was this upending of gendered and social norms which forms part of the importance of studying the representations of royal mistresses. The figure of the courtesan is ‘a perfect vehicle for political commentary, a funhouse mirror of social corruption […] at once trivializing and perpetuating its trauma,’ and Turner’s argument shows how the royal mistress fit within the political debates surrounding transgression, sex, and the role of women from the Civil War through the


30 Ibid 1. For more on his meaning of pornographia, see Chapter 1 ‘Pornographia and the markings of prostitution: and introduction.’

31 Ibid 167

Restoration. These mistresses are also a subject for art historians, including Julia Marciari Alexander, who contributed to the study of Barbara Palmer’s self-representation by examining portraiture. The catalogue and exhibition *Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II* (2001) are also important because they looked to shed light on late seventeenth-century English portraiture, ‘a deeply unfashionable subject,’ as well as the ‘parallel neglect of the women who were so often their [the portraits’] subjects.’

In order to begin to correct this neglect, the *Painted Ladies* catalogue combines essays by art historians and historians. *Painted Ladies* also argues that representations of Restoration court women – be they portraits or libels – were often built around the women’s reputations, which were themselves ‘appropriated by all sides to further their own arguments or damage those of their opponents,’ and indeed ‘it is impossible to extricate fully the women at Charles II’s court from the myths that have grown up around them […].’

These conclusions highlight the importance of Restoration representations and what they reveal about English politics and society in the early modern period, as well as the role royal mistresses were perceived to play. The interdisciplinary nature of the book also marks the significance of ‘new’ sources within historical research and how the study of representations can be useful in historical practice. *Painted Ladies* shows what representation can add to historical analysis, as well as focusing on the often neglected art and women of the Restoration. Literary and art historical scholarship takes the role of royal mistresses and their representations seriously, and places these women within their contemporary context through the study of literature and portraiture.

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doing so, these scholars also engage in a broader historiographical debate about sex and gender in early modern England by showing how the figure of court women was incorporated into, and shaped by, social and political debate.

There is also a trend in political historiography to take gender more seriously as a category of political analysis, particularly amongst scholars working in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods. Louis Montrose’s work on the images of Elizabeth I explores the tension between Elizabeth’s female sex and her masculine role as monarch, tension that created contradictory perceptions based upon ideas of power and gender.\(^{35}\) As Montrose succinctly phrases it, his work ‘is not about the person of Queen Elizabeth but rather about the field of cultural meanings that were personified in her’ further arguing for the use of representation to better understand the past.\(^{36}\) Scholars of the early Stuart period have also used gendered analysis of libelous attacks on court politics and personalities, particularly in work surrounding the Overbury murder and characterizations of Frances Howard, the gendered implications of which David Lindley suggests are still relevant today.\(^{37}\) The 1640s provides another period in which scholars have focused more on the importance of gender within political analysis, and is particularly interesting for this project because of its proximity to the Restoration itself. A time filled with turbulence, the 1640s saw an upsurge in women participating in writing and ‘public

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\(^{36}\) Ibid. For more on the uses of images of Elizabeth I see Roy Strong’s *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

debate on religion and politics. Ann Hughes, for instance, discusses the role of women within political literature surrounding the Leveller movement, literature which both celebrated and censured the female. Unsurprisingly, a perceived and actual increase in women’s political participation created anxieties about gender, seen in mock-petitions which used images of overtly sexual and subversive women to denigrate the growing number of female petitioners in the 1640s. The use of feminine figures to represent both the threatening Long (or Rump) Parliament and the threatened ‘English body politic,’ as Mark Jenner argues, reveals the vitality of gendered political discourse in the run-up to Restoration through highly gendered language. Rachel Weil continues the examination of the importance of gender and politics in her study of the family in the later Stuart period. In studying the intersections between the family and politics Weil not only analyzes how political events were seen as ‘a family drama writ large,’ but also the various beliefs on what constituted the ‘family’ and ‘political,’ as well as making an important bridge between political and gender historiographies. All of these studies highlight the importance of gender in politics and focus on representation as much as female agency, and it is the goal of this project to bring more of the examination of gender, politics, and representation into the reign of Charles II.

38 Joad Raymond, Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 278.
40 Raymond 304
42 Rachel Weil, Political passions: gender, the family and political argument in England 1680-1714 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 2.
Contribution

The following chapters look to build on the study of representations of Restoration royal mistresses as a way to explore in greater depth the gendered nature of the politics of Charles II’s reign. As noted before, this project focuses on representation, on the voices, words, and faces given to court mistresses by writers and printers, not on the words, the lives, and actions of royal mistresses themselves. Furthermore, this is not a study of the images of all of Charles’s mistresses, but focuses mainly upon three women: Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland (1640-1709), Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth (1649-1734), and Nell Gwyn (1651?-1687). These three women were by far the most notorious of Charles’s mistresses, and all three generated significant amounts of hostile comment. All three, in different ways, came to embody core contemporary anxieties about the king’s mistresses, symbolizing to contemporaries the female, social, political, and religious Other. The subject of the Other plays an important role in this project, which looks at the creation of self- and other-hood – the psychological underpinnings of which are reflected in the use of terms like ‘anxiety,’ ‘concern,’ and ‘projection,’ although this project is not attempting historical psychoanalysis - often revolving around issues of nationality, religion, bodies (both diseased and reproductive), and the uses of memory and history. In construing and constructing these royal mistresses as the Other, Restoration and early Hanoverian writers revealed their myriad social, political, and gendered anxieties, projecting them on to the fictive figure of the royal mistress.

My approach to this history of anxiety, projection, and representation is thematic rather than chronological, interpretive and hermeneutic in style, selectively following traces and motifs rather than attempting a definitive assessment of all possible meanings.
My chapters follow a path which begins with a discussion of the Ottoman Other, and
moves to a pair of chapters centered on the mistress’s body, imagined as both diseased
and mysteriously and dangerously fecund, before concluding with a study of the cultural
uses of the mistress in historical memory.43 These themes are not intended to be
definitive and the chapters that follow offer only a handful of the many possible
interpretations of the various poems, histories, libels, medical texts, and even songs to be
found in the following pages. The study isolates certain images, emphases, and concerns
that recur in the sources, and tracks them through a wide variety of genres.

In examining representations of these court women, this project looks to not only
contribute to the history of Restoration England and its politics, but also to women’s and
gender history, the history of medicine, and the history of the body. Much of the study of
the court mistress has been within the framework of women’s and gender history, and has
sought to better understand the construction of early modern gender norms, the workings
of power and the family, and the ways women found agency within the ambiguities of a
patriarchal system. This project also works within these frames, but looks too to extend
this type of analysis by fusing political history with the histories of medicine and the
body. Women’s bodies are at the center of two of my four main chapters. Studying ‘the
body’ has become an important subject in history, with scholars increasingly aware that
the human body has its own history and time-bounded social implications.44 This work
thus supports Laura Gowing’s recent call for further study of the body in women’s
history, and indeed owes much to Gowing’s earlier work on the meaning of touch, words,

43 Laura Gowing, “Women’s Bodies and the Making of Sex in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Signs* 37.4
(Summer 2012): 817.
44 Barbara Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin: A Doctor’s Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany*,
and bodies to early modern women. It builds too on a growing trend within women’s studies to look at links made between women’s bodies and broader concerns about issues like family and reproduction, a trend which includes the work of other scholars like Mary E. Fissell, Rachel Weil, Londa Schiebinger, and a lot of work written in the wake of Thomas Laqueur’s Making Sex. My body-centered approach also engages with and contributes to the recent historiography of medicine by studying the social, political, and religious connotations of bodies, disease, and reproduction. Not looking to diagnose the dead, I focus instead on the cultural constructions of disease and reproduction as related to women’s bodies and use these constructions as context for interpreting powerful images of the court mistress. Gowing’s call for further examination of the female body also ties together the various broader contributions of this project to political, women’s, and medical history. Women’s bodies, Gowing claims, were seen as an ‘absolute other’ in early modern England. The ‘othered’ female body thus forms one link in a network of images of the Other – national, religious, etc – that are central to the representations of the court mistress explored in this study.

45 Gowing, “Women’s Bodies,” 814
Sources

The various sources found in these chapters are again a testament to this author’s interdisciplinary tastes and style of reading. From manuscript poetry collections to libels, novels to secret histories, the following pages explore a variety of genres in which our core themes of the Ottoman harem, disease, reproduction, and memory are presented in different forms and styles. Chapter 1 focuses on two self-proclaimed novels, Chapters 2 and 3 use medical literature alongside pamphlets, poems, broadsides, and songs, and Chapter 4 focuses on memoirs and secret histories; libels and histories appear throughout. My project is about discourse and perception, not opinion formation or the public sphere, so for my argument the audience’s size for any particular source does not matter, but a brief sketch of manuscript and print culture will show the role each played in Restoration discourse.

Even with the growth in printing and the book market during the later seventeenth-century and early eighteenth century, the importance of manuscript writing should not be underestimated. Many of the libels written during the reign of Charles II remained unpublished until after 1688, and there was a thriving culture in the writing and exchanging of manuscript literature with poems finding their way into handwritten poetry collections and commonplace books which allowed the reader to assemble poems into groups to be ‘read together.’

49 Paul Hammond, The Making of Restoration Poetry (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 38 and 41. For more on the form of the libel itself, see Harold Love’s English Clandestine Satire 1660-1702 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) in which he describes the various forms of libel including the court lampoon, town lampoon, and state satire. For example, Love describes how court lampoons ‘needed a cast’ and how ‘there have to be instantly recognizable signs by which they [the people attacked] can be identified, and stock accusations against them that are universally known and accepted. Satire does not have time to explain: it must get straight to the business of vilification. The charges do not have to be true; indeed, in order to satisfy the strange needs served by the genre it is often a good idea if they are not true,'
Many of the poems found in these chapters have unknown authors, which has caused consternation to many as the numerous attempts to build collections of poets such as John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester and Andrew Marvell indicate. Yet, Paul Hammond explains that the ‘problem of anonymity’ was not one felt in the Restoration where ‘many writers did not show that concern for the creation of a personal œuvre under their own name which modern editors and critics display on their behalf’ and readers were ‘free from any anxiety about, or even interest in, authorial identity.’ Instead, Hammond argues that anonymous manuscripts allowed for an ‘implicit community’ that gave power not only to the writer but also the reader. Manuscript culture continued to thrive during the Restoration, and its largely anonymous form provided a culture that gave power to the reader as well as writer, while at the same time bypassing state censorship.

The importance of print culture is obvious, particularly in the larger questions found in early modern studies about the creation of the public sphere and the participation of a larger number of the populace in politics. As Joad Raymond argues, by the Glorious Revolution ‘it was self-evident that any attempt to generate public support for a political initiative, party or position, would have to exploit the persuasive powers of the press.’ Although manuscript culture was still very much alive, it did not have as wide an audience as print, and more people could read print than handwriting.

or no better than half-true,’ 23. For more on the often fine line between political attack and pornography (and as will be shown, not only libels could be accused of being pornographic) see Rachel Weil’s “Sometimes a Scepter is Only a Scepter: Pornography and Politics in Restoration England,” in The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800, ed. Lynn Hunt (New York: Zone Books, 1993).

50 Ibid 49 and 66
51 Ibid 68 and 71. Examples of the power of the reader are demonstrated in the changes of titles and even text in poetry and libels found in different poetry collections.
52 Raymond 25
53 Ibid 91. Reading print was also more common than being able to write. Oral traditions were also still prevalent which meant that a manuscript (or print) source could be read aloud to reach a wider audience,
printed materials, particularly the pamphlet – which at its most basic is defined as a ‘short, quarto book’ – is shown in the worry many had over the ‘potentially deleterious effects of reading certain kinds of publication, particularly printed pamphlets and periodicals of news.’ Such a bad impact is of particular concern during this period because, as Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker argue, ‘in early modern England men and women, we might say, read themselves into citizens.’ The need for print and the subsequent worry over its impact reveal the growing participation in political discussion by the English populace and the meaning this had for Restoration politics. As Mark Knights and Tim Harris discuss, the ‘public acquired new prominence and importance as a collective fiction’ and understanding better the London crowd could go toward broadening views on Restoration politics which are often ‘over concentrate[ed] on the elite.’ The need to control the impact of the printed word is also shown throughout the Civil War and Interregnum years, with an explosion of unlicensed printing beginning in

but it was the audience for printed materials which Raymond highlights as most influential during this period.

54 Joad Raymond, “Irrational, impractical and unprofitable: reading the news in seventeenth-century Britain,” in Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 186. For quote see Raymond, Pamphlets, 5. For more discussion on the various and wide ranging definitions of the pamphlet, see Pamphlets Chapter 1 ‘What is a pamphlet?’


the early 1640s, leading Thomas Fairfax to complain that ‘pamphlets attacking his Army were being published without any restraint.’\textsuperscript{57} In 1647, government gained a tighter control on printing and ‘even more repressive’ laws came with Cromwellian leadership.\textsuperscript{58} Lessons on the importance of keeping a tight grip on the press were followed in the Restoration with the 1662 Printing Act, but control slipped during the turmoil of the Exclusion Crisis and ‘plots’ with the lapsing of the act in 1679 through 1685, showing how ‘in times of great political controversy it was virtually impossible to suppress the opposition press.’\textsuperscript{59} The demand for print is apparent, as is the political emphasis seventeenth-century governments placed on its control. Printed materials were important not only because of their ability to reach a wider audience, but also because they became a vital part in the politics of the Restoration.

Both manuscript and printed materials have roles to play within this project, although they did not reach the exact same audience. Print culture had a large audience and many pamphlets and popular books on the market which were relatively cheap, but manuscript culture also had an important, if smaller, audience. It is not possible to know how many people read or heard a manuscript poem or a particular pamphlet or book, although the repetition of specific poems within various collections shows a certain breadth of circulation, and the fact that many of the books discussed in the following chapters went through multiple editions and printings indicate that they found a decent sized audience.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid 47
Chapters

As stated previously, this project is divided into thematic chapters. The particular themes discussed are the ‘Turkish’ harem, disease, reproduction, and memory. These are certainly not the only themes one could discuss in relation to court women – fashion, portraits, and theater are just a few others – nor does this project pretend to have combed through every poem or pamphlet that discussed Charles’s mistresses, or try to analyze each court woman of Charles II’s reign. Instead, each chapter looks to highlight an issue or motif, to situate it in some kind of broader context, and thus to explore its possible political meanings.

The Prologue is an examination of the bawdy house riots of 1668, focusing briefly on two pamphlets which came out quickly after the events – The Poor-Whores Petition and The Gracious Answer – which connected the tearing down of whorehouses in London to Barbara, Countess of Castlemaine, the king’s favorite mistress. In creating links between prostitution and the court mistress, by fusing this with fears about religion and foreign influence, these pamphlets allow us to see in embryo some of the networks of anxiety around the sexual, bodily, religious, and national Other that were to become even more prominent in the 1670s and -80s. Chapter 1 examines two self-proclaimed novels – Hattige (English translation in 1680) and The Sultana of Barbary (1689) – which transport the English court into ‘Turkish’ settings. Tales of court intrigue and sex, the novels center upon a benign but helpless king surrounded by his manipulative advisors and mistresses. By examining these books alongside ideas of the Ottoman, this chapter looks at what it meant in the English mind to equate the court with harem politics, as well as at anxieties surrounding the foreign Other often embodied within the figure of the
court/harem woman. Chapter 2 looks at the accusations of disease, particularly sexual disease, commonly made against court women found in libels – both manuscript and printed – and what it meant to make such a charge. To better understand the meaning of the ‘poxed’ court women to a Restoration audience, this chapter focuses on popular medical literature to uncover theories about the nature and origins of the pox or French Disease. Doing so demonstrates the role women and their bodies were believed to play in the spread and even genesis of the disease. This literature also exposes the moral and political discourse surrounding the pox, in particular its construction as a foreign attacker which could corrupt the soul as well as body, a construction that made it the quintessential disease of the religious, national, and sexual Other. Chapter 3 continues the examination of the female body by using a ‘pamphlet war’ between the Duchess of Portsmouth and Nell Gwyn as a starting point to discuss ideas of nationality, religion, and motherhood. These pamphlets all contain dialogues between Portsmouth and Gwyn, and lay bare the rivalry between French/English and Catholic/Protestant, but also contain a submerged set of claims and anxieties about motherhood and reproduction. By examining popular medical literature, it is possible to place these pamphlets within the debate surrounding reproduction, including pregnancy and breastfeeding, and the role that women’s bodies played, uncovering anxieties surrounding the royal mistress as royal mother. Chapter 4 focuses on memoirs and secret histories written after the deaths of Gwyn, Cleveland, and Portsmouth. Both Cleveland and Portsmouth lived into the eighteenth century, and although Gwyn died shortly after Charles II, a memoir written about her in the 1750s will be examined, showing the ways in which the memory of the court woman was useful in the eighteenth century. Grappling with the legacy of the
troublesome Restoration, Hanoverian England represented these women in particular ways, emphasizing contemporary social issues – divorce, gambling, and definitions of virtue. These women were not entirely stripped of their political meaning, but they were often taken out of their Restoration context in order to highlight an issue of more pressing concern to later Stuart and early Hanoverian readers. Studying these memoirs and secret histories thus makes it possible to see the mutation of the significance of the Restoration court mistress in new political, social, and gendered contexts. The Epilogue ends the project with a printed rebus from 1756 in which Nell Gwyn is made to chide the Hapsburg empress Maria Theresa for allying with the French shortly before the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War. In having Gwyn, the Protestant from a humble background, advise an empress, the rebus appropriates the memory of Charles II’s mistress in order to score polemical points against one of the most powerful women in eighteenth-century Europe.

The figure of the court mistress allowed Restoration and early Hanoverian people to wrestle with a wide range of intrinsically politicized concerns about national and religious identity, about the vulnerability of nation, soul, and body to foreign infiltration and subversion, and about the sexual, diseased, and reproductive female body. This project demonstrates the fundamental importance of representation to the study of gender, politics, and the body by showing how fears of the foreign, Catholic, and female Other were imprinted onto the fabricated faces and voices of royal mistresses in early modern England.
Prologue
The Bawdy House Riots of 1668

‘We therefore being moved by the imminent danger now impending, and the great sense of our present suffering, do implore your Honour to improve your interest, which (all know) is great, That some speedy Relief may be afforded us, to prevent Our Utter Ruine and Undoing. And that such a sure Course may be taken with the Ringleaders and Abettors of these evil-disposed persons, that a stop may be put unto them before they come to your Honours Pallace, and bring contempt upon your worshiping of Venus, the great Goddess whom we all adore.’

‘give no Entertainment without Ready Money, lest you suffer Loss. For had we not been careful in that particular, we had neither gained: Honour nor Rewards, which are now (as you know) both conferred upon Us.’

Although this project focuses primarily on representations of the court mistress during the “Restoration crisis” of the 1670s and 80s, we can glimpse several of the core anxieties already in place by the later 1660s in the period of malaise that followed a sequence of disasters - the Great Plague in 1665, the Great Fire of London in 1666, and the Battle of the Medway in 1667 – that had ended the honeymoon period for the restored monarchy. The Bawdy House Riots of Easter 1668, in which a traditional form of youthful misrule was channeled into angry political protests against the Restoration religious settlement, were re-presented in print as a richly symbolic assault on Charles II’s favorite mistress, Barbara Palmer (née Villiers), Countess of Castlemaine, and on the transgressions (of order, of gender, of sexual morality, and religious orthodoxy) she was believed to embody.

attacks on brothels by apprentices were a customary Shrove Tuesday activity traditionally dealt with ‘moderately’ by the government and largely approved of by the populace. That the riot of 1668 was treated so differently by the government points to

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60 The Poor-Whores Petition. To the most Splendid, Illustrious, Serene and Eminent Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of CASTLEMAYNE, &c. The Humble Petition of the Undone Company of poor distressed Whores, Bawds, Pimps, and Panders, &c. (London, 1668).
61 The Gracious ANSWER of the most Illustrious Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of Castlem---- To the Poor-Whores Petition (London, 1668).
62 Tim Harris, “The Bawdy House Riots of 1668,” The Historical Journal, 29.3 (Sept 1986): 537. As Harris notes, the earlier riots were viewed as a sign of the apprentice’s ‘virtue.’
an important change in the meaning of the attacks and in the authorities’ perceptions of their significance. No longer simply a form of charivari, the bawdy house riots of 1668 were recognizably political protests, focused on contentious questions of religion and law. That the government took the riots unusually seriously is shown by the charges of high treason brought against some of the rioters, and the hanging, drawing, and quartering of four of the accused.63 The riots also generated a flurry of printed petitions, both satirical and earnest, which point to the obvious intersection between religion and sex revealed by an attack on a brothel. Two of these petitions, *The Poor-Whores Petition* and *The Gracious Answer of the most Illustrious Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of Castlem---- To the Poor-Whores Petition*, further reveal how a court woman was seen as party to the political, religious and social problems motivating the rioters, in particular how the mistress’s religion – she had converted to Catholicism in 1663 – fed into fears of plots to spread “popery” throughout the land.

The harsh prosecution of the rioters reveals how the riots were interpreted as not merely attacks on common brothels but as attacks on the government and king. Using a law from the reign of Edward III, the leaders of the riots were charged with high treason, as Tim Harris describes, ‘for levying of war against the king,’ supposedly based upon the apprentice’s ‘usurpation’ of royal authority by pulling down buildings.64 Neither contemporaries nor historians seem fooled by this explanation, however, as the religious and political implications of the riot revealed deep unrest over the intolerance shown to Protestant dissenters following the Restoration, intolerance which had broken the promise

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63 For more on the specifics of the riot and the logic behind the charge of treason, see Harris’s “The Bawdy House Riots of 1668.”
64 Ibid 548
of liberty of conscience made in Charles’s Declaration of Breda (1660). Popular disappointment over the situation spilled over into the riots, and the rioters received a sympathetic response from many who wondered why religious dissent rather than illegal brothels was the target of the authorities’ persecution. The importance of the religious, political, and social fears revealed in the riots of 1668 are beyond doubt. Yet historians have not fully explored the centrality of sex and the identity of the riots’ victims – prostitutes – as crucial elements of the riots’ contemporary meaning. Particularly interesting is the connection drawn in popular print between the Countess of Castlemaine and her ‘sister’ prostitutes, who appealed to the countess for help after the violence of the riots. These printed images of Castlemaine in dialogue with London’s whores not only reveal how the figure of the court mistress could come to symbolize the court of Charles II, but also demonstrates the emergence of fears about foreign and Catholic influence at court over a decade before those fears emerged as central to the troubles of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis.

The timing of the 1668 riots signaled a difference between them and their predecessors from the very beginning. Rather than the traditional charivari associated with Shrove Tuesday (or Fat Tuesday), the 1668 riots began on 23 March, Easter

65 Ibid 544-545
66 Ibid 539 and 547
67 Certainly ideas about sex and the equation of Whitehall with bawdy houses are discussed in sources such as Harris’s “The Bawdy House Riots of 1668” and London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Chapter 4 ‘The Problem of Religion,’ and Jenny Uglow’s A Gambling Man: Charles II’s Restoration Game (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), but most of the emphasis is placed upon politics and religious dissenters. See Melissa M. Mowry’s The Bawdy Politic in Stuart England, 1660-1714: Political Pornography and Prostitution (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004) in which she discusses prostitution in democratic terms and pornography as defining the ‘public sphere.’ See specifically Chapter 3 “The Specter of Corporate Identity and 1668” for discussion of the 1668 riots and her assessment of their economic/republican meaning over the religious interpretation given by other scholars. James Grantham Turner gives more attention to the importance of sex to the riot petitions in Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuality, Politics, and Literary Culture, 1630-1685 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), particularly Chapter 5 ‘Monstrous assemblies: bawdy-house riots, ‘libertine libels’, and the royal mistress.’
Monday, and lasted for days. Highly organized, the rioters were placed in regiments and followed specific colors, showing that the riots were deliberately targeted and structured. Charles’s response on 24 March was to send out peace-keepers, but the arrest of rioters created further chaos when jails were besieged by their accomplices. Though eventually brought under control, the riots paint a different picture than the usual days of misrule celebrated before Lent, making clear the serious concerns the rioters and their London supporters had. Attacks on brothel houses were not unprecedented, but they took on an added potency when connected to perceptions of the restored court and religious persecution. As Tim Harris implies, if the rioters did indeed see Whitehall as ‘the biggest bawdy house of the lot’ then their threat to ‘pull White-hall down’ was no idle one. A further connection between the brothel houses and the court was made by two ‘petitions,’ printed as broadsides, written shortly after the riots took place, The Poor-Whores Petition, published 25 March 1668, and The Gracious Answer of the most Illustrious Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of Castlem—-, published 24 April 1668, pointed to the central role of Castlemaine – and images of her as a Catholic agent – in some contemporaries’ understandings of the riots’ logic.

The Poor-Whores Petition, published two days after the start of the riots, points directly to Castlemaine in its satirical dedication, ‘To the most Splendid, Illustrious, Serene and Eminent Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of Castlemayne, &c.’ ‘Signed’ by Madam Cressell and Damaris Page, well-known brothel keepers, the petition asks for the protection of a great lady, but one who herself was much experienced in the commercial

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68 Harris, “Bawdy House Riots,” 538
69 Ibid 539
70 Ibid 540
71 For more on the interpretation of these pamphlets, see note 67.
72 The Poor-Whores Petition
sex trade: “all of us [are] exposed to very hard shifts,” the brothel-keepers claimed, “being made uncapable of giving that Entertainment, as the Honour and Dignity of such persons as frequented our houses doth call for, as your Ladyship by your own practice hath experimented the knowledge of.”73 In seeking protection from Castlemaine, the libel connects the king’s mistress to common prostitutes, and claims she has a vested interest in keeping her sister whores in business. The line between court mistress and prostitute vanishes, as shown by the cruelly mocking list of honors given by the dedication ‘Splendid, Illustrious, Serene and Eminent’ which is capped by demeaning her as a ‘Lady of Pleasure.’74 In order to retain her own standing Castlemaine is called upon to help her fellow prostitutes:

We therefore being moved by the imminent danger now impending, and the great sense of our present suffering, do implore your Honour to improve your Interest, which (all know) is great, That some speedy Relief may be afforded us, to prevent Our Utter Ruine and Undoing.75

Not petitioning Castlemaine as poor, brutalized women to be given mercy by a virtuous lady, The Poor-Whores Petition instead addresses Castlemaine as a woman who earned wealth and status through prostitution. The difference between the common prostitutes affected by the riots and Castlemaine was one of success and wealth, not reputation or activity.

The Poor-Whores Petition not only slandered Castlemaine, but also exposes the gendered political overtones of the riots themselves and how women fit into the debate surrounding them. If Whitehall was indeed seen as ‘the biggest bawdy house of the lot’

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73 Ibid. See also Sonya Wynne’s “The Mistresses of Charles II and Restoration Court Politics, 1660-1685” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1997) which links the petitions to ideas of Castlemaine as a whore, but also to her religion and the petitions trying to ‘explain’ the riots, 218-219.
74 According to the OED, ‘Lady of Pleasure’ was a phrase used to denote ‘a courtesan’ or ‘a prostitute’ since the 1550s.
75 The Poor-Whores Petition
then it stands to reason that court women would also have cause to fear the rioters. *The Poor-Whores Petition* bears out this assessment when it warns Castlemaine that she might share the same fate as her fellow ‘poore distressed Whores’: the petition hopes that a stop may be put unto [the rioters] before they come to your Honours Pallace, and bring contempt upon your worshiping of *Venus*, the great Goddess whom we all adore [...] for should your Eminency but once fall into these Rough hands, you may expect no more Favour then they have shewn unto us poor Inferiour Whores.\(^\text{76}\)

Not respecting Castlemaine as a court woman but treating her as a common whore, the petition satirically warns the countess that she must do something to stop the riots in order to protect her own interests.

Connections made between a whorehouse and Charles II’s court are to be expected, but *The Gracious Answer* published a few weeks later demonstrates how the idea of Castlemaine as prostitute within the royal court was not merely a criticism of her wealth and status, but was also a reflection of broader politico-religious anxieties. *The Gracious Answer* is more pointed in its criticisms of Castlemaine, satirically appropriating her very voice. From the beginning ‘Castlemaine’ shows her disdain for the English people by acknowledging the ‘Titles of Honour, which are but our Due’ from *The Poor-Whores Petition*, but continuing on to say that while at a theatrical performance she was, ‘wonderfully deck’d with Jewels and Diamonds, which the (abhorred and to be undone) Subjects of this Kingdo[m have payed for.’\(^\text{77}\) The parenthetical ‘abhorred and to be undone’ adds a dark political note to the petition – as well as a possible play upon the word ‘abhorred’ as it is supposedly written by a whore to a group of whores - as the ‘countess’ unveils (within the secrecy of a parenthetical statement) her plan to undo the English. Her goal, as becomes clear throughout the rest of the petition, is not simply to

\(^{76}\text{Ibid}\)

\(^{77}\text{The Gracious Answer}\)
help her fellow whores, but to spread her Catholic and foreign contagion across the kingdom.

Castlemaine’s supposed indignation at the treatment of her sister prostitutes is voiced in the petition, as well as her thirst for revenge. She advises the poor-whores to continue in their ‘practice,’ as it was sanctioned by the Catholic church, and then goes on to chart out a plan to increase not only the whores’ lubricious trade, but also the spread of the popish religion. Linking bawdy houses with playhouses, the countess hopes for the ‘increase of our Practice’ by opening up more playhouses so ‘that the Civil youth of the City may be Debauched and trained up in Loosness and Ignorance, whereby the Roman Religion may with ease be established in Court, Church, City, and Nation, the most effectual means for the accomplishment of our Designs.’

The theater is linked to ‘Loosness and Ignorance,’ an old feature of the anti-theatrical prejudice prominent in godly critiques of the public stage in late Elizabethan England, but given an added charge by the prominence of female actresses. That theaters were also connected to Charles II, as they returned with his restoration, lends further bite to the petition’s critique as it was through something the king himself restored that Catholicism could spread. The Catholics hoped to advance their religion through polluted bodies and words, creating weakness in the youth and preying on their ignorance. Castlemaine also speaks of English money being diverted to the French, ‘[.. .] For should we part with a hundred thousand pounds worth of our Jewels, since so much English Money hath cross’d the Narrow Seas [.. .],’ partly to explain why she does not give money to the prostitutes herself, and perhaps also to demonstrate how the destruction of England has already begun.

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78 Ibid
79 Ibid
destruction of English Protestantism is insinuated when the countess calls for the banning of all preaching and private meetings not ‘Connived at’ by members of her church.\textsuperscript{80} Rather than working towards religious toleration, the countess instead wants to persecute all Protestants, harkening to the religious persecution of the dissenters as a central theme of the riots themselves.\textsuperscript{81} There is also a reiteration of the theory that Catholics were behind the Great Fire of 1666, with ‘Castlemaine’ stating ‘if any Alderman will Eat Flesh in \textit{Lent}, or deal in Prohibited Commodities, Our pleasure is, That they pay and be paid soundly for it, least they build \textit{London}-again; contrary to the intent of those that burnt it [. . .].’\textsuperscript{82} Catholic usurpation of power extended not just to their supposed burning of the capital, but also in their ability to keep the rebuilding from occurring.

The closing two paragraphs of \textit{The Gracious Answer} point once again to the licentiousness and dangers of Catholicism. Telling all Catholics coming to London to visit her sisters and ‘delight themselves together,’ she also has words of warning for Catholicism’s enemies: “But for our Adversaries, with the Rebellious Citizens, Let them look to it when the \textit{French} are ready (who as yet drop in by small Parties, and lie \textit{incognito} with the rest of the \textit{Catholicks}) we shall deal with them [. . .].”\textsuperscript{83} Given that the riots and petitions occurred so soon after the Second Anglo-Dutch War and the Dutch attack on the Medway, it is interesting to see that this petition is focused squarely on the

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid
\textsuperscript{81} See Harris’s “The Bawdy House Riots” for a discussion of the supposed Catholic desire to keep the various Protestant factions split.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid and Turner 193-194. The London Monument to the Great Fire, completed in 1677, continued ideas that the Catholics began the fire on one of its inscriptions. Added in 1681(in the aftermath of the Exclusion Crisis and Popish Plot) to the North Panel Latin inscription was the line ‘But Popish frenzy, which wrought such horrors, is not yet quenched.’ The line was not removed from the monument until 1830. See www.themonument.info.
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{The Gracious Answer}
French threat to England, on the danger posed by the Catholic foreigner. The image of the French allegedly blending in surreptitiously with the rest of the Catholics reveals the fears of secretive foreign invasion, and an assumption that all Catholics were inherently un-English. Finally, the countess tells her sister prostitutes to continue in their trade, rather than counseling against it, because of its profitability: “give no Entertainment without Ready Money, lest you suffer Loss. For had we not been careful in that particular, we had neither gained Honour nor Rewards, which are now (as you know) both conferred upon Us.” Reiterating the point that Castlemaine’s money and titles came merely from prostitution, the petition closes with the words of an unrepentant sinner.

*The Poor-Whores Petition* and *The Gracious Answer* are important contributions to the public debate on the riots of 1668, and that they were published so quickly shows the immediate concerns of those who wrote them. Written two days after the beginning of the riots, *The Poor-Whores Petition* latches onto themes about prostitution and the figure of Castlemaine as a link between the court and the common brothel. Catholicism also emerged as a threat within this petition, particularly when it makes a plea for protection:

> Will your Eminency therefore be pleased to consider how highly it concerns You to restore us to our former practice with Honour, Freedom and Safety; For which we shall oblige our selves by as many Oaths as you please, To Contribute to *Your Ladyship*, (as our Sisters do at *Rome & Venice* to his *Holiness the Pope*) that we may have your *Protection* in the Exercise of all our Venerial pleasures.

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85 Ibid

86 A marked contrast to Castlemaine’s self-representation as Mary Magdalen and the Virgin Mary in portraits during the 1660s as discussed in the Introduction.

87 *The Poor-Whores Petition*
The corruption of ‘venerial pleasures’ reached all the way to the Pope himself, and the link made between Castlemaine and the Pope showed how she was seen as a conduit for the foreign. This passage also alludes to an old anti-popish trope which contended that the church itself was lax and corrupt – as shown by ‘Castlemaine’s’ desire to ‘debauch’ the youth through ‘loosness and ignorance’ – because it was believed that Italian brothels carried papal license, an idea which was still very much alive in England during the 1660s as shown in Tydings from Rome (1667) which states that ‘all things are vendible at Rome […] they have vast Revenues from the very Stues and Brothels.’ According to these charges, the Church not only condoned ‘venerial pleasures’ but also profited from them, equating the Pope himself to a pimp. The petitioners also ask for protection not as remorseful people, but hoping that the countess will let them continue in their trade. Interestingly, both petitions appropriated the voices of women, whether Madam Creswell and Damaris Page or Castlemaine herself in order to comment upon sex, female influence, Catholics, and the insidious contamination of the English by transgressive, commercialized sexuality and by foreign power and religion.

The Bawdy House Riots of 1668 provide an important example of how a court woman was incorporated into Restoration religio-political discourse. Literally an attack on London’s bawdy houses, the traditional charivari activity became an organized riot which resulted in treason trials and executions. That Charles and his government took the riots seriously is evidenced by their swift and harsh reactions, and the flurry of ‘petitions’ published in 1668 shows the debate that ensued. In tracing how social, religious, and

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88 Tydings from Rome: or, Englands alarm Wherein several grounds to suspect the prevalency of the popish interest are seasonably suggested: Londons ruine pathetically lamented; arguments to dissuade from the popish religion, are urged; and the duties of Christians in this time of common danger, and distraction, perswaded. London: printed in the year, 1667 (London, 1667), 21.
political concerns about foreign invasion, sexual immorality, and Catholicism, all embodied by Castlemaine, were linked to Restoration court women during the 1660s, their centrality to images of court mistresses during the Exclusion Crisis and Popish Plot becomes less startling. It is to those images we now turn. Whether placing the English court within a ‘Turkish’ setting, making accusations of disease, raising questions about the pregnant body, or revising the ‘memory’ of court women after their deaths, these images demonstrate the importance of studying the varied ways representation was linked to gender, and the central role women were made to play within the world of Restoration politics and culture.
Chapter 1
English Grand Signiors and Sultanas: ‘Harem Politics’
and the Restoration Court

‘Indamora had for him a thousand Charms; and contrary to that wretched custom which makes the Grand Signior’s Passion the sole Reward of her he favoured, and that they were confined to a Seraglio, without the Liberty to see any but the Sultan and the Eunuchs that attended him; I say, contrary to this observed Custom, Acmat gave the Title of Sultana of Barbary to Indamora, and restrained her in nothing but in the Point of Amour and Gallantry.’

‘Strange Weakness! But Kings in love are Men, and not Gods.’

‘Turkish’ courts filled with plotting courtiers and manipulative harem mistresses revolving around the comical and tragic figure of the clueless prince or sultan are the setting of Hattige: or the Amours of the King of Tamaran (1680 [original French version in 1676]) and The Sultana of Barbary (1689). The choice of such a locale was not merely to provide an exotic background to the stories, however, as becomes apparent by the fact that both books make obvious and pointed allusions to the court of Charles II. Building upon views developed over many years, and familiarized with the figure of the Ottoman through mediums such as plays, poems, histories, and broadsides, the English in the second half of the seventeenth century had strong – if often complicated – perceptions of the Ottoman. Encompassing important social, religious, and political assumptions, the figure of the Ottoman held a particular importance within the English mindset because of its links to ideas on power, empire, and trade. An image of menace, a target of mockery and even, sometimes, an object of reluctant admiration, the Ottoman was also a way to understand English national identity. At the core of using ‘oriental settings’ lies the importance of difference in the ‘generation of meaning,’ but as Ros Ballaster goes on to note, the ‘façade of difference’ is later revealed to cover similarities between the

89 The Amours of the Sultana of Barbary A Novel In Two Parts. The Story finish’d (London, 1689), 52-53.
90 Sébastien Brémond, Hattige: or the Amours of the King of Tamaran, A Novel (Amsterdam, 1683 [originally published in 1680]), 67. This chapter uses the 1683 edition, which appears to have few differences from the 1680 original apart from some changes in typeset and spacing. It too claims to be printed in ‘Amsterdam’ for ‘Simon the African, at the Black-Prince in the Sun.’
foreigners portrayed and the English themselves. Placing the king within the ‘alien’ seraglio revealed how the image of the Ottoman was utilized not only as a way to form national identity, but also to critique the English court.

Growing since the fourteenth century, the Ottoman Empire became a source of fear and fascination to Western Europeans. With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Ottomans became the successors of the Eastern Roman Empire, and incursions into Eastern and Central Europe made the powerful Islamic empire one to be respected and dreaded. By the time of the Restoration in England, the image of the Ottoman or ‘Turk’ was well-known, portrayed (often inaccurately) in cultural productions ranging from plays to histories. How much the English got right or wrong about the Ottomans is not what concerns this chapter, however. Instead, I focus on the ways in which the traditional images of the ‘Turk’ were appropriated during the Restoration to reflect upon the English court itself. The chapter concentrates in particular on two novels, *Hattige* and *Sultana*, which depict Charles II as a ‘Turkish’ king or sultan. The role played by harem mistresses within these self-proclaimed novels is especially important because they not only indicate Restoration assumptions about the mysterious and titillating Ottoman harem, but also about the meaning of female political influence within a royal court. When placed next to Restoration perceptions of the ‘Turk,’ the creation of Charles II into an Ottoman ruler surrounded by viziers and harem women takes on particular political importance as it questions the Englishness of the court itself.

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Introduction

The image of the ‘Turk’ in early modern England often served to create an oriental Other against which national and religious identities could be formed. Part of the usefulness of Ottoman representations came from the misconceived notion of the term ‘Turk’ itself, as it often conflated ‘Muslim’ and ‘Ottoman’ while the incredibly diverse Ottomans themselves used the term in a derogatory way toward the Anatolian peasantry.\textsuperscript{92} The longevity of the early modern European construction of the term, with its associations between the Ottomans, particularly Muslim Ottomans, and the ‘Turk,’ is shown in Samuel Chew’s influential \textit{The Crescent and the Rose} published in 1937. In his study, Chew focuses on English references to Islam during the Renaissance, and as Gerald MacLean points out, it is important because Chew’s work is the first foray into the subject, but he also took for granted the early modern use of the term ‘Turk’ and used it himself. In doing so, Chew did not take into account the political implications of such a word, and he also revealed how potent the term and its assumptions remained over the centuries.\textsuperscript{93}

The meaning of ‘Turk’ to the English was as multi-layered as the Ottoman Empire itself, yet perhaps the most obvious issue highlighted is that of religion. Certainly not the only Islamic area known to Europeans, the Ottoman Empire held a grasp over the

\textsuperscript{92}Gerald MacLean, \textit{Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 6. MacLean also quotes L. Carl Brown about the West’s compression of a diverse empire into a single word – ‘Turk’ or ‘Turkey,’ and how a ‘Turk’ to the Ottomans meant ‘rustic.’

\textsuperscript{93}Ibid 6. See Samuel C. Chew’s \textit{The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance} (New York: Octagon Books, 1974 [originally published in 1937]). Other terms such as ‘Moor’ were also employed during the early modern period to denote Muslims from other parts of the world, with Moors being defined as usually of an Arab and Berber descent from north-west Africa, but could also be used more generically for an Islamic person. \textit{OED.} MacLean notes the politics of the term ‘Turk,’ particularly in light of the 1923 declaration that all Turkish Republic inhabitants should be called ‘Turks,’ rendering invisible other ethnic groups within the nation such as Kurds and Armenians.
English Christian imagination as the locus of the Muslim other. Indeed, some in post-Reformation England questioned whether the ‘Turk’ should supplant the pope for the title of ‘Antichrist,’ an indication of the power that Islam and the ‘Turk’ had over the imagination of English Protestants. The word ‘Turk’ managed to conflate political, imperial, and religious assumptions into a tidy word that allowed for easy recognition rather than accuracy.

The term ‘Turk’ also reveals another side of the English identity, one which is linked to instability. As argued by Daniel Goffman, Daniel Vitkus, and Linda Colley, the image of the English colonist, so infamous in the nineteenth century, is inaccurate for the early modern period where English people abroad were much more vulnerable to captivity. The physical uneasiness of the Englishman abroad is also translated to those who remained at home in another use of the term ‘Turk.’ Used amongst the English themselves, the term could be used to indicate someone deemed to behave ‘inappropriately.’ As a negative term, the ‘Turk’ could infiltrate England in the guise of a native-born Christian, perhaps the ultimate way of ‘turning Turk,’ and possibly an allusion to another insidious infiltrator, the Catholic. Use of the word ‘Turk’ constituted a shorthand for a vast array of social, religious, and political issues for the early modern

94 MacLean 1
95 See Anthony Milton’s Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 [originally published in 1995]) particularly Chapter 2 ‘The rejection of Antichrist’ in which Milton discusses the particular debates around the Antichrist. For example, one ‘answer’ to the question of which was the Antichrist was to say that Protestant prophecy was ‘referring to the papacy alone, as the final Antichrist, while the Turk was merely an Antichrist,’ 115. See also Constance C. Relihan’s “Barnaby Riche’s Appropriation of Ireland and the Mediterranean World, or How Irish Is ‘The Turk’?,” in Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings, ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
96 This chapter will use both ‘Turk’ and Ottoman.
98 MacLean 7-8
English who ‘attempt[ed] to construct and impose a stable, definitive identity for the
Mediterranean [particularly the Levant],’ showing how the image of the Ottoman was
shaped by the English, but also the unease surrounding the identity of the English
themselves. In trying to create a definite Other, they were also trying to define
themselves.  

The ‘Turk’ was not simply a shadowy figure created within English imaginations,
however, but also embodied the thriving, growing, and incredibly cosmopolitan Ottoman
Empire itself. The Ottoman Empire grew to encompass parts of Europe such as modern
day Greece and Hungary, so fears of the empire were justified to many throughout
Europe, including the island nations of Britain. The complicated nature of European
interactions with the Ottomans is shown through the various approaches English
administrations took towards the empire, particularly in relation to diplomacy and trade.
The sending of Daniel Harvy as new ambassador to the Ottoman court in 1668
demonstrates the ambiguities felt by the English towards the Ottomans with Charles II
ordering Harvy to disembark at Smyrna rather than Constantinople because ‘his Majestye
will not venture his men-of-warr within y\(^e\) command of y\(^e\) Turkish castle.’

Constantinople, like the Ottoman Empire itself, held contradictory views for Europeans
as it ‘was synonymous with both barbarism and liberality,’ and much like ‘Turk’ was an
inaccurate term. Charles II was willing to have ambassadors there, but he did not trust the

99 Vitkus 8
100 The Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed by Alfred Morrison: The
Bulstrode Papers Volume I (1667-1675) (Printed for Private Circulation, 1897), 52. Entry from 18\(^{th}\) July
1668. Richard Bulstrode was a soldier and diplomatist who became an agent and later Envoy to Brussels.
He was knighted in 1675. After the Revolution of 1688, Bulstrode followed James II to St Germain where he
died in 1711 at the age of 101. The Bulstrode Papers are a collection of news-letters sent to Bulstrode
which kept him abreast of what was happening in the court and England at large. 1. Although
Constantinople fell in 1453, Westerners still called the city Constantinople up into the twentieth century. A
uniform use of the name Istanbul was not codified until 1930, when the Republic of Turkey passed the
Postal Service Law, requiring the use of Istanbul over other names, including Constantinople.
people of Constantinople to not attack his ship. The Ottoman military also caused great concerns in Restoration England, such as ‘a growing […] presence in Hungary and Eastern Europe,’ which Humberto Garcia argues, ‘took center stage in national debates about monarchical succession and religious authority,’ demonstrating that ‘Catholic France was not England’s only worry.’ Garcia’s contention underscores the emphasis placed upon the actions of the Ottoman Empire by the English, but also how they were used within debate about the English monarchy and religion.

Tying the Ottomans into debate over English issues is linked to the ‘sustained re-evaluation of the Ottoman Empire’ described by Matthew Birchwood, who argues that this reevaluation was made all the more important by ‘the pressing business of trade.’ The Ottomans were an extremely important trading partner for European countries, but even trade could be complicated as ideas of trade and treaty with the ‘Turks’ changed with differing ideas about ‘Christian unity’ or the Protestant and Catholic divide. Ambivalence continued to mark the relationship between the English and the Ottomans since the Ottomans were known to have strong ties to France, linking them to French absolutism, but at the same time seen as a friend to Protestants because of wars with the

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103 Birchwood 144
104 See Matthew Dimmock’s *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), particularly Chapter 1 “The ‘Turke’ and ‘Turkishness’ in England, 1529-1571.” During William Trumbull’s tenure as ambassador to Constantinople (1687-1691), he would complain that trade with the Ottomans was in ‘decaying Circumstances,’ but that it was an incredibly important enterprise: “beyond all doubt and Contradiction […] the Turky […] trade is of all others the most necessary and beneficial to this Nation, Because the Improvements which accrew from a manufacturing trade of this nature doe vastly surpass the advantages that any other trade can pretence to bring forth,” British Library Add. 72550 Trumbull Papers, Turkey Vol. IV Papers as Ambassador to Constantinople f. 82.
Much like the Tudor period, political and economic pressures could make the Ottoman a friend or foe, and sometimes both at the same time. Trade with the Ottomans also saw an influx of new products into England, including coffee and its offspring the coffeehouse. The importance of the coffeehouse to what Jürgen Habermas termed the ‘public sphere’ has long been debated, and the public sphere has been pushed back ever farther into history, but coffee and the coffeehouse were both imports, ‘new Turkish custom[s]’ which became definite parts of English culture.

In incorporating a ‘Turkish custom,’ the English show the complexities in building an identity. If one could call a fellow Englishman a ‘Turk’ for acting inappropriately, then the question became how to define a person participating in an Ottoman activity like drinking coffee in a ‘Turkish’ coffeehouse within England. While many simply embraced the new custom, others viewed it with suspicion on economic and social grounds, showing again the ambivalent nature of Ottoman representations. An anti-coffee broadside entitled *A Broad-side against Coffee; Or, the Marriage of the Turk* (1672) made its disapproval clear:

Coffee, a kind of *Turkish Renegade,*
Has late a match with *Christian water* made;
[. . .] But now, alas! the Drench has credit got,
And he’s no Gentleman that drinks it not;

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That such a Dwarf should rise to such a stature!¹⁰⁷

The allusion to marriage made the broadside more pointed as it questioned the union of the ‘Turkish’ coffee and the Christian water.¹⁰⁸ The broadside also accuses coffee of bewitching both the water and men, and alludes to the humble beginnings of coffee in England by stating, ‘A Coachman was the first (here) Coffee made, / And ever since the rest drive on the trade.’¹⁰⁹ The ‘Coachman’s drink,’ laments the author, has now become required of gentlemen, a bottom-up consumption which perhaps fuses with the problematic marriage of ‘Turk’ and Christian it implies. Worries about coffee and the coffeehouse are further linked to accusations that coffeehouses in Turkey and Persia contained male prostitutes, revealing perceptions of non-normative ‘Turkish’ sexuality.¹¹⁰ The same charges were not leveled at English coffeehouses, but belief that coffee could cause impotency or sterility highlights fears of abnormal sexuality being transferred to England through coffee.¹¹¹ Such a fear echoes concerns about ‘turning Turk’ found in earlier plays like Robert Daborn’s A Christian turn’d Turke: Or, The Tragicall Liues and

¹⁰⁷ A Broad-side against COFFEE; Or, the Marriage of the Turk (London, 1672).
¹⁰⁸ The marriage motif also highlights fears surrounding Christian conversion to Islam. As Bernadette Andrea explains, conversions could be based upon personal convictions, but often were seen as ‘coerced’ since a Christian man had to convert to marry a Muslim woman, or even more sinisterly, was forced to convert if caught in a ‘compromising position’ with a Muslim woman. Religious conversion through sex seems a titillating way of explaining the change from Christianity to Islam, but also implies a fragility of Christianity in the face of Ottoman power. Bernadette Andrea, Women and Islam in Early Modern Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3. This also echoes Jane Hwang Degenhardt’s argument that ‘the Renaissance stage reflected an awareness of how this type of conversion entailed a threat of reproductive contamination, or the process we now refer to as racial miscegenation.’ Jane Hwang Degenhardt, “Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger’s The Virgin Martir and the Early Modern Threat of ’Turning Turk,” ELH 73.1 (Spring 2006): 84-85.
¹⁰⁹ Broad-side
¹¹⁰ Cowan 41
¹¹¹ Ibid. Quaker founder George Fox shows English ideas on ‘Turkish’ sexuality in To the Great Turk, and His King at Argiers (1680) in which Fox accuses Ottomans of raiding ships, taking goods, beating people to get them to pay more than they were able and, most tellingly, of severe beatings for those who ‘refuse to lye with your men, as a man lyeth with a Woman.’ Fox goes on to speak out against all of these outrages, writing at length about sexual ‘abominations’ and the wrath that will fall not only on those who perform those acts, but leaders who allowed them to occur. Interestingly, Fox’s pamphlet uses not only passages from the Bible but also from the Koran, which was first translated into English in 1649. George Fox, To the Great TURK, and His King at Argiers (London, 1680), 2.
Deaths of the two Famous Pyrates, Ward and Dansiker (1612). Much like later concerns about Britons ‘going native’ in parts of the empire like India, the idea that Christians could ‘turn Turk’ was met with a dread tinged with fascination. This fear of being ‘turned Turk’ through contact with the Ottomans demonstrates again the vulnerability felt by the English as they grappled to create a national and religious identity.\textsuperscript{112}

Worries over coffee as displayed in A Broad-side against Coffee indicate the importance of discourse to the creation of Ottoman representations. As Matthew Birchwood argued, knowledge of the Ottoman Empire was particularly important for economic reasons, but did not mean that the English had an accurate picture of the Ottomans. The term ‘Turk’ itself, as noted earlier, is incorrect from the viewpoint of the Ottomans, but this chapter is not concerned with accuracy but with what discourse reveals about the issues and anxieties of the English Restoration itself.

The figure of the Ottoman continued in importance into the Restoration with ‘Turks’ in histories and on the stage. English histories of the Ottomans went into multiple editions: Richard Knolles’s Generall Historie of the Turkes, originally published in 1603, was in its sixth edition in 1687 and a two-volume abridgement was produced in 1701.\textsuperscript{113} Perhaps the most significant Restoration era history of the Turks was written by Paul Rycaut who was a counsel at Smyrna (1667-1678) and a member of the Royal Society.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{112}See Nabil Matar’s Islam in Britain 1558-1685 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), particularly Chapter 1 “‘Turning Turke’: conversion to Islam in English writings.”

\textsuperscript{113}Christine Woodhead, ‘Knolles, Richard (late 1540s–1610)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/15752, accessed 27 July 2012]. A possible reason why Knolles wrote his history, according to Woodhead, supports Birchwood’s claim that economics pressed for knowledge of the Ottomans: “the suggestion came possibly from Sir Peter Manwood in the light of growing interest in the Ottoman state in London following the chartering in 1581 of the Turkey (subsequently Levant) Company and increased commercial and diplomatic relations with the empire.”

\textsuperscript{114}For an example of an analysis of altogether falsified histories and their political uses, see Christine Isom-Verhaaren’s “Royal French Women in the Ottoman Sultans’ Harem: The Political Uses of Fabricated Accounts from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-first Century,” Journal of World History 17.2 (2006).
A noted authority on the Ottomans, Rycaut wrote *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* in 1667, and it went through many subsequent editions into the early eighteenth-century and was translated into six languages.\textsuperscript{115} In this history, Rycaut promises explanations of “The Maxims of Turkish Polity, the most Material Points of the Mahometan Religion, their Sects and Heresies, their Convents and Religious Votaries. Their Military Discipline, with an Exact Computation of their Forces both by Sea and Land” along with various illustrations of ‘Turkish’ dress.\textsuperscript{116} The wide variety of topics covered by Rycaut show the varied interests people had concerning the Ottomans, ranging from religion to warfare to costume.

The interest in the ‘Turk’ reached onto the Restoration stage, where plays highlighted the usefulness of the figure of the ‘Turk’ in discussing the state of England. Elkanah Settle’s *The Empress of Morocco* (1673) looked to questions of legitimacy and the problems of dynasty.\textsuperscript{117} Henry Neville Payne’s *The Siege of Constantinople* (1674) also links English politics to the figure of the ‘Turk,’ with one major theme being that ‘the real threat to the civilised state is posed, not by the advancing Ottoman Turks, but by seditious elements already operative within the city walls,’ pointing to the dangers of seditious English ‘Turks’ in another major city, London.\textsuperscript{118} Plays set within ‘Turkish’

\textsuperscript{115} See Sonia P. Anderson’s *An English Consul in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna, 1667-1678* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1989). As Anderson notes at the end of her book, ‘He continued to update his Turkish history, in spite of waning powers, and was recalled just in time to see the last part published before his death in 1700 at the age of seventy. His work was to inform European attitudes to Turkey for another century,’ 293. See also Anderson’s ‘Rycaut, Sir Paul (1629–1700),’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/24392, accessed 27 July 2012].


\textsuperscript{118} Ibid 170
settings allowed for discussions of English problems, a conceit which is utilized in
*Hattige* and *Sultana* to describe the court of Charles II and the people surrounding him.

With the shaping of the Ottoman image over the previous century and the wealth
of knowledge surrounding the ‘Turk,’ the importance and ambiguities of that
representation become apparent. The ‘Turk’ could be both menace and friend, creator of
instability and identity, and placing Charles II and his court within this context shows
how both the king and court, particularly mistresses, were created anew in the English
version of the Ottoman image, and what that divulged about the court itself. The
Restoration ‘Turk’ came from a tradition of perceptions about Ottomans and Muslims
more broadly, and that context is an important backdrop to this chapter. Seeing how and
why the English saw Ottomans as they did, this chapter now turns to what it meant to
place the court of Charles II itself within a ‘Turkish’ world centered upon harem politics.

**Hattige, The Sultana of Barbary, and Harem Politics**

His green *seraglio* has its eunuchs too;  
Lest any tyrant him outdo.\(^{119}\)

Andrew Marvell’s “The Mower against Gardens” (1681) takes part in the debate ‘aroused
by garden fanaticism’ during the seventeenth century which focused on ideas of
cultivation, artificiality, and nature.\(^{120}\) Into this poem, Marvell inserts allusions to a
seraglio and tyrant, placing images of the ‘Turk’ within a discussion of nature. The
Ottoman Empire retained its luster of excitement and danger into the Restoration, but as
Marvell made clear in his poem, the Ottomans were also associated with luxury, tyranny,

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\(^{120}\) Ibid 131
and depravity. The term *seraglio* points to concepts of the foreign Other, Nigel Smith notes, since Marvell’s use of the term denotes the ‘alien nature’ of both the word and the concept itself to the English.

The fascination with the seraglio and the women therein revealed an interest in the ‘secret’ world of the Ottomans, as well as the more titillating beliefs that Western Europeans had about the ‘Grand Signior’s Mistresses.’ The extended title of another Restoration era history of the Ottomans, Francois de Chassepol’s *The History of the Grand Viziers Mahomet, and Achmet Coprogli, Of the three last Grand Signiors*, translated into English in 1677, underlines topics that Western Europeans wanted to read about: “Their Sultana’s and Chief Favourites; With the most secret Intrigues of the Seraglio. Besides several other particulars of the Wars of Dalmatia, Transylvania, Hungary, Candia, and Poland.” Here, the military campaigns of the Ottomans seem of secondary importance to the intrigues of the seraglio and tales of the sultanas and favorites of the Grand Signiors. The importance of speaking about the seraglio is also highlighted by Rycaut who claims that the reader would be angry with him for not talking about the seraglio in his history. After writing about the eunuchs of the seraglio, Rycaut eases into the ‘Ladies of the Seraglio’:

> And since I have brought my Reader into the quarters [. . .] of the sequestered Ladies of the Seraglio, he may chance to take it unkindly, should I leave him at the door, and not introduce him into those Apartments, where the Grand Signior’s Mistresses are lodged [. . .].

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121 Ibid 134 notes 27 and 28
122 Ibid. Smith also discusses the use of italics for *seraglio* in the 1681 publication of the poem.
123 Francois de Chassepol, *The History of the Grand Viziers Mahomet, and Achmet Coprogli, Of the three last Grand Signiors* (London, 1677), Title Page. De Chassepol’s history was translated by John Evelyn, Jr. and licensed by Roger L’Estrange.
124 Rycaut 69
Rycaut took for granted that his (male) readers wanted to enter the forbidden doors of the seraglio, while de Chassepol openly acknowledged on his title page the selling power of the seraglio and its mysterious inmates.

Certainly the seraglio or harem was a source of fascination and mystery to the English as it was seen as a forbidden enclave of women, one that even those who went to the Empire did not get to see. Rycaut wrote about his knowledge of the ‘Apartments’ where the ‘Grand Signior’s Mistresses are lodged’:

And though I ingenuously confess my acquaintance there (as all other conversation with Women in Turkey) is but strange and unfamiliar; yet not to be guilty of this discourtesie, I shall to the best of my information write a short Account of these Captivated Ladies [ . . . ] .

Admitting that his knowledge is at least second-hand, Rycaut plunges forth into four pages explaining the organization of the seraglio, the teaching of the girls how to please the Grand Signior, and also relates the Handkerchief Story in which the sultan throws a handkerchief at the foot of the woman he wishes to sleep with on a given night. Rycaut also emphasized that the seraglio women were ‘fair’ and that virginity upon entering was paramount: “here an Army of Virgins make it the onely study and business of their life to obtain the single nodd of invitation to the Bed of their great Master.” The allusion to the military, albeit an ‘Army of Virgins,’ is further highlighted when Rycaut notes that many of these women were captured by the sword, brought back as spoils of war, truly ‘Captivated Ladies.’ Rycaut also mentions the hierarchy within the seraglio and the

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125 Ibid. The ‘discourtesie’ Rycaut wished to avoid was the before mentioned quotation of upsetting the (male) reader by not taking him inside the doors of the seraglio after talking about the eunuchs that protected it. For information on the growth of a ‘culture of fact’ and its importance to historical writing – alluded to when Rycaut states he will write about the seraglio and its ‘Ladies’ to the ‘best of my information’ - see Barbara J. Shapiro’s A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), particularly Chapter 2 “‘Fact’ and History.”
126 Ibid
127 Ibid
importance of marriage and children to the women, but the opening image of the ‘Army of Virgins’ is particularly striking as Rycaut readily admits that he had no first-hand knowledge of the seraglio. His need to mention it at all for fear of ‘discourtesie’ reveals how important the image of the seraglio was within the Western European reader’s mindset – the history of the Ottoman Empire was not complete without a relation of the seraglio.

Rycaut may have done more in his little chapter about ‘The Apartments of the Women’ then simply dash off a few pages to satiate his reader’s curiosity. It is worth detailing his four pages on the seraglio to see Rycaut’s presentation of the power structure within the harem and the connections between sex and political influence. After his first paragraph of explaining why he was including a description of the seraglio and qualifying his limited knowledge, Rycaut then states that most were prisoners of war. Only women deemed ‘worthy of […] Preferment’ were allowed into the seraglio, worthiness being determined by beauty and virginity.\textsuperscript{128} Rycaut then describes how the harem women were split into ‘two Odæs’ or chambers ‘where they are to work, sow and embroider.’\textsuperscript{129} Rycaut then states that each woman has her own bed, and ‘between every five of which is a Kadun or grave Matron laid to oversee and hear what actions or discourse passes either immodest or undecent […]’, seeming to imply that these women – though ‘undoubted Virgins’ - would still indulge in immodest words and actions if given the opportunity.\textsuperscript{130} These women have chambers for music and dance, and they work carefully on their ‘carriage and comportment […] as that which opens the door of the

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid 71
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid 69-71
Sultan’s affections, and introduces them into Preferment and Esteem.¹³¹ From this group of women, the Queen-Mother ‘chuses her court,’ and those chosen ‘are always richly attired and adorned with all sorts of precious Stones, fit to receive the addresses and amours of the Sultan,’ and these women are also overseen by the Kadun Kahia or ‘Mother of the Maids’ who, like the Kadun, ‘correct any immodest or light behaviour amongst them,’ again emphasizing the importance of virginity and modesty.¹³²

The closed nature of the seraglio is revealed when Rycaut describes how the people are expected to distance themselves from the walls of the garden, on pain of death, when the sultan wishes ‘to dally with a certain number of these Ladies.’¹³³ Inside the walls, the women hope to charm the sultan with their conversation, dancing, and singing in order ‘to make themselves Mistresses of the Grand Signior’s affection.’¹³⁴ If a woman is chosen through the ceremony of the sultan throwing his handkerchief to her, ‘she is ravished with the joy before she is deflowered by the Sultan’ and ‘immediately she is congratulated by all the Ladies of the Court, for the great honour and favour she hath received.’¹³⁵ After preparing to see the sultan by bathing and donning the finest clothing and jewels, chanting accompanies her as she goes to the sultan’s bedchamber. After the sultan takes her virginity, the woman is conducted by the Kadan [sic] Kahia ‘with the same Musick as before,’ but now she ‘hath afterwards the lodging and attendants that belong to Hunkiar Asa-kisi, that is, the Royal Concubine.’¹³⁶ The only further wish this concubine could have would be to give birth to a son, earning her the title of Hasaki

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¹³¹ Ibid 71
¹³² Ibid
¹³³ Ibid
¹³⁴ Ibid
¹³⁵ Ibid 72
¹³⁶ Ibid
Sultana and a coronation ‘with a small Coronet of Gold beset with precious Stones.’

Other women who had sons would not be crowned but simply called by their rank (first concubine, second concubine, etc). Rycaut then claims that the sultan’s daughters were married at the age of four or five to ‘some great Pasha or Beglerbeg with all the Pomp and Solemnities of Marriage,’ and the girl was to be raised at her husband’s court.

Finally, Rycaut tells of what happens to these harem women after the death of the sultan. If the woman was the mother only of girls then she was able to ‘come forth from the Seraglio and marry with any person of Quality,’ while those who bore sons were required to ‘pass a retired life without redemption’ at the old seraglio. The only way for her to leave the seraglio was if her own son ascended to the throne and he ‘release[d] his Mother from that restraint, and ma[d]e her sharer with him in all his Happiness and Glory.’

Rycaut’s description of the Ottoman seraglio is short, but gives interesting insight into English perceptions on the structure of the harem and the interplay between power and sex. A clear hierarchy is demarcated, with captured women being placed within a seemingly rigid atmosphere, separated into groups where they sewed and worked on their dancing and singing in hopes of gaining the attention of the sultan. There are women to oversee their behavior to make sure that they remain modest, and the queen mother (or sultan valide) picks the court women from which the next concubines would be chosen by the sultan. If a harem woman is lucky enough to catch the eye of the sultan, she is

137 Ibid 73
138 Ibid
139 Ibid
140 Leslie P. Peirce argues that Rycaut glosses over the central role of the valide sultan (royal mother) within the seraglio’s hierarchy, choosing instead to highlight the ‘favorite’ or principal concubine (haseki). Peirce hypothesizes that he did so because the reader ‘would find it more satisfying to believe that power lay with the sultan’s concubine rather than his mother.’ Leslie P. Peirce, The Imperial Harem: Women and
provided with her own household and servants, with further titles available if she is able to provide the sultan with the first heir. Such a power structure indicates the central role of the sultan, underscored by the emphasis placed upon the women’s virginity and education in pleasing the sultan.

This description of the harem’s structure also highlights important connections Rycaut made between sex and political influence. Rycaut is careful to explain that often harem women are prisoners of war, making them from the beginning helpless against the power of the sultan. Emphasis upon virginity is also paramount with only those women who were ‘undoubted virgins’ being allowed to even enter the seraglio. Taught only to please the sultan, these women are also policed to keep them from any immodesty or indecency. Rycaut seems skeptical of the harem woman’s actual modesty, however, when – after describing how people knew to keep their distance when the sultan wanted ‘to dally’ with the women in the garden – he states that these women use their charms to gain the sultan’s affections ‘and then let themselves loose to all kind of lasciviousness and wanton carriage, acquitting themselves as much of all respect to Majesty, as they do to modesty.’

According to Rycaut, these women used a façade of modesty to gain the affection of the sultan, but would soon drop the mask after gaining what they wanted. The connections between sex and power are ultimately shown in the sultan’s choice of concubine, who after losing her virginity gains her own household and servants, and perhaps a crown if she becomes pregnant soon enough. All rank is only available through

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Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 117. Peirce also notes that ‘it would seem that it is only in the Ottoman tradition (with the exception of the early generations) that the functions of mother and of wife were delineated separately, in contrast, for example, to the Mongold, the Timurids, and the Safavids,’ 90. Peirce also notes an important exception to this rule in the life of Hurrem, known to Europeans as Roxelana/Roxolana, the wife of Suleyman, who will be discussed later in the chapter.

Rycaut 71-72
the sultan’s choice of concubine, meaning that it was imperative that a woman make herself as desirable as possible. The importance of children is also noted, as only through the birth of a son could a woman possibly rise to Hasaki Sultana, but the ending of the chapter is ominous. When a sultan died, the only way for a mother of his son to leave the seraglio was if her son ascended to the throne and released her. Not only is this an indication again of how totally dependent these women were upon men – either the sultan or her own son – but also leaves the possibility of scheming amongst the mothers of boys to gain their child the throne, if for no other reason than to leave the seraglio. The connection between political power and sex within Rycaut’s harem is obvious as the only way to gain preferment was through the sultan and his sexual appetite, but Rycaut also makes the point that modesty was deceiving, perhaps suggesting that the sultan was being fooled by the women surrounding him.

The validity of Rycaut’s claims about the harem are questionable given his admission that he himself did not enter one, but the accuracy of his description is not important within the confines of this chapter. Instead, Rycaut’s account gives key insight into the Restoration mindset on gender assumptions and the connections between sex and power, projecting them onto the mysterious (and misunderstood) harem. Placed within this context, the novels Hattige (1680) and Sultana (1689) cast interesting light upon the ways in which the Ottoman was used to reflect back upon the English themselves. Transporting Charles II and his court into an Ottoman setting, these stories use the familiar but complicated figure of the ‘Turk’ to grapple with English anxieties about sex and female influence. The particular emphasis on the harem reveals the central role royal
mistresses were perceived to play within courtly life, and the stories focus upon the problems such influence could bring to a ruler and his people.

Both Hattige and Sultana claim on their title pages to be novels, and though they lack printed keys, both have characteristics of the roman à clef in their often thinly veiled references to Charles and his mistresses. Hattige is the more ambiguous of the two, and often the funnier. An English translation of the Frenchman Sébastien Brémond’s 1676 Hattige appeared in 1680, but the original French edition was a sensation in London since its original publication.\(^{142}\) Brémond lived in England from 1672-74 and 1676-78 and was apparently known to the king and court, although ‘a minor French novelist,’ through an association with Robert Cambert, who became maitre de la musique to the Duchess of Portsmouth.\(^{143}\) Brémond’s acquaintance with the court is not the only reason to believe that Hattige was written about the Restoration court. Edwin P. Grobe argues that Brémond drew inspiration from his own travels in Tunis and the nation’s ‘weak-willed monarch’ Caragus, but that the author also used the similarities between Caragus and Charles’s courts to write ‘a number of lengthy satirical passages directed against Charles II and his notorious mistress, the Duchess of Cleveland […]’.\(^{144}\) The contemporary belief that Brémond was writing about Charles II’s court is seen in the ‘brisk’ sales of the

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\(^{142}\) Although printed anonymously, many attribute Hattige erroneously to Gabriel Brémond, sometimes conflating Gabriel Brémond and Sébastien Brémond into the same person. Edwin P. Grobe convincingly argues, however, that they were two separate men and that Sébastien was the author of Hattige. For conflation of the two Brémonds, see the EEBO and British Library databases and Patricia Francis Cholakian, *Women and the politics of self-representation in seventeenth-century France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 104. For Grobe’s arguments see “Sébastien Bremond: His Life and His Works” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1954) and “Gabriel and Sébastien Brémond,” *Romance Notes* 4.2 (Spring 1963).

\(^{143}\) John Buttrey, “New Light on Robert Cambert in London, and His “Ballet et Musique,”” *Early Music* 23.3 (May 1995): 210-11 for more on Brémond as librettist in Cambert’s Ballet et Musique. Buttrey’s article also discusses the use of musicians in the battle between Hortense Mancini and Portsmouth, as some within the court tried to replace Portsmouth with Mancini, which while briefly seemed likely ultimately proved unsuccessful. See also Grobe for identification of Sébastien Brémond as the author of the Ballet et Musique, “Gabriel and Sébastien Brémond,” 135.

\(^{144}\) Grobe, “His Life,” 76
French version and the scramble to print keys, and those still in existence all identity the King of Tamaran with Charles II and Hattige with Cleveland.\textsuperscript{145} Although Brémond ‘persistently maintained that he had not intended to make any scandalous allusions to the King,’ both the reading public and Restoration government thought otherwise, as shown in an investigation by Secretary of State for the Northern Department, Joseph Williamson.\textsuperscript{146} Williamson wanted to dash the hopes of Brémond’s friend and publisher Richard Bentley, who planned to profit off of Hattige’s popularity by translating it into English, by refusing him a license. That the book was known in London is shown by an informant writing to Williamson that he had purchased a new edition of Hattige at Bentley’s shop on April 21, 1676 – apparently Brémond needed to resupply the market with a new edition – and the informant even theorized that the book was being printed in London itself.\textsuperscript{147}

The enduring appeal of Hattige is seen by another French edition, entitled La Belle Turc, being released in 1680 and would be reissued four times during the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{148} An English translation did not appear until 1680 with further editions in 1683 and 1692, and, renamed The Beautiful Turk, was printed in a collection of novels in 1720 and 1729. The popularity of the French version, and the struggle to have it translated into English, show how Hattige was thought to be based upon the court of Charles II, even if Brémond himself denied the claim. As Grobe argues, ‘there can be no doubt that he [Brémond] wrote many passages of Hattigé with the Restoration Court of Charles II specifically in mind,’ and so it is important to see what the novel reveals about attitudes

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\textsuperscript{145} Ibid 77
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\textsuperscript{146} Ibid 82
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\textsuperscript{147} Ibid 79. The letter from the informant is cited by Grobe as S.P. Dom., Car. II. 380, No. 206, dated April 21, 1676.
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\textsuperscript{148} Ibid 84
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toward the English court. That Bentley wanted to translate it into English demonstrates not only the book’s popularity, but perhaps also that it was seen to echo popular feeling about Charles II and his mistress Cleveland – that it spoke to the English mindset. A scandalous tale filled with sex and intrigue, *Hattige* was also a critique of the English court and its ‘Turkish’ ways.

*Hattige* opens with a battle at sea with an old Corsair Gourdan and a young Knight of Malta on one side, and the ‘Turks’ on the other. Upon winning the battle, the Corsair and Knight take the ‘Turks’ and ‘Moors’ prisoner, but Gourdan hides a ‘Turkish Lady of Eminent Quality, and one of the handsomest Women that had ever been seen.’

After hearing a rumor of the woman, the Knight finds Razy, one of the woman’s slaves, who tells him the story of Hattige her mistress. Mistress of the King of Tamaran, Hattige was inconstant but able to retain her hold over the king while struggling with Osman, his Chief Aga and favorite, for control. Hattige begins an affair with the master gardener’s nephew Rajep, and although Osman tries to ruin her by exposing the affair, the king’s love for her blinds him to her unfaithfulness. Eventually the king begins his own affair with Roukia, the master gardener’s wife, and upon discovering Hattige’s new dalliance with Roukia’s husband Meharen, tries to switch Hattige for Roukia. Hattige claims a religious calling to travel to Mecca in order to leave, and is then captured after the battle at sea. The Knight of Malta, though warned by Razy, wants to see Hattige and helps her escape Gourdan, but leaves her upon arrival in Tunis even though his attraction for her is apparent.

*The Sultana of Barbary* is a more straight forward *roman a clef* which tells the story not only of the Sultana of Barbary, but also of the court of Acmat the Grand

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149 *Hattige* 10
Signior. Like *Hattige, Sultana* sprang from the tumultuous years of the 1670s and 80s, and was published not only after Charles II’s death, but the Glorious Revolution. *Sultana* does not appear to have the same colorful publication history of *Hattige*, but Ros Ballaster claims that the preface to *Sultana* states it was written in 1684 but could not be published until 1689. No preface is found in the *Sultana* copy this dissertation uses, but such a dating seems odd given the sultan’s death at the end of the novel since Charles II did not die until 1685. The clamping down on printed court criticism after 1682 through the king’s death, as noted by Sonya Wynne, supports the statement that *Sultana* could not be printed in 1684, and it is interesting to see *Sultana* through the dating to that year. If indeed the preface is telling the truth that *Sultana* was written in 1684, then the death of the sultan takes on new meaning as a warning to Charles II of the dangers imposed upon him by the mistresses surrounding him, particularly Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth. Even if the preface is untruthful about being written in 1684, it appears that the writer wants his work to be seen as prescient, playing again upon ideas of the dangers of female influence.

Once again a tale of power struggles, *Sultana* sees the fall of the Sultana Homira and rise of Indamora, Sultana of Barbary. Characters conspire throughout, with Homira attempting to bring down Indamora, and the Grand Vizier Mahomet trying to keep Homira out, all surrounding the seemingly blind Acmat. Indamora was herself a captive, a German Christian brought to the court of the Grand Signior after being captured while traveling to Russia. Indamora’s old love Agustus, exiled for dueling with and killing another of Indamora’s lovers, comes to Constantinople, and they begin a dalliance while

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150 Ballaster 173-174
Indamora also wants to retain her place at the sultan’s court. Other amours include a proposed marriage between the Grand Vizier’s daughter Zayda and the sultan’s brother Mustapha that falls through, leading Zayda to align herself with Homira, and Homira’s own affairs with Amurath and Mustapha. In the end, Indamora wants to leave the seraglio and claims a need to leave court to repent her sins, a request made more imperative when circumstances lead to Agustus’s banishment, but the sultan refuses to let Indamora go. Indamora’s hatred for the sultan leads her to poison him and soon after his death leave Constantinople to join Agustus.

*Hattige* is a bit more opaque than *Sultana of Barbary* in its characterizations—though it is clear that Hattige stands in for Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland and the king for Charles II, other characters are less easily identifiable. The Chief Aga Osman could be George Villiers, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and Rajep was possibly a stand-in for John Churchill, later the first Duke of Marlborough, who was reportedly Cleveland’s lover in the 1670s. Sultana of Barbary is clearer in its characters’ identities, and the original owner of the British Library copy William Musgrave was confident enough to write his opinions on who the characters represented in the margins of the book, and also in a handwritten key on the back page. Acmat was Charles, Mustapha his brother James, Duke of York, while the Sultanas Homira and Indamora were the Duchess of Cleveland and the Duchess of Portsmouth respectively. Other characters included were

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Philippe de Vendôme as Agustus, and Catherine of Braganza as the otherwise nameless Sultana Queen. Some identifications are more uncertain, such as the Grand Vizier Mahomet Bassa and Zayda his daughter who is jilted by Mustapha. Ros Ballaster claims that the Grand Vizier is Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon and Zayda his daughter Anne Hyde. These two stand-ins seem unlikely, however, as Clarendon was toppled from power in 1667 – so would not have been part of a scheme to replace Cleveland with de Kéroualle - and Anne Hyde did marry James, Duke of York, even if he was notoriously unfaithful to her. Additionally, when Mustapha tells Acmat of his intentions to marry, the sultan exclaims, ‘Was it not enough to allow him once the Liberty of pleasing his Inclinations, by a Marriage contrary to mine, but he must again repeat the very same Crime?’ Mustapha is looking to marry a second time, and Anne Hyde died in 1671, before de Kéroualle was made Duchess of Portsmouth in 1673.

William Musgrave’s own identifications are not without ambiguity themselves. Although he equates the Grand Vizier with George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham when the character originally appears on page 11 and in the handwritten key in the back, on page 45 he claims that the Grand Vizier is Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington and one time Secretary of State to Charles II. The possible conflation between the two comes at the part of the story where the Grand Vizier is persuading the captive Indamora to

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154 Philippe de Vendôme was believed to be Portsmouth’s lover in 1683. For a particularly colorful description of Vendôme, see Bryan Bevan, Charles the Second’s French Mistress: A Biography of Louise de Kéroualle Duchess of Portsmouth, 1649-1734 (London: Robert Hale, 1972), 144-145. Bevan believes that Vendôme was the only man Portsmouth was unfaithful to Charles II with ‘for she was no wanton by nature’ – certainly a different opinion than the libelers of the Restoration – and states that even when she returned to France, Portsmouth did not resume her relationship with him because ‘she had no doubt discovered his real character,’ 145 and 174. Vendôme was called Le grand Prieur (the Grand Prior) because of his rank in the Knights of Malta, linking him to Agustus (who is called a prelate in Sultana) and also making an interesting allusion to the Knight of Malta in Hattige, although it is highly unlikely that Hattige means to represent Vendôme.

155 Ballaster 173

156 Sultana 62-63. Although published anonymously, the book was licensed by Robert Midgley in October 1689 and sold by R. Baldwin in the Old Bailey.
become the sultan’s mistress. Arlington was accused of being a ‘pimp’ and a ‘bawd’ for the king in satires for his role in managing mistresses and convincing de Kéroualle to become Charles’s mistress in 1670.\textsuperscript{157} Buckingham was also accused of being the king’s ‘pimp’ in “The King’s Vows” (1670) for his failed attempt to make Frances Stuart, future Duchess of Richmond, the king’s mistress.\textsuperscript{158} It would appear then that both men were seen to be part of the sordid exploits of Charles and his mistresses. The plotting against Homira/Cleveland makes the argument for Buckingham more plausible, however, as Buckingham is known to have worked against her even though they were related, and Arlington’s own daughter Isabella married Henry Fitzroy, one of the acknowledged children Cleveland had by Charles, in 1672. Musgrave’s own reversal on page 46 to the Duke of Buckingham shows how the Grand Vizier was more likely Buckingham, even if conflated slightly with Arlington’s involvement with de Kéroualle.

The character of Zayda is also tricky as Musgrave identifies her with Susan Lady Bellasis [or Belasyse] of Osgodby, who was not the daughter of Buckingham but of Sir William Armine. Bellasis was known to be a mistress of James, Duke of York however, and was lumped into the general miasma of the ladies of court in the poem “Ladies’ March” (1681): “The next that marched was Bellasis, / She who can pox you with a kiss.”\textsuperscript{159} It is difficult to tell if Lady Bellasis is who the author intended for Zayda, but, as Rebecca Bullard states, one of the pleasures of the roman à clef genre is that ‘it offers its readers an intellectual challenge as it asks them to crack a code.’\textsuperscript{160} Perhaps some of

\textsuperscript{157} Andrew Marvell, “Second Advice to a Painter,” \textit{POAS}, Vol 1, 51 l 334, and the anonymous “The King’s Vows,” \textit{POAS}, Vol 1, 161 l 43. See note 334 for “Second Advice to a Painter” and note 43 for “The King’s Vows.”
\textsuperscript{158} “The King’s Vows,” 161 l 44
\textsuperscript{159} “Ladies March,” \textit{CSR}, 58 ll 75-76.
these characters were meant to be amalgamations of people – like Arlington and Buckingham – allowing for more entertainment in thinking over the puzzle. Ultimately the exact identities of all the characters are not as important as examining the characterization of the court itself, with the center belonging to the sultan and his sultanas.

Both *Hattige* and *Sultana* take place within lands considered ‘Turkish’ and both concern struggles for control over the king or sultan, whether through sex or political favoritism. Ros Ballaster dismisses both novels as not fitting the usual model of ‘oriental scandal fiction’ because of the light treatment received by Charles. Rather than being the despotic ruler so often associated with this type of fiction – the only despotric characteristics Ballaster notes are the sultan’s preoccupation with pleasures and mistresses with a talent for words – the Charles of these novels is a ‘tolerant king’ posing no threat. The perceived power of women is thus also less menacing because of the easygoing nature of the ruler. Ballaster’s judgment may be too quick, however, as tyranny was long linked not simply with the wielding of political power, but also with ‘personal disorder and licentiousness.’ Accusations of tyranny were also directed at Charles in libels such as “A New Ballad” (1679) in which the king is described as

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161 *The Sultana of Barbary* is set within Constantinople, while *Hattige* takes place in Tamaran. There is a village on Mauritius called Tamarin, and Gran Canaria in the Canary Islands was called Tamarán in the native Guanche language, but since Hattige was on one of three ships ‘bound with Pilgrims for Mecha’ and captured by ‘Corsaires of Malta’ near the coasts of Tunis, it seems unlikely that Mauritius is the intended setting. References to Hattige and other characters as ‘Turkish’ – and the intended pilgrimage to Mecca – however, show that whatever the location of the story, the intent was to represent the Islamic ‘Turk,’ so if Gran Canaria was the setting, it is worth noting that the Canary Islands were a Spanish colony from the late fifteenth century (although there were sieges by others such as the Dutch and Ottomans), making another possible equation between the ‘Turkish’ and Catholic threats. Grobe claims that Tamaran is ‘a mythical Turkish kingdom closely patterned after the Tunisian settings of Bremond’s earlier romances,’ “His Life,” 76.

162 Ballaster 174. Ballaster claims that Charles is often ‘treated lightly’ by oriental scandal fiction.

arbitrarily ruling but also given over entirely to pleasure: “I am a senseless thing […] / Men call me a king […] / To my luxury and ease / They brought me o’er the seas.” The linking of Charles’s ‘sexual excesses’ to concepts of tyranny reveal that the sex-befuddled rulers in *Hattige* and *Sultana* held more powerful political meaning than Ballaster allows. These novels literally transform the king into an Ottoman sultan with all of the political connotations that implies, hinting again that they were not so ‘light’ on Charles. Additionally, the seemingly benign nature of both the King of Tamaran and Acmat allowed for harem women to wield undue influence, which played upon gendered perceptions of female influence and ‘the political chaos ambitious women might provoke.’ In permitting such chaos, the benignly neglectful nature of the rulers in both novels has malign consequences because it bestows power in the hands of women. The exploring of Ottoman history provided an example of disastrous feminine power with the famed story of an ‘over-indulgent’ Suleyman toward his wife Hurrem/Khourrem, or Roxolana as she was known to Europeans, and the execution of Suleyman’s son Mustapha in 1553. This episode demonstrated for the English the real dangers surrounding women and harem politics and how being a ‘tolerant’ king may be far from good for the nation.

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166 Judy A. Hayden, “The Tragedy of Roxolana in the Court of Charles II,” in *Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture*, ed. Galina I. Yermolenko (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 79.
The Sultan Swayed

His Scepter, and’s Pricke are boeth of one Length,
And she may sway the one, who plays with th’other. 168

O happy Sultan! whom we barbarous call,
How much refin’d art thou above us all!
Who envies not the joys of thy Serrail!
Thee, like some God, the trembling crowd adore,
Each man’s thy slave, and Woman-kind thy Whore.169

The Earl of Rochester’s infamous “A Satyr on Charles II” is an often repeated bit of poetry which encapsulates not only the wit and obscenity of the earl himself, but also ideas on the king and how he (was) ruled. By implication, the king was susceptible to those who were able to satisfy him in bed, and consequently there was a danger of women’s influence becoming too strong at the court. Hattige echoes this idea when Razy tells the Knight her mistress’s story:

The Government of the Kingdom was in a manner in her hands; every one made his court to her, and whoever expected Favours or Rewards, must apply himself to Hattige, by whom all was granted, as the pipe that convey’d the Royal bounty to the Subject [. . .].170

It was this feminine usurpation of royal authority that our two novels of the ‘Turk’ explore and expose, while also connecting Charles’s mistresses and sexual excesses to ideas of tyranny. Rochester’s “A very heroical epistle in answer to Ephelia” claims that all envy ‘the joys of thy Serrail,” but the next lines are decidedly darker with allusions to all men as slaves and all women whores to the sultan/king. As both of Rochester’s poems make clear, sex is at the center of Charles’s reign, with his overindulged libido turning him into a tyrannical sultan who enslaves and makes whores of his subjects, but at the

168 “A Satyr,” Rochester, Love, 87 ll 11-12. Love gives five different versions of “A Satyr” in this collection, with various sentence and word changes. Interestingly, two of the five change the line about the king’s scepter and prick ‘are’ of a length to ‘were’ of a length, demonstrating not only how these libels were changed but also perhaps an indication of perceptions on the king’s potency, 85-90.
170 Hattige 11
same time feminine influence was overtaking him through that same libido. Razy’s contention that Hattige served as the ‘pipe’ to ‘Royal bounty’ shows how favor may flow from the king’s fountain, but the conduit was the mistress alone.

Such a conduit of favor, when placed within harem politics, could have dangerous implications as seen in the well-known story of the execution of Suleyman’s son Mustapha in 1553. Suleyman was a complicated figure to Europeans who saw him as a great ruler but also as a possible invader, and they viewed the execution of his son with particular fascination. Such fascination only grew because it was ‘by all accounts, engineered’ by Suleyman’s ‘favorite wife’ Roxolana, so-called by Europeans because of her ‘Russian or Circassian origins,’ who ‘conspired with the vizier Rustan’ to replace Mustapha with her own son and thus gain political power as valide sultan. The tale of Mustapha’s death found its way into histories and plays, including a play by Roger Boyle entitled Mustapha first performed in 1665. As Linda McJannet explains, the writers of these accounts had differing opinions on the culpability of both Suleyman and Roxolana, with some like Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq taking an even-handed and diplomatic approach while others like Nicolas à Moffan and William Painter were more sensational and censorious, labeling Suleyman as weak and Roxolana as a master manipulator.

Painter even took his work a step further by using the death of Mustapha to ‘condemn not

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171 McJannet 141. McJannet notes that Suleyman was especially to be feared by Europeans because he changed course from his father Selim: ‘while Selim’s campaigns put him largely in conflict with eastern nations (notably Egypt), after his death, his son Suleyman turned the Ottoman armies westward again. So, despite his positive reputation in the west, Suleyman in fact represented a more serious threat to Christendom than did his father,’ 141.

172 Ibid 143

173 Ibid 163. For more on the various histories and plays that discussed the death of Mustapha – including those by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq [Turkish Letters, 1554-1562], Fulke Greville [Mustapha, closet drama ca 1596], Nicolas à Moffan [The Horrible act of Sultan Solyman emperor of the Turks, 1555], William Painter [The Palace of Pleasure, 1566], and Richard Knolles [Generall Historie of the Turkes, 1603] – see McJannet’s Chapter 6 “Horrible Acts and Wicked Offenses: Suleyman and Mustapha in Narrative and Drama.” Roger Boyle was a brother of Robert Boyle.

174 Ibid Chapter 6
only the acts of individuals but also the Turks in general,’ making the story one not
merely about Suleyman and his family, but also the ‘Turks’ as a whole.\textsuperscript{175} Using Painter’s
idea of applying the story’s themes to a whole populace, McJannet notes how Fulke
Greville, Lord Brooke, used the tale more broadly and ‘applies the “lessons” of the story,
as he construed them, not just to the Ottoman court but to all political arenas and nations,
including his own.\textsuperscript{176} Whatever the truth behind the execution of Mustapha and the role
played by Hurrem/Roxolana in his death, it is apparent that the story built around it by
European and English writers often highlighted the ambition and power of a woman, the
influence she had over the sultan, and the disasters which could occur. Interestingly,
Linda McJannet and Judy A. Hayden disagree over the culpability of Roxolana in the
plotting of Mustapha’s death in Boyle’s \textit{Mustapha} – McJannet claiming that Roxolana
was a pawn in the machinations of the vizier Rustan because she wants to protect the life
of her son, while Hayden claims that Rustan had to follow along with Roxolana’s plan
‘given Roxolana’s power over the Sultan’ – but both imply that Roxolana’s ability to
sway the sultan, whether it was her plan or another’s, was a cause of great concern.\textsuperscript{177}
Hayden also describes how, in Boyle’s account, Suleyman ‘divorces and banishes’
Roxolana after learning of her part in the death of Mustapha, which was quite different
from the story found in histories such as Knolles’s, making it ‘a rather strong suggestion
to put forward’ since it advocated that the king be rid of his own plotting female

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid 149
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid 143. Bulman also discusses this idea of finding parallels in political history and using them within
plays, but within a Restoration context: “[Elkanah Settle also appears to have drawn upon the same early
Enlightenment style of historical analysis that [Lancelot] Addison employed in his work [\textit{West Barbary},
1671]. Settle accepted the basic premise behind \textit{West Barbary}: the late humanist conviction that the
histories of foreign lands like Morocco were indispensable materials for political counsel. This conviction,
which was underpinned by the notion that political history unfolded in fundamentally similar ways across
space and time, guided Settle’s use of historical parallel,” 324.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid 164 and Hayden 77
Interpretations of Hurrem/Roxolana, one of the few women pointed out earlier to combine the roles of haseki and sultan valide, and her role in the court of Suleyman were complicated, but their ability to be used to discuss not only the Ottomans but the English court itself was an established tradition by the Restoration, giving a (supposedly) historical example of the true dangers of harem and feminine politics and the weak rulers who could allow such politics to occur. The indulgence, blindness, or weakness of a king was not benign, then, but could hold serious implications for the king’s court and nation.

The ability of Hattige to maintain her place within the court required a certain willful blindness on the part of the king, and the comedy of the book is often at his expense. When the Aga tries to bring the king to Hattige’s chambers in order to catch her having sex with Rajep, the king makes as much noise as possible outside her room so that by the time they entered ‘the Bird was flown.’

When the king finally does become jealous, he decides to hide in the seraglio dressed as a Bedouin woman to see if anyone attempted to enter Hattige’s rooms, giving particular attention to the clothing the king donned: “his Face he cover’d with a black Vail, and his Body a white Blanket, and put on a pair of Linnen-Drawers, and black Stockings, which is all the Equipage of that sort of Women, when they are in the Towns; for in the Country they go as God made them.”

The king waits and sees Hattige’s servant Zara approach with another Bedouin woman about to go into Hattige’s room ‘whom the King prepossest with suspicion, presently

\[178\] Hayden 81
\[179\] Hattige 57-59
\[180\] Ibid 70-71. Grobe describes how Brémond liked ‘describing the exotic costumes which his foreign heroes and heroines wear,’ perhaps also alluding to Brémond’s own time in North Africa, “His Life,” 134-137. The forbidden nature of the seraglio is also highlighted here as only the king should be entering because of his ‘privilege,’ no other man should be there. Cross-dressing in order to enter the seraglio is also found in The Sultana of Barbary.
believ’d such another Woman as himself.” The king is correct in his suspicions since the other Bedouin is of course Rajep, but he sees part of the king’s sword sticking out from under the Bedouin costume and runs away. Zara then unsuspectingly takes the king to Hattige instead of Rajep. Hattige is caught when she speaks to him as though he were Rajep, but the king’s rage is softened when she falls in a faint at his feet: “But seeing a Woman almost dead at his feet (though she did but counterfeit) his fury vanish’d, to give place to his pity, which seiz’d him with that Tenderness, that made him sensible, false and ingratefull as she was, he could not forbear loveing her still.” The king forgives the unfaithful Hattige yet again, showing him to be a fool to love. The humor in reading about the king dressed as a Bedouin woman to sneak into his own seraglio is tinged darker when seen in relation to critiques that slighted the body of Charles himself by effeminizing it, literally making him a woman, continuing the criticism that Charles was effeminate because of his enjoyment of luxury and pleasure.

A bawdier joke at the king’s expense concerns the way he falls in love with the woman who replaces Hattige, the master gardener’s wife Roukia. Fully realizing the unfaithfulness of Hattige, the king becomes less enamored with her and begins searching for a new mistress. He finds one during a sunset when looking out into the trees from his terrace in the seraglio’s garden:

[. . .] Roukia, who being one of the Handsomest Women of the Kingdome, charm’d him by that part, of which she took the less care, because she would have been asham’d to shew it him, and would not have expos’d it to the Light, but for necessity, and without dreaming it could be the cause of so lucky an Effect

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181 Ibid 72
182 Ibid 76-77
[. . .] an Object so charming to that Prince, never saw any thing whiter, or better shap’d. ‘Twas in truth a Masterpiece of the kind, and (notwithstanding the unpleasing Function it was about) inflam’d the Heart of the Royall Spectator, who did all he could to see a little more; but Love would not permit it, being resolv’d the part he had first seen, should have all the Glory of that Conquest.\(^{184}\)

From this unlikely beginning, the king takes Roukia for his mistress and gets rid of Hattige, who chooses to go on a pilgrimage rather than be permanently attached to her new lover, Roukia’s husband Meharen. The joke is laughed at within the text of the story as Razy, the slave telling the Knight Hattige’s story, breaks her narrative to say, ‘Excuse me, Sir (says Razi [sic]) laughing, if I enlarge no further on this Subject. You may guess by what I have said, few Fish are caught with that Bait.’\(^{185}\) Razy does go on to enlarge further by then explaining that the king saw Roukia at sunset, and her emphasis on the ‘Royall Spectator’ makes the further point that the king is not only in love with the master gardener’s wife, but that he fell in love with her naked bottom while she was defecating. Such a story not only indulges in scatological humor, but also points to ideas of inversion – the (high) royal attracted to the (low) anus – and the carnivalesque as discussed by scholars such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Natalie Zemon Davis, calling into question the King of Tamaran’s fitness as a ruler, as well as gendered inversions linked to the idea of the disorderly.\(^{186}\)

The image cannot be less grand, but with it began the king’s new love affair with Roukia, and through it he divested himself of Hattige. The king and Roukia meet in the seraglio gardens for a tryst and while there overhear Hattige and Meharen. Another comedy at the expense of all four commences in which the king and Roukia listen to

\(^{184}\) Hattige 86-87
\(^{185}\) Ibid 86
Meharen swear that his wife will never be unfaithful to him even though he is happy to cheat on her, and Hattige explains her belief in the mastery of the heart, but that same heart can be infinitely changeable: “Our Sentiments are subject to Change, as other things; and Love, as well as Nature is not charming, but in Variety [. . .].”\(^\text{187}\) A far cry from the faithful lover, the lady instead wants multiple lovers and claims that she tried to get the king to be false in turn to her but instead got ‘nauseous Assurances of his Truth and Tenderness for me.’\(^\text{188}\) All of this proved the final straw for the king, who in the end did not need the plots of the Aga to be rid of Hattige, but instead to hear the falseness from her own lips. Ideas of inversion are again highlighted in this section because the king ultimately chooses as his mistress the head gardener’s wife, a woman far beneath him in status. Perhaps there is an allusion here to Charles’s own proclivities towards taking lower status women – such as the actress Nell Gwyn – into his bed, but it also once again questions the King of Tamaran’s sexual adventures and their impact on his authority. Authority is further inverted in *Hattige* by its use of comedy which provided not only entertainment to the reader but also critiqued Charles II because, as Mikhail Bakhtin explains, ‘that which is important and essential cannot be comical. Neither can history and persons representing it – kings, generals, heroes – be shown in a comic aspect’ meaning laughter ‘in literature belongs only to the low genres […]’\(^\text{189}\) That Charles II could be laughed at meant that it could be wondered whether he and his reign were ‘important and essential,’ and whether he deserved his authority.

*The Sultana of Barbary* is much less comedic in its approach, but it is more precise in its assessment of Charles’s court. Ambitious women once again play a central

\(^{187}\) *Hattige* 97
\(^{188}\) Ibid 98
\(^{189}\) Bakhtin 67. Bakhtin discusses how this idea on laughter was a change from earlier centuries.
role, this time within the Ottoman court at Constantinople. At the beginning of the novel, Acmat has lessened in affection for Homira (Cleveland) - whose chief attributes are beauty, ambition and pleasure-seeking - particularly after catching her with his brother Mustapha. Indamora has also already been made Sultana of Barbary, a story which is told later in the novel, and the rivalry between the two women becomes pronounced as the tale unfolds. Conspiring couples again form throughout, all trying to manipulate the sultan into turning against their courtly enemies. The Grand Vizier’s involvement in Indamora’s placement as Acmat’s mistress is highlighted after Homira’s disgrace with the young Amurath, and the Grand Vizier wishes to ensure that the fickle sultan does not return to Homira:

But Mahomet Bassa will prevent that by all the ways can be thought on, there is a very fair Christian Slave taken, he ransoms her, and places her with the Sultana Queen, in a Station so advantageous for his Designs, that as often as the Sultan came out of that side, he must of necessity see her [...]190

In order to ensure the sultan’s abandonment of Homira, the Grand Vizier will replace her with Indamora, an event drawn from real events as de Kéroualle became a member of Catherine of Braganza’s court in the early 1670s. Not wishing to replace Homira only to have to wrestle for control again, the Grand Vizier makes sure of the acquiescence of Indamora: “but he will know if he finds her ready to follow all he shall advise, if she will, then he is the absolute Monarch of the Sultan, since it was the Humour of that Monarch to let himself be govern’d by the Woman he loves.”191 Not only would the mistress have control of the king, but she herself would also serve the man who put her in that role.

190 Sultana 14
191 Ibid 15
The Grand Vizier’s machinations thus imply that the sultan could be controlled by his pimp, and the allusion here is to allegations that the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Arlington pimped women to the king in order to secure their own authority. The widespread idea that power could be attained at court through a woman was voiced in the libel “The Angler”:

Me thinks I See the mighty monarch Stand  
His plyant angle trembling in his hand  
[ . . . ] And how ere week or Slender be the String  
Bait it with Whore and it will hold a King.192

Just as The Sultana of Barbary implied that the string of control could be baited with a woman, real courtiers such as Buckingham and Arlington tried the same policy. The novelistic narratives of both Homira and Hattige complicate this perception, however, as both women are depicted as ambitious in their own right and difficult for any man to control. Homira, for example, promised the Grand Vizier, who was in love with her, ‘her Favours’ if he could get her the title of sultana and the sultan’s attention, but after the Grand Vizier did so Homira ‘denies to reward his Love and his Care, contemns him, and in a word uses him […].’193 Homira manipulates the Grand Vizier into getting what she wants, which echoes the vizier’s own plan to replace her with the supposedly more pliable Indamora to further his own goals. Hattige was not pimped to the king, but her own ‘ambition preferr’d the Title of Mistress to a King, before private Felicities,’ making it unsurprising that Hattige wielded influence on her own.194 Indamora is more blatantly pimped to the sultan in Sultana when Mahomet Bassa, hoping to displace Homira, places

192 “The Angler,” ECS, Avon, 386-387. For more on the expectations that women of the court, such as Ladies of the Bedchamber, were to use their positions to their families’ advantage, see Sonya Wynne’s “‘The Brightest Glories of the British Sphere’: Women at the Court of Charles II,” in Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II, ed. Catharine MacLeod and Julia Marciari Alexander (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2001).
193 Hattige 11-12
194 Ibid 19-20
Indamora specifically in the Sultana Queen’s court so that the sultan will see her. Telling Indamora how to gain the sultan’s favor, the Grand Vizier states, ‘I am your Friend, and you may be satisfied I will continue so, if (as I do not at all question it) you will permit me to advise you in what I believe requisite.’ Indamora readily agrees, ‘conjuring’ him to command her in any thing, and he should be obeyed. Upon becoming sultana, Indamora is rewarded with influence over Acmat with the sultan ‘let[ting] himself be absolutely governed by her, the whole Ottoman Empire was as she pleased to have it [...]’.

An example of Indamora’s power over Acmat alludes to allegations that the Duchess of Portsmouth furthered the French cause at the English court: “all the great Offices are disposed as she desires; Germany [the stand-in for France in Sultana] is much advantaged by the ascendant she has in Turky [sic], and she employs all her Arts to continue the Peace [...].”

The influence of Indamora, a German Christian slave, was growing within the Ottoman Empire much to the satisfaction of the Grand Vizier.

The manipulation of control over both the sultan and King of Tamaran also pointed to an interesting insecurity felt by both rulers. The sultan or king was aware that desire for power rather than real love might be the only reason women were attracted to him. In Hattige, the King of Tamaran reasons that Hattige would not cheat on him simply because there is no one greater in the land:

_Had there been another in the Kingdom greater than my self, or were any one my equal in it, I might peradventure have some apprehension she might be guilty of such a Crime [...] But considering her pride and height of Spirit, you shall never make me believe she can abase her self to think of any thing below me [...]._

195 Sultana 46
196 Ibid
197 Ibid 57
198 Ibid
199 Hattige 54
Knowing the ambition of Hattige, the king finds it hard to believe that anyone could surpass him in her eyes, if for no other reason than she could not acquire more from anyone else. Perhaps this makes the sting of her affair with Meharen the master gardener all the sharper because of the vast difference in status. Indamora uses the sultan’s insecurities to her advantage, on the advice of the Grand Vizier, by telling Acmat that she would love him even ‘had he not been so great a Monarch.’ The need to be loved became a weakness, an avenue of manipulation utilized by both the men and women of the court.

Given the emphasis placed on manipulation, it is important to note the minute role that Charles II’s wife Catherine of Braganza plays in these novels. Catherine is not in Hattige and only makes brief appearances in The Sultana of Barbary, revealing how the writers focused their concerns about female influence on the king’s mistresses and not his wife. Throughout Sultana, the Sultana Queen is not even given a name, and appears very rarely. The first time she appears in the novel is when young Amurath comes to court and enters the seraglio to kiss the hand of the Sultana Queen. Amurath arrives at the apartments before the Sultana Queen enters, but upon seeing Homira falls on his knees pretending she was the Queen, flattering Homira but also showing how the mistress upstaged the queen. The Sultana Queen is also mentioned in a curious example of the sultan’s indulgence in which he gives his wife, as well as his mistresses, a greater liberty than was deemed seemly. Although no improprieties are connected to the Queen in Sultana, the possibility is certainly open because her husband ‘indulged the fair Sex’

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200 Sultana 55
201 Ibid 53-54
more than any of his predecessors. Perhaps the lack of a role for the Sultana Queen is based upon the English misunderstanding of harem politics where the royal favorite predominated, placing the emphasis upon the *haseki*. Such an emphasis Leslie P. Peirce contends was incorrect because the most powerful woman in the Ottoman harem was actually the *sultan valide* or royal mother. Even if Peirce’s correction is used, Catherine is still unimportant within harem politics because she was not a mother, meaning that she was neither *sultan valide* nor *haseki*, making her role within a book about harem politics – if she was included at all – unsurprisingly small.

The emphasis placed upon the sultan’s indulgence, giving freedom even to his wife, struck at the heart of the question about sex in the novel and its impact upon the ruler and his reign. The dangers of too much sex were apparent throughout with references to the gaining of influence through the king/sultan’s bed, but also in the articulation of the fear that the pursuit of his love affairs led to an abdication of his role as king or sultan in pursuit of his loves. *Hattige* makes the general claim that monarchs in love simply divest themselves of majesty: “Such, Sir, is the fortune of Monarchs in love; when they are with their Mistresses they commonly lay aside that Majesty which dazles the Eyes, and affects the Hearts of Mankind [. . .].” While the speech claims all monarchs share this fate, the treatment of the overly amorous king betrays him as especially vulnerable to losing his majesty. Acmat in *The Sultana of Barbary* was equally vulnerable because he not only put aside his majesty, but ‘forgot he was the Ottoman Emperor’ upon seeing Indamora after the Grand Vizier assures him of her

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202 Ibid 53
203 *Hattige* 19
willingness to be his mistress.\textsuperscript{204} Clearly, both monarchs are apt to lose their majesty and even their notions of kingship when with their mistresses, a state of affairs which led to the lament in \textit{Sultana} that ‘his very Enemies acknowledged he had no other weakness.’\textsuperscript{205} The common Restoration protest, as voiced by Samuel Pepys in 1663, that Charles would rule better without the women surrounding him is again repeated within the novel. If this major weakness were removed, the steady rule of the king was assured, a particularly haunting and futile plea given the publication date of 1689 for \textit{Sultana}.

These novels also reveal the damage that the ruler’s sexual adventures could do to the royal reputation. The Aga in \textit{Hattige} is fully aware of the negative impact that corrupt courtiers could have upon the monarch’s reputation, and even tries to warn the king of this when informing him of Hattige’s affairs. Originally trying a roundabout tactic that is completely lost upon the king, the Aga is forced to bluntly confront the king about Hattige’s misbehavior: “\textit{since I must be plain with you, and that the honour of my King is concern’d in it, you are the Person so basely dishonour’d.”}\textsuperscript{206} The ruin to the king’s reputation is specifically stated after the king forgives Hattige following yet another indiscretion: “[he] seem’d to have forgotten, not only what he had said of \textit{Hattige}, but all that had past; which for a Lover of his Character was of consequence enough, never to be forgotten. It was talk’d of abroad, but not much to his advantage.”\textsuperscript{207} The indulgence of the king toward his mistresses and his sexual appetite were causing him to be widely gossiped about outside the court, perhaps even internationally, showing the damage done to the king by his excesses and weaknesses. Even after the Aga’s plea to the king to not

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{204} \textit{Sultana} 49
\bibitem{205} Ibid 53
\bibitem{206} \textit{Hattige} 53
\bibitem{207} Ibid 83
\end{thebibliography}
allow his reputation to be further ruined by his mistresses, the King of Tamaran refuses to change his behavior and continues to indulge in his sexual excesses. His ability to be duped by his mistress and forgive her transgressions was affecting not only the king’s ability to rule but also his reputation. The king’s blindness was so severe, in fact, that Osman judged it better to let Hattige eventually destroy herself rather than try to get the king to see her infidelities because of his willful blindness or ‘incurable Infirmity.’

Whether people really believed there was no other weakness in Charles II or not, Hattige and Sultana both made the argument that the mistresses were only a hindrance to the king.

Charles was not the only one affected by the excesses of his court, however, as the court and even English people themselves were seen as being adversely affected by the libertine atmosphere around them. The Kingdom of Tamaran, according to the slave Razy, is abandoned to ‘gallantry’:

Gallantry is become so much in use there, ‘tis almost as natural to be a Gallant, as to live, they are wholly given up to Love, and the young People, encourag’d by their Fathers Examples, get themselves Mistresses before they get rid of the Rod of their School-Master. [. . .] from the age of fifteen to sixty, from the King to the Plowman, every one enjoys his natural Liberty [. . .].

Razy goes on to muse about what could cause such a nationwide phenomenon, but lights upon the notion that it is the king himself. The king ruled the nation and somehow infused it with his own sexual libertinism, perhaps a further example of the influence of the women surrounding him: “I rather think Subjects are such as their Kings make them.”

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208 Ibid
209 Ibid 18-19
210 Ibid 19
Razy’s thoughts on the king’s behavior filtering down to his subjects were also found within England itself. *Basilikon Doron* (1599), written by James I to his son Henry with advice on kingship, stated that a king ‘must always strive to be a pattern of virtue for his subjects,’ and this obligation to rule by example extended to the behavior of courtiers, with the ideal court being ‘a place of virtue.’ The importance of the example of the king impacting his subjects was an established trope during the Restoration court, but it was not one many thought was well-heeded. “A New Ballad,” which has Charles declare himself a luxurious tyrant, also has him describe how he corrupted the country: “With a Court and a stage […] / I corrupted the age, […] / The nation once were men / But now are slaves again.” Echoing Rochester’s “Ephelia,” “A New Ballad” claims that Charles was not only corrupting England through his court and the theatre so often associated with his return, but also enslaving his once free subjects through his rule.

*Hattige* and *Sultana* are tales of sexual inversion and corruption at ‘Turkish’ courts that highlight concerns about sexual immorality and libertinism, particularly as they impact the country at large, but they also look to the inversion of authority and proper power relationships in a royal court. These are all important issues within the Restoration court, but examining these novels further shows how the interconnections between sex, religion, and politics could play an equal role within the bawdy tales of the Ottoman/English court. These dynamics ultimately lead, much as they did in the tale of Suleyman and Roxolana, to other dangerous consequences of female influence including manipulation, murder, and betrayal.

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212 “A New Ballad,” 176-177 ll 11-14
Consequences of Harem Politics: Manipulation, Poison, and Betrayal

Interestingly, after the weakness of both the King of Tamaran and Acmat were emphasized throughout Hattige and Sultana, it is an act of power which undoes the Sultan Acmat. When Indamora becomes upset after nearly having her affair with Agustus exposed to Acmat, she wonders if ambition at the court was enough to be happy, and begins to plan a retirement. She claims to Acmat that she wants to leave out of concern for the sins she was committing while at the Ottoman court, but Acmat does not believe her excuse and thinks instead that it is ‘your aversion to me’ that causes her to want to leave the seraglio. Rather than acquiescing to Indamora’s request, he instead puts on the cloak of majesty:

Let me then once forget the tenderness of a Lover, and assume to me the Majesty of a King, by assuring you, I will hear no more of any thing of such a cruel nature, ‘tis altogether in vain ever to reassume your Desires, and be satisfied Love has render’d it impossible for me to live without you.

Although it was only in the service of his own sexual appetites, the sultan purposefully puts on the mantle of his office here, becoming, in a strange sense, a true sultan in forcing his will upon another, a particularly impressive feat considering it was one of his mistresses he was not indulging. His refusal to grant Indamora’s request leads her to hate him and plot an escape to be with Agustus, and the very freedom the sultan gave her by granting her the title of sultana came back to haunt him.

After reading a letter to Indamora from Agustus, Acmat still endeavors to think Indamora innocent. His uncertainty leads him to ask the Grand Vizier for advice, showing the influence of the official: “Acmat bids him be just and free with him, (as he was his Monarch and Friend) and advise him in what he should believe, and what he

213 Sultana 161
214 Ibid 162
ought to do.”\(^{215}\) The request was met with the Grand Vizier’s reiteration of support for Indamora, but in a display of kingly sense, Acmat realizes that the Grand Vizier’s championing of Indamora might be biased, and decides nothing. The Grand Vizier then advises Indamora to prostrate herself to the sultan and claim that Agustus’s advances were unwelcome, asking for him to be banished from Constantinople, if for no other reason than to keep him alive. Indamora and Agustus plan to meet in exile, and Indamora hatches a plot to kill the sultan using a slow poison. Indamora administers the poison at dinner, ‘and whil’st he [the Sultan] is more admired than ever by all the World, he falls by the extreme malice of a Woman, and a Woman so dear to him [. . .].’\(^{216}\) Acmat’s donning of his majesty and refusal to grant Indamora’s request to leave was a precursor to his death. One of his few acts of power within the novel is rewarded by poison.

The sequence of events leading to Acmat’s death at the hands of Indamora obviously point to allegations of poisoning at the English court, but it is interesting to first see how courtiers attempted to manipulate their ruler. As shown in both novels, the chief advisors – Osman, the Chief Aga in *Hattige* and Mahomet Bassa, the Grand Vizier in *Sultana* – scheme and plot not only to bring women to the king’s bed but also to destroy the influence of others already enjoying the ruler’s favor. Such fraught courtly relationships were based in part upon the actual occurrences of the day, with courtiers vying for the king’s favor by providing women as mistresses. As stated before, the Dukes of Buckingham and Arlington were often cited as ‘pimps’ for the king, with Buckingham trying to make women like Frances Stuart, later Duchess of Richmond, royal mistresses,

\(^{215}\) Ibid 166
\(^{216}\) Ibid 175
with varying degrees of success. “The King’s Vows” (1670) charges that Charles II’s was being overrun by his pimps and whores:

My bawd shall ambassadors send far and near,  
Of my pimp I shall make my minister premier,  
And my wench shall dispose of the congé d’élire.  

Such a complaint is amplified in “The Dissolution” (1679) which claims that,

To a lascivious Dildo King  
Whom C---ts various Modes dos [sic] draw  
Ruleing by Letchery not Law  
Who dos his Pimps not States men trust.

More forceful than “The King’s Vows,” “The Dissolution” argues that Charles is completely enthralled to sex and those who provide it for them, be it his whore or his pimp. Pimps were even more trusted than ‘States men,’ meaning that true power at the English court lay with pimps, bawds, and whores. If, as Sonya Wynne points out, the role of courtly women was to advance their family’s positions, then it is little wonder that men such as Buckingham would exploit these expectations to their own advantage. The rivalry between Buckingham and his own cousin, the Duchess of Cleveland, however, shows how family interests were not always followed within the Restoration court and how the plots hatched there were reflected in a ‘Turkish’ setting.

Such a struggle even between family members reveals the lengths to which some at the Restoration court went in order to gain the king’s favor. If the royal mistress was indeed a ‘pipe that convey’d the Royal bounty to the Subject’ as Razy claimed in Hattige, then it behooved courtiers to either remain on good terms with the conduit of bounty, or be successful in replacing it with someone more in-line with their own interests. The

217 “The King’s Vows,” 161-162 ll 43-45.  
218 “The Dissolution,” ECS, BL Add, 93.  
219 See note 192
attempts by Osman and Mahomet Bassa to gain control over or simply eliminate their female competition are highlighted in *Hattige* and *Sultana*. Osman wanted to be rid of the treacherous and unfaithful Hattige, while Mahomet Bassa sought to replace the more independently minded Homira with a woman he at least thought was more malleable, Indamora. The use of the king’s sexual appetite to gain control over him, as demonstrated in “The Angler,” showed how the king allowed his power to be stripped away by the men and women surrounding him, given further evidence by Mahomet Bassa’s desire to use Indamora to make himself ‘absolute Monarch of the Sultan.’ Hoping to exploit Acmat’s weakness for women, Mahomet Bassa will control the sultan through the supposedly pliant Indamora.

Mahomet Bassa’s attempts to manipulate the sultan by championing over the Cleveland stand-in Homira leads him to usher in a woman who was ultimately far more dangerous to the Ottoman Sultan Acmat - Indamora. Unlike *Hattige*, which merely focused on the downfall of the Cleveland figure, *Sultana* reveals the impact of a foreign born favorite, one who ultimately kills the sultan. Indamora, a German Christian taken captive while traveling to Muscovy by ‘Turks’ after one of their many ‘Incursions into Poland,’ was eventually sold to the sultan’s seraglio and ransomed by Mahomet Bassa to make sure that Acmat would ‘of necessity see her […].’ From the beginning, then, the Grand Vizier planned to use Indamora in furtherance of his own power. Indamora’s nationality and religion mark her as a complete foreigner, with her initial reaction being

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220 Interestingly, Hattige is described as the ‘daughter of a Janizary,’ 19. Nabil Matar describes Janizzaries: “A fact well-known among travelers was that those [Christian] children [captured by Muslims] grew into one of the most fearsome orders with the Turkish army: the Janizzaries (the New Soldiers). That the Janizzaries consisted of men who had originally been Christian could not but appear as ironic to English and Christian observers: the Muslim Turks took Christians and turned them into warriors against other Christians,” 24. Hattige was of the ‘Turkish’ court through the conversion of her father, but Christianity was a close part of her heritage.

221 *Sultana* 41 [page is mistakenly marked as 39, but pages 38 and 39 were repeated twice in a row] and 14
that she saw ‘my self a Prisoner, to a Nation I then believed the most barbarous in the world [...]’.\(^{222}\) Indamora’s use of the phrase ‘then believed’ shows how her opinion changed, particularly after the kindness of a Bassa, not Mahomet, who fell in love with her and arranged for her to learn Arabic. That Indamora never became a Muslim, however, is revealed when she uses her religion as an excuse to see Agustus and later when she tries to claim religious reasons for leaving Constantinople, showing how foreign the Sultana of Barbary was within the sultan’s court. The comparisons with the French and Catholic Portsmouth are telling, and seem to say that Catholics were as distant from Protestants as Christianity was seen to be from Islam. Especially pointed is the fact that while Homira was manipulative and abusive of her influence over Acmat, it was the foreign born Indamora that ends up murdering him after his refusal to let her leave.

Halfway through the novel, Indamora’s lover Agustus is invited to the court at Constantinople because Acmat feels sorry for the banished prince.\(^{223}\) Expelled from Germany after challenging another of Indamora’s lovers, Alcander, to a duel and killing him, Agustus lived in Russia and hoped for an opportunity of going to Turkey and seeing Indamora. Although she is originally surprised by Agustus’ arrival, soon the pair are declaring their love for one another and hatching schemes in order to see each other, including Indamora feigning a severe illness and begging the sultan to allow Agustus in her chambers because ‘he is of my Religion, we were acquainted in the Emperors Court [...] I cannot die, but despairing, if I do not see him, ‘tis necessary for my Eternal

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\(^{222}\) Ibid 41
\(^{223}\) Ibid 59
Happiness, I receive from him Absolution.’224 Indamora’s religious claims were honored by Acmat, and after Agustus returns from Indamora’s room the sultan asks him how she was doing, in response to which Agustus paints a vivid picture of the ‘intolerable Pains’ and ‘terrible Agonies’ which Indamora was suffering, even saying that her doctors believed that Indamora had been poisoned.225 Indamora later hints to Acmat that she suspected Homira was the one who poisoned her, a further maneuver in the war between the rival mistresses to wrestle control over the sultan, but also foreshadowing the desperate actions Indamora took at the end of the novel.226

Her ascendancy over Homira all but assured, Indamora becomes dissatisfied with her life in the sultan’s seraglio because she wants to be with Agustus. Even with her ultimate power over Acmat, she decides that it would be better to be with Agustus than to rule in Constantinople: “her Tenderness conquers her Ambition, and she resolves with her self, that it is better to live retired and happy, than the most glorious Princess in the World […].”227 Letting her heart overrule her ambitions, this is when Indamora begs Acmat to let her leave Constantinople, and she ‘pretends Religion and Remorse of Conscience’ which was spurred by ‘her late dreadful Malady,’ an echo of Hattige’s successful use of a pilgrimage to Mecca as a way to leave Tamaran.228 Indamora further appeals to the amorous sultan by saying that he could not possibly love her if he ‘can so easily for some short moments of Satisfactions, and those of so Criminal a Nature, doom

224 Ibid 115
225 Ibid 120-121
226 Ibid 154. Interestingly, Acmat implores Indamora to forgive Homira for supposedly poisoning her because her ‘haughty Spirit cannot bear Injuries without revenging them; it is possible the Poyson that you took, and which had almost cost me my Life, was the effect of her malicious Humor, but we know what Reasons she has to hate you, and her Resentments must be pardoned, since they have such a motive,’ 155.
227 Ibid 158
228 Ibid 159
your *Indamora* to an Everlasting rest of Torments [...]\(^{229}\) Calling their sexual encounters ‘criminal’ highlights Indamora’s attempts to use religion and morality as excuses to leave the seraglio, when she was in fact leaving Acmat for another lover. She goes on to say ‘[…] My Religion has suffered all manner of persecution for my Love, and I may say, it has even dy’d in your Arms, it is time then for me to alter so deadly and so charming a manner of living […]\(^{230}\) In using phrases like ‘My Religion,’ Indamora not only highlights how she is trying to use religion as an excuse, but also further underlines how different and foreign she is to the sultan and his court. The German Christian is using her religion not only in an attempt to escape, but also as a way to distance herself from the sultan.

Unlike his response to her earlier attempt to use religion when feigning illness, this time the sultan refuses Indamora’s request. Saying that it would surely kill him to lose her, Acmat instead commands Indamora to stay, even though he now realizes that she is ‘indifferent’ to him. He even says that she would ‘destroy’ his life by leaving, but ‘if the sacrifice of it can be pleasing, bring me Poysons, offer me Poniards, or whatever way you command for dying, and you shall be satisfied, that it is necessary for me to expire by one of them, ‘ere quit the possession of you […]\(^{231}\) Acmat’s refusal to let her go incenses Indamora, making her not only ‘hate the Love, and the Person, of the Grand Signior’ but also consider far more drastic, even ‘fatal Resolutions’ to her need to escape, saying that ‘nothing […] but the life of the Sultan, should satisfie her,’ showing how she took Acmat’s earlier statement to kill him rather than make him live without her

\(^{229}\) Ibid
\(^{230}\) Ibid 160
\(^{231}\) Ibid 161-162
seriously.\textsuperscript{232} Being denied a request by the sultan for the first time, Indamora decides to take her rage to a murderous level by giving Acmat a ‘slow Poyson […] into a Glass where the Sultan was to drink.’\textsuperscript{233} He fell ill the next day, dying a few days later. \textit{Sultana} ends with Mustapha, the king’s brother, coming to the throne, and Indamora – who escapes all suspicion – finally gets permission to leave Turkey and sets off ‘with those designs which we have already related, in her Orders to the Prince \textit{Tiridate Agustus} at his departure from \textit{Constantinople}.’\textsuperscript{234} The sultan was murdered by his female favorite in order for her to escape to be with another lover, and the implications are clear: a foreigner had infiltrated the court, gained influence, and ultimately murdered the ruler. The accusations were grave, particularly since they were not simply part of an oriental fiction, but also ones which were levied against the living embodiment of Indamora, the Duchess of Portsmouth. Rumors of Portsmouth’s supposed part in the king’s death were not only to be found in \textit{Sultana}, but placing these charges within a harem setting raises interesting questions about the foreign Other.

The accusations of murder against Indamora/Portsmouth are of particular interest because they echoed earlier allegations that were published even before Charles II’s death in 1685. It is also predictable that rumors surrounding the king’s rather sudden death would surface, since such rumors were almost ‘customary’ or ‘typical.’\textsuperscript{235} Earlier English courtly poisonings were certainly known, including the infamous Jacobean case of the death of Sir Thomas Overbury and the many executions and show trials which followed.
in its wake, and so too were poisonings outside of London, often sensationalized through pamphlet literature.\textsuperscript{236}

As noted before, accusations that Portsmouth had poisoned the king were leveled against her even before the king’s death. Using charged language, \textit{Articles of high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanors against the duchess of Portsmouth (1680)} was an anonymous pamphlet ‘which accused Louise of subverting church and state.’\textsuperscript{237} Authorship of the \textit{Articles} is still debated, although Sonya Wynne discusses the possible involvement of Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury and other exclusionists.\textsuperscript{238} Although there are twenty-two charges of varying crimes brought against Portsmouth in this document, two in particular are related to poison. Article 17 claims that Portsmouth is aware of many ‘Papist’ servants at Whitehall, even ‘giving them frequent and private Access to his Majesty, to the Hazard and Danger of his Majesty’s Person,’ including a French confectioner who ‘doth daily prepare Sweet-meats and other Banquetings’ giving him ‘Opportunity to poison his sacred Majesty.’\textsuperscript{239} Not simply passive in allowing the confectioner the opportunity to poison the king, Portsmouth is accused in Article 18 of being more active in attempts to poison Charles:

\textsuperscript{236} For more on the Overbury murder, see Bellany’s \textit{The Politics of Court Scandal}. See Randall Martin’s \textit{Women, murder, and Equity in Early Modern England} (New York: Routledge, 2008), Chapter 4 “Women and Poison” which discusses the Overbury plot, but also other poison cases outside of the court and London. See also Anne Somerset’s \textit{The Affair of the Poisons: Murder, Infanticide and Satanism at the Court of Louis XIV} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003) for a discussion of the fear of poisoning in early modern France and the ‘readiness of people at court to suspect poisoning even if firm proof was lacking,’ 198.

\textsuperscript{237} Wynne, “The Mistresses,” 231. Wynne also discusses how the \textit{Articles} could have been ‘prepared as early as 11 December 1679’ but they ‘may not have been circulated in their finished form until 5 January 1680’ and were published on 24 January 1680, 231. The \textit{Articles} will also be discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

\textsuperscript{238} Ibid 231-232

\textsuperscript{239} \textit{Articles of High-Treason, and other High-Crimes and Misdemenors, against the Duchess of Portsmouth, The Harleian Miscellany: or, a Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, As well in Manuscript as in Print, Round in the late Earl of Oxford’s Library. Interspersed with Historical, Political, and Critical Notes. With a Table of the Contents, and an Alphabetical Insex. Vol. III} (London, 1745), 485-486.
“That, the Day before his Majesty fell sick at Windsor, she persuaded her [sic] Majesty, being then in her Lodgings, to eat a Mess of Broth, prepared by some of her Papist-servants; whereupon his Majesty fell immediately sick.”

Although he recovered from the illness, the Articles contend that the king’s doctors believed ‘that his Majesty’s Diseases were much augmented, if not wholly created, by the aforesaid Broth.’ Not only was Portsmouth supposedly allowing the king to be endangered by Catholic servants, but she was actively participating in his poisoning by feeding him a tainted broth. In the midst of the Popish Plot, these were not merely idle accusations either. As Wynne points out, these Articles ‘were to form the basis of a projected attack on her [Portsmouth] in the forthcoming parliament,’ but the duchess was saved from this by parliament being prorogued, and she remained in England, except for a brief sojourn in France in 1682 discussed in Chapter 3, for the rest of Charles’s reign.

Nor were allegations of attempted assassination by poisoning relegated to Portsmouth. In 1678, Catherine of Braganza’s Catholic physician George Wakeman was accused by Titus Oates and Israel Tonge of being part of a plot to poison the king. Wakeman was arrested and indicted for high treason in 1678, but the evidence against him was found to be perjured and based upon hearsay, and Wakeman was found not guilty. Such a finding was surprising given the charged atmosphere against all Catholics during the Popish Plot, but was a particular relief for Catherine of Braganza who was

240 Ibid 486
241 Ibid
242 Sonya Wynne, ‘Kéroualle, Louise Renée de Penancoët de, suo jure duchess of Portsmouth and suo jure duchess of Aubigny in the French nobility (1649–1734),’ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/15460, accessed 27 July 2012]. Interestingly, Wynne discusses how the Articles may not have been meant to be widely published because they provided ‘another reason for Charles not to call parliament’ since they caused concern to Charles of a ‘forthcoming accusation of treason against Louise,’ although it is not possible to know whether ‘the opposition would have carried through the threatened impeachment given the opportunity of parliament,’ “The Mistresses,” 235.
accused by some of being complicit in the plot.\textsuperscript{243} Another poison plot in 1681 was supposedly revealed to Elizabeth Freeman in Hertfordshire by a spirit. The troubled years of the Popish Plot made it impossible for authorities to ignore her claims, and ‘the king himself questioned her at some length before dismissing her,’ with the need to take her claims seriously showing the anxieties around poison plots.\textsuperscript{244} The charges against Portsmouth not only fit into wider beliefs that the king’s life was in danger due to poison, but also thoughts on the figure of the favorite. A belief from the Tudor and early Stuart eras linked the royal favorite (usually male) to poisoning and, as Curtis Perry argues, ‘any royal favorite of sufficient longevity and influence to attract resentments tends to have been accused, in the most spectacularly public manner possible, of using poison.’\textsuperscript{245} Perry contends that this equation between royal favorite and poison was built upon assumptions about corruption, ‘seditious inwardness,’ and the ‘violation of trusting intimacy’ which highlights the ‘bodily intimacy’ the favorite had with the king.\textsuperscript{246} Translating this older trope upon Portsmouth shows the influence that the mistress was thought to have as well as the malevolent intentions she was believed to harbor. Not simply malicious gossip but an apparently serious attempt to accuse Portsmouth of treason, built upon a traditional


\textsuperscript{244} Alexandra Walsham, “Invisible Helpers: Angelic Intervention in Post-Reformation England,” \textit{Past & Present} 208 (2010): 112. In 1662, Isabell Binnington of Yorkshire claimed that a spirit visited her warning that there was an assassination plot against Charles II. Though this plot was not specifically a poison plot, it shows an early example of worries about plots against the king, as well as the use of the supernatural in ‘exposing’ them. Todd Butler, “The Haunting of Isabell Binnington: Ghosts of Murder, Texts, and Law in Restoration England,” \textit{Journal of British Studies}, 50.2 (April 2011).

\textsuperscript{245} Curtis Perry, \textit{Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 95.

\textsuperscript{246} Ibid 99-100
view of the royal favorite, the *Articles* highlight the crimes the French duchess was believed to have committed, one of which was attempting to murder the king by poison.

The connection made between murder by poison and women is an old one. Even though, as Randall Martin points out, poisoning was ‘evenly divided by gender’ in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and there were many early modern ‘high profile poisoning conspiracies by men,’ the association between women and poison remained potent.\(^{247}\) Part of these suspicions was because poisoning was considered ‘nonconfrontational,’ but also because of women’s association with medicine and food in their ‘domestic expertise.’\(^{248}\) Indeed, it is worth noting that broth, the poisoned item Portsmouth was accused of actually feeding the king, was ‘used as both food and physic; hence common allegations of poisoned broth against suspected women […]’.\(^{249}\) Certainly poisoning was also linked to issues of power and status with poisoning seen as a weapon of the weak and lowborn, meaning that men could also be poisoners – as seen in the figure of the royal favorite – but the links between women and food seem to cause great anxiety surrounding the actions of women in early modern England.\(^{250}\) The *Articles*, then, fed into the wider English social world which often viewed poison through a gendered lens. Beyond that, however, poisoning itself held the tinges of a ‘political crime’ since using poison to kill was made high treason in 1530 by Henry VIII, and even after it was reclassified as simply homicide in 1547 it still carried vestiges of *lèse-majesté* for years after.\(^{251}\) Indeed, many of the poisonings associated with women were examples of petty treason, with a woman killing her husband or master, showing the ‘symbolic

\(^{247}\) Martin 124-125

\(^{248}\) Ibid 125-126

\(^{249}\) Ibid 130

\(^{250}\) Bellany 145

\(^{251}\) Martin 128
transgressions of social and gender boundaries in everyday domestic settings,’ which combined with the political edge given to poisoning by Henry VIII made the image of the female poisoner a compelling one.\(^{252}\) So, not only did the *Articles* accuse Portsmouth of attempted murder, but did so in a way that also called upon early modern society’s gendered assumptions about women and their ‘cruelty in passionate conflicts.’\(^{253}\) Fears of the ‘insubordinate’ woman were prevalent, particularly when she was a French Catholic mistress.\(^{254}\)

Apart from the erroneous associations made between women and poisoning, the charges against Portsmouth also show a decided tinge of the foreign and Catholic. The combining of Catholicism with poisoning was known at the English court, as it was an evident part of the Overbury scandal as discussed by Alastair Bellany.\(^{255}\) Another example of how poisoning could be connected to the Catholic and foreign is in perceptions of the infamous Borgia family, particularly Alexander VI (Rodrigo) and Cesare Borgia. As J.N. Hillgarth explains, Alexander VI became a ‘favorite target for Protestant propagandists’ as did his son Cesare because the family ‘provided a heaven-sent target; their crimes, suitably embroidered, could easily be extended to the whole


\(^{253}\) Ibid 123. One of Martin’s overarching arguments is about the importance of pamphlet literature to the cases of female murder suspects, but also in gendered perceptions, a theme shared with Dolan. For a discussion on the shift in views on ‘intimate violence’ – how the emphasis moved from female perpetrators to male ones – see Martin J. Wiener’s “Alice Arden to Bill Sikes: Changing Nightmares of Intimate Violence in England, 1558-1869,” *The Journal of British Studies* 40.2 (April 2001) in which he discusses how the appearance of female murderers in popular literature shows a ‘marked overrepresentation’ of the actual numbers of female perpetrators in comparison to men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 188.

\(^{254}\) See Dolan, Martin, and Wiener for discussions of the insubordinate woman.

\(^{255}\) See Bellany’s *The Politics of Court Scandal*, particularly Chapter 4 “‘The powder poison’: popish plots and the Overbury scandal,” as well as Bellany’s “Mistress Turner’s Deadly Sins: Sartorial Transgression, Court Scandal, and Politics in Early Stuart England,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 58.2 (1996) in which Bellany also discusses how ‘unruly women’ could be added to Catholicism and witchcraft in accusations of poisoning, 188.
institution of the papacy.\textsuperscript{256} Long dead – Alexander VI died in 1503, Cesare in 1507 – the Borgias could be used by Protestants to point to all that was wrong with the papacy including corruption, ‘dealings with the devil,’ sexual depravity, and poisoning.\textsuperscript{257} Whether or not any of these accusations, including poison, are true it was certainly the perception of Protestants that the Borgias represented all that was wrong with the Catholic Church. Poisoning was seen as an important part of the Borgia story, and the Borgias and their proclivity for poisoning remained popular subjects for centuries. Indeed, the Borgias were featured in Nathaniel Lee’s \textit{Caesar Borgia; Son of Pope Alexander the Sixth, a Tragedy} from 1680 (so during the Popish Plot) and Hillgarth discusses how during the Restoration ‘Borgia became a useful name to conjure with, especially when coupled with Machiavelli,’ and many determined that Oliver Cromwell was the ‘new’ Rodrigo or Cesare Borgia.\textsuperscript{258} The prologue to Lee’s play, written by John Dryden, also emphasizes at the end the ubiquity and subtlety of murder by poison in Italy, again highlighting the connection between the foreign, the Catholic, and poison.\textsuperscript{259} Indeed, any type of murder was seen to ‘[strike] at the heart of order in the Protestant state’ since it was only ‘God’s right to take human life’ and so murder was a ‘rebellion against providence’ and ‘Christian society,’ once again showing how it was the Catholic and foreign influence which brought in murder and upset the religious, social, and gender


\textsuperscript{257} Ibid 120. Hillgarth also points out that many Catholics also condemned the Borgias – most often Cesare, but also Alexander VI – but saw them more as individually to blame, rather than representative of church corruption itself, 125-125.

\textsuperscript{258} Ibid 128

\textsuperscript{259} As quoted in Hillgarth 127-128. Hillgarth also discusses how the Borgias were seen by Italians as ‘foreigners of dubious antecedents’ since Rodrigo was a Catalan, but those outside of Italy ‘at a time when Italy was viewed as a land where murder, especially by poison, was a daily occurrence, they were perceived as Italians,’ 129.
order. When the *Articles* charged Portsmouth with poisoning the king, then, they were not simply calling her an attempted murderess but also highlighting all of the characteristics which marked her as a threat to the king, his court, and England itself—her foreignness, Catholicism, gender, and her intimacy with the king which provided access to his body. Indeed, although Cleveland was herself a Catholic, her stand-ins Hattige and Homira were not made to seem foreigners to the Tamaran and Constantinople courts, and Hattige’s religious plea was to go to Mecca, showing how she was still considered a part of the court. Indamora, on the other hand, is painted as influential but ultimately an outsider.

That Indamora was successful in killing Acmat in *Sultana* shows not only the rather typical allegations of poisoning in early modern courts, but also seems a culmination of the accusations leveled against Portsmouth in 1680. Published in 1689, and Portsmouth safely in France, it is taken for granted her fictional counterpart Indamora not only manipulated the sultan and used him and his kingdom for her own gain, but that she killed him in order to be with another lover. If the author is truthful in the preface claiming that the novel was actually written in 1684, then perhaps *Sultana* was inspired by accusations against Portsmouth, such as in *Articles*, which warned that the king was in danger from his mistresses. Even if *Sultana* was written after Charles II’s death, accusing Indamora/Portsmouth of murdering the sultan/king played upon fears of female influence and the infiltration of the foreign. According to Bryan Bevan, Portsmouth did not become involved with Vendôme again even when she returned to France, so the reconnection of Indamora and Augustus in exile does not ring true, and neither does the accusation of

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poisoning, since Portsmouth did return to England a few times after Charles’s death, and it seems unlikely that she would be granted permission to do so and be allowed return to France if she was seriously thought to be a regicide. Much like the Borgias, Portsmouth served as a figure to ‘conjure with’ and she came to represent all that was wrong with Charles II’s court with its female, foreign, and Catholic influences.

By placing Hattige and Sultana within a ‘Turkish’ setting, the authors were not simply giving an exotic locale to their scandal writing. They chose a social, cultural, and religious setting that was known yet alien to its English readers, and that conjured up a range of long-held images, assumptions, and associations. The ‘Turk’ held a specific place within the English mindset, and was an object of dread, fascination, and awe that could provoke a real sense of fear. In some English sources, the ‘Turk’ was a figure of tyrannical, despotic rule, as in The Most Christian Turk: Or, a View of the Life and Bloody Reign of Lewis XIV. Present King of France (1690) which tells of the terrible deeds of the marauding and absolutist French king. Highlighting the paradox within the title, The Most Christian Turk is a predictable telling of the king’s life up to that point, one which condemned the French king even on the title page itself with phrases such as ‘Monstrous Birth,’ ‘unjust Enterprizes,’ ‘blasphemous Titles,’ and ‘Treachery.’ Placed beside this use of the ‘Turkish’ king, Hattige and Sultana show a different yet no less

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261 Given all of the problems with trying to diagnose the illness of a long dead person from the writings of observers, there is a theory that suggests that Charles’s symptoms, including his apoplectic fit, convulsions, and uremia were in fact caused by poisoning, although not the kind of poisoning suggested by gossips and Sultana. This theory contends that Charles’s interest in science and alchemy, which would have brought him into extended contact with mercury, ultimately killed him through mercury poisoning. See M.L. Wolbarsht and D.S. Sax’s “Charles II, A Royal Martyr,” Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London 16.2 (November 1961) in which they state that Charles’s changes in moods could also be attributed to exposure to mercury.

262 The Most Christian Turk: Or, a View of the Life and Bloody Reign of Lewis XIV. Present King of FRANCE (London, 1690), Title Page. To explain his monstrous birth, this publication claims that Louis ‘contrary to the Rules of Nature, was born with long and sharp Teeth […]’, 3.
devastating image of ‘Turkish’ royal misrule. Unlike the monstrous king of action who brought down all in his path, Acmat and the King of Tamaran were peaceable and kind. Thinking only of the happiness of those around them, particularly women, they allowed themselves to be manipulated, even to the detriment of their own reputation and rule. For the King of Tamaran, this ultimately means discovering how unfaithful his beloved Hattige was and being made a laughingstock, while Acmat lost his life after his own use of the royal prerogative, even if that use was in order to keep his love in the seraglio. That the harem or seraglio itself, at least the version brought to mind by the English, is often the place where the action takes place further uncovers not only the meaning that the ‘Turk’ had within England, but also the role that women were seen to play within the English court itself. A forbidden and secretive place, but one still ‘known’ to the English through writers like Rycaut, the harem came to symbolize the sex and danger associated with the Ottoman world, with armies of virgins for the sultan’s pleasure. But these women were not simply sexual objects, as Roxolana’s tale reveals, but people who could use their sexual influence to disastrous consequence. In using the ‘Turkish’ harem setting, these novels showed how the Restoration court was perceived, filled with danger, sex, and far too much feminine influence. Ultimately, then, these novels point to how the English court, from its king to his mistresses, personified that other meaning of the word ‘Turk’ amongst the English – one who acts ‘inappropriately.’ The court and its people were, in that sense, the ultimate Turks because of their blindness or complicity in making it a place of foreign, Catholic, and female influence where betrayal, manipulation, and poison were expected and indeed typical. Charles II was no longer an English king, but a luxurious ‘Turk,’ at the mercy of his court and its women.
Conclusions

The ‘Turk’ held specific meanings within the early modern English mindset, and frequently appeared in histories, plays, pamphlets, and broadsides. The ‘Turk’ was seen with a mixture of awe and dread based upon many years of representation that had created by the Restoration a figure of mystery, power, luxury, and sex. Part of this image was based upon cultural, social, and religious differences, but also the titillating mystery of the Ottoman harem. Even though it is noted that English notions of this institution were largely incorrect, it is still important to consider what the harem meant to the English. A place filled with women whose lives were devoted to the sultan’s pleasure, it also came to be synonymous, through stories such as Hurrem/Roxolana’s supposed involvement in the execution of Suleyman’s son Mustapha, with dangerous female political influence. Seeing the role of the ‘Turk’ within English society, it is important to consider novels such as Hattige and Sultana which portray the English court and its people within a ‘Turkish’ setting.

Both tales include a passive king/sultan, a manipulative advisor, and ambitious women who use the ruler’s weakness to their own advantage. Poking fun at the willing blindness of the king/sultan, and the various schemes hatched around him, the novels also have a serious message. Far from the terrifying Ottoman sultans who threatened to engulf all of Europe within their empire, the King of Tamaran and Acmat were both passive and peaceable, more interested in keeping their mistresses happy than trying to expand empires or even keep their own reputations. Indeed, Suleyman marks an interesting point of comparison because he was a conqueror but also supposedly enthralled to his wife Hurrem/Roxolana, but the King of Tamaran and Acmat are far more hopeless because
they care for nothing except their loves. Such behavior makes them laughable and pathetic, while Acmat also becomes vulnerable to the murderous intentions of Indamora. The struggles between the male and female courtiers show just how inept the King of Tamaran and Acmat were at controlling their court, let alone the entire nation.

Accusations of poisoning in Sultana not only show the conventional response to a sudden death at court, but also the social, religious, and gendered meanings in such an accusation, since the poisoner was seen as an insubordinate who upended social norms, and it was imperative to bring back order and decorum. Choosing to focus upon the love affairs of rulers, Hattige and Sultana point to what the authors saw as the true problems with Charles II and his rule – the royal pursuit of sexual pleasure left him prey to the malign influence of dangerous forces, feminine, Catholic, and foreign. That certain women such as Cleveland and Portsmouth combined at least two of these features made them especially dangerous, and their central place within these novels shows how they were thought to manipulate and abuse the king through their own wiles and the king’s weaknesses.

Setting Hattige and Sultana within the ‘Turkish’ worlds of Tamaran and Constantinople was more than simply creating another world for the reader, but voicing specific and pointed concerns about the king and his court. Charles was allowing himself to be influenced by those around him, and in the process making the English court itself foreign. Such foreign incursions could occur within physical bodies themselves, and invasions through the bodies of court mistresses could infect the body politic of England through the over willing conduit of the king himself.
Chapter 2

Venus Unmasked: The French Disease
and Restoration Court Mistresses

‘Yet had the Pox so bit her bones, and Houndes which on her tended,
Fell on at length Superbus flesh, till that his life they ended.
This Venerius, was a Hound most Faire, by Arte and Nature made,
A Neapolitan by birth, a Courtesan by trade’.263

The hunting scene was ordinary enough. Dogs loosed upon a target which is chased until
cought and killed by the persistent onslaught of its attackers. What makes this ordinary
scene so extraordinary, however, is that The Hvnting of the Pox, published in 1619,
depicts a hunting scene which has a hapless man as the victim, with the dogs as various
diseases literally hounding him to his death. The man comes to be known as Morbus
Gallicus, or ‘French-diseased man,’ and the hunting scene begins with a visit to a
courtesan, who is soon revealed as the hound Venerius and besets the man with her many
whelps, including gonorrhea, pustules and scurvy. The poetic satire shows the pox and
the fatal degeneration of the human body, but its gender implications are clearer. Not
only did Morbus Gallicus acquire the initial disease from a woman, but the pox itself is
depicted as a female hound, one which sends her diseased whelps to attack a man. The
association between women and disease, particularly those linked to sexual pleasure or
venery,264 continued beyond the Jacobean and into the Restoration period, where
accusations of disease against court mistresses were not only slurs on reputation, but
indications of political and religious fears which reached to Charles II himself.

263 J.T. of Westminster, The Hvnting of the Pox: A Pleasant Discourse between the Authour, and Pild-
Garlicke. Wherein is declared the nature of the Disease, how it came, and how it may bee cured (London,
1619), sig.B2r.
264 Interestingly, the word venery has two meanings in the OED - ‘the practice or sport of hunting beasts of
game’ and ‘the practice or pursuit of sexual pleasure.’
Introduction

Placing disease within a social and political context in the early modern and Restoration worlds is certainly not new. Rather than focusing simply on a disease itself, scholars such as Roy Porter, Kevin Siena, Jonathan Gil Harris, Paul Slack, Johannes Fabricius, Winfried Schleiner, and Roze Hentschell examine representations of various diseases and what they can uncover about the early modern world. Indeed, this chapter follows in the tradition of using ‘cultural representations’ of disease to explore broader themes, an approach exemplified in Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau’s study of gout, an affliction which had its own connotations connected to status and gender. Rather than looking to identify which individuals suffered from what disease or argue about the accuracy of early modern medicine itself, this chapter looks to add to Porter and Rousseau’s point that ‘discourse about disease goes beyond recognizing the powers of pathogens: it may be freighted with associations like disorder and dirt which embody value judgments and emotive charges.’ It is with particular attention to ‘value judgments and emotive charges’ that this chapter will examine one way of interpreting the accusations against Restoration court women as carriers of the French Disease, a disease with rather different judgments and emotions attached because of its connections with sex and women.

In looking at accusations of the pox against Restoration royal mistresses, this chapter continues Porter and Rousseau’s ideas about the importance of cultural representations in relation to disease, as well as the gendered implications of certain diseases. Gendering the pox builds upon the work of scholars such as Winfried Schleiner, Roze Hentschell, and Laura J. McGough by examining how accusations of disease

266 Ibid
against a particular group of women could have political, social, and religious implications. In order to understand these allegations, it is important to first look at the medical literature of the period to see what theories existed about the pox, particularly its origins and spread, which show a heavy emphasis upon the role of women. That women were often associated with sexual disease is important in better understanding gender norms during this period, and when the focus is narrowed upon court women, particularly royal mistresses, the ways in which disease was used as a metaphor for political corruption becomes clear. This metaphor allows then for a study of the libels which accused women of this dreaded disease, and what such accusations meant within a medical context. Far from simply a statement about the bodily health of royal mistresses, these libels also point to issues of morality, influence, and the workings of the female body itself. In their ability to infect the men around them, including the king, the image of pox riddled Restoration court mistresses played upon political, social, and religious concerns that were connected to fears of undermined royal authority through perceived female, foreign, and Catholic influence.

Connections between royal authority and the king’s body were seen with particular anxiety during the Restoration because of a rupture in the traditional view of the king’s two bodies during the Civil Wars. A tradition dating from the medieval period that was given special resonance by Elizabeth I, the idea of the king’s two bodies meant that the king inhabited a body characterized by ‘timelessness and a quasi-divine stability’ but also one that ‘locate[d] the present ruler within history.’267 With the king (or queen’s) body split into mortal flesh and immortal spirit, the body of the monarch itself became an

important political and social symbol of authority. In Paul Hammond’s words, the Civil Wars ‘violently fractured’ this ‘doctrine of the king’s two bodies,’ placing a different and less stable emphasis upon the body of Charles II, particularly his association with sex. Far less formal than his father Charles I, he was easily accessible, at least in the early years of his reign, and was much more ‘down-to-earth,’ which Kevin Sharpe explains was because of his exile and reliance upon ‘ordinary folk.’ Such familiarity did not necessarily make Charles II more popular, however, as his court became more associated with libertinage with the king himself keeping a steady procession of mistresses. The mystique of kingship, so damaged by the execution of Charles I, was further imperiled by the actions of Charles II who became ‘altogether more fleshly than angelic.’ In associating the king more with his earthly body, one which was vulnerable to the same dangers as other mortals including disease, the king’s body now became a source of unease.

Although certainly problematic, Charles II’s body was still that of an English monarch, and as such was believed to be endowed with certain quasi-divine qualities. One such quality was touching for the King’s Evil, or scrofula, making the king a vessel of healing within a highly ritualized form of court ceremony. Scrofula is a form of tuberculosis which often causes the lymph nodes to swell, and, as evidenced by the name ‘king’s evil,’ was believed in England to be curable by the king’s touch. Begun in

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269 Ibid. For more on how the king’s body combined with sex and politics, see Harold Weber’s Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996) and James Grantham Turner’s “Pepys and the private parts of monarchy,” in Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration, ed. Gerald MacLean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
England during the medieval period, touching for the king’s evil continued to a greater or lesser extent until the Hanoverian period, but in the Stuart period took on a particular emphasis with Charles I underscoring connections between ideas of monarchy, the divine, and the miraculous, all of which were assaulted during the Civil Wars.\(^{271}\)

With a history based upon divine authority, it is unsurprising that touching for the king’s evil would become an important part of Charles II’s reign, since his very restoration in 1660 was glossed in panegyrics as ‘the body politic restored to health after eleven years of sickness.’\(^{272}\) In a recent estimate, Charles II touched about a thousand people a month for most months from his restoration in May 1660 until his death in February 1685, making a total of about 100,000 people.\(^{273}\) The public nature of most of these touching ceremonies – dates were publicized to make sure there were spectators – shows how disease could be used to demonstrate the sacredness of kingship as well as Charles II’s canny use of the politics of access.\(^{274}\) The miraculous was important not only to the idea of divine right and the king’s authority, but also to a populace that felt a general unease with ‘academic medicine’ and looked to alternate sources for relief.


\(^{272}\) Sharpe, Remapping, 217

\(^{273}\) Anna Keay, The Magnificent Monarch: Charles II and the Ceremonies of Power (London: Continuum, 2008), 118. Keay gives an in-depth description of the touching ceremony and how one came to be touched by the king during Charles II’s reign.

\(^{274}\) Ibid 117. Keay also points out that much of the healing ceremony’s procedure was inherited from Charles I, 112. For more on Charles II’s politics of access, and how it changed from the early Restoration into the troubles of the 1670s and 80s, see Brian Weiser’s Charles II and the politics of access (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2003).
including its king. Touching for the king’s evil proclaimed that the king’s body itself was able to cure, marking him as quasi-sacred and possessed of legitimate authority. Such a statement was vital in the years following the Commonwealth when the vast majority in England wanted to simply erase the years under Cromwellian control and return England to a healthy state under the rightful Stuart monarch.

While the king’s evil allowed for the underlining of royal power, another disease served to challenge authority - the bubonic plague. Periodic waves of the plague came to England after the infamous years of the Black Death in 1348 until the 1660s. Throughout his study of plague in Tudor and Stuart England, Paul Slack emphasizes the importance of looking at the social meaning of disease since ‘plague […] was both a personal affliction and a social calamity,’ meaning that the impact of the plague went beyond fear of the disease itself to have important social and political implications. The demographic impact of the plague and attempts to contain it reveal social issues, but politics becomes visible in debate over why the plague struck. Often the reason for the plague striking was not seen as pathological but providential – God was punishing the English, a traditional reaction to epidemics and natural disasters. What was important was

Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 [originally published in 1971]), 14. It is also worth noting, however, that each person touched for the king’s evil during the Stuart dynasty was supposed to receive a coin, so as scholars such as Judith Richards observe, it is very difficult to know how many came for the touch, how many for the coin, and how many for a mixture of the two, 91. It is also important to note that the king did not necessarily hold a monopoly on the curing of scrofula, since ‘seventh sons’ were often believed to perform the cure, and English manuscript recipe books also listed cures for the king’s evil, such as Wellcome Library MS.7391 and MS.4338. [MS.7391 is an untitled English recipe book from the seventeenth century and MS.4338 is marked as Johanna S’s John Her Booke (the Wellcome Archive dates it at 1680)].


For more on demography and the plague, particularly in London, see A. Lloyd Moote and Dorothy C. Moote’s The Great Plague: The Story of London’s Most Deadly Year (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). Although the outbreak in 1665 is often associated with London, the plague did spread to the countryside and lasted in some communities until 1666, 11.
to understand the reason why God was angered, often centering upon political and religious reasons. Some blamed the plague upon the allowance of ‘heresy’ in England, while others like the Presbyterians and Quakers claimed that the disease came because of persecution of dissenters.278 Even more politically rooted was the idea that ‘The Commonwealth rescued England from plague, which […] will return again with the monarchy,’ championed by Commonwealth writers like John Milton even before the devastating 1665 outbreak, while royalists countered by saying that it was the ‘killing of Charles I and the sins of the Commonwealth’ which brought down God’s wrath upon England.279 The debate over the divine cause of the 1665 epidemic demonstrates how disease was a useful and potent political metaphor and tool of critique. The role of the king in this punishment is seen in arguments over his policies on religious tolerance and even his retaking of the throne. As David Quint claims, Milton draws links between kings and disease, with ‘kingship [as] a kind of disease of the body-politic’ and ‘kingship is a product of sin,’ meaning that the return of the king and his problematic body itself could be seen as a disease within England.280 Others wondered if the sins being punished were more localized, meaning that the many transgressions of the profligate court of Charles II were the cause of the plague, an idea echoed in Daniel Defoe’s A Journal of the Plague Year (1722).281 These debates about the providential causes of the plague show how disease was, in Paul Slack’s terms, ‘a social calamity’ which touched upon issues of


280 Ibid 138

281 Moote and Moote 21 and Aino Mäkikalli, *From Eternity to Time: Conceptions of Time in Daniel Defoe’s Novels* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 120-121.
religion and politics in important ways. Combined with the change in views on the king’s body, diseases like the plague could be used as devastating political critiques. Especially pointed though were accusations of the pox because the fleshly king associated with libertinage was particularly open to this dreaded infectious disease which carried particular moral connotations because of its associations with sex and women.

For a reign linked with libertinism and sex, then and now, accusations of sexual disease were potent weapons for critics. Certainly such allegations were based on some real fears of infection since members of Charles II’s court were believed to be sufferers, but the seemingly casual nature in which court mistresses in particular were charged with the pox leads to questions about why sexual disease was and could be so easily alleged. Harkening not to perceptions of the king’s divine right as with the ‘king’s evil’ but rather the fear and dread associated with the plague and its connotations of divine wrath, critics used allegations of disease to imply not only physical disease but also corruption of the soul or morality, particularly troubling given the fracturing of perceptions of the king’s two bodies. As Ernest B. Gilman states in relation to the plague, there is ‘a politics of infectious disease’ which shows how ‘disease strikes the city and the kingdom as well as the individual,’ again demonstrating that disease was not only the province of the afflicted but of all of society.\(^2\) The connection between the court and king himself with an infectious disease, particularly one that is sexually transmitted, makes the stakes even higher since the now earthly monarch was vulnerable to disease, making not only his

\(^2\) Ernest B. Gilman, *Plague Writing in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 42. The risk of disease associated with sexual activity is not unknown to the modern person, nor are issues of gender, class, and morality eradicated from diseases in the modern world. For modern uses of disease as metaphor and issues of morality see Susan Sontag’s *Illness as Metaphor* (1977) and *AIDS and Its Metaphors* (1988) (published together by Picador USA, 1990). For an example of the handling of a non-sexual communicative disease, typhoid, in New York City in the early twentieth century, and the gender/class connotations it demonstrated, see Judith Walzer Leavitt’s *Typhoid Mary: Captive to the Public’s Health* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996) which looks at the case of Mary Mallon (‘Typhoid Mary’).
touch possibly un-therapeutic, but perhaps his entire rule. In taking Jonathan Gil Harris’s description of syphilis as a ‘palimpsest that splices together many strands of discourse,’ this chapter will turn its focus upon the relationships drawn between women and the pox, and how medical ‘facts’ were used within libels to accuse Restoration court mistresses of having a disease that was physical, moral, and foreign. 283

**Medicine, Women, and the ‘Venereal Evil’**

> ‘But what mean I to stand upon thy Skill?  
> Which want in others, makes men seek thee still:  
> For to prevent, or cure, the Mischiefs that  
> Hot Mars wounds Venus with, or she gives him a Clap’ 284

Medical guides played an important role in the practice of medicine during the early modern period. Medical practice itself encompassed a vast range of people, with

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284 Every Man his own Doctor, Completed with an HERBAL Shewing, First, How every one may know his own Constitution and Complexion, by certain Signs. Also The Nature and Faculties of all Food; as well Meats as Drinks, whereby every Man and Woman may understand what is good or hurtful to them. Treating also of Air, Passions of Mind, Exercise of Body, Sleep, The Use of Tobacco, a new hot Bath; Venery, with an Infallible Secret to prevent the POX. Of the Senses, proving Six in number His *Elixir Propriettis*, and its Use. The Second Part shews the full Knowledg and Cure of the Pox, *Running of the Reins, Gout, Dropsee, Scurvy, Consumptions and Obstructions: Agues.* shewing their Causes and Signs, Danger and Cure. *The Second Edition, with Additions.* Viz. A Treatise of melancholy and Distraction, Government in Cure. Also a Compendious Herbal, discovering the Physical Vertue of all Herbs in this Kingdom, and what Planet rules each Herb, and how to gather them in their Planetary Hours. Written by JOHN ARCHER one of His Majesties Physicians in Ordinary. **LONDON**, Printed for the AUTHOR, and are to be sold at his House, at the Sign of the **Golden Ball** in Winchester Street, near Broad Street. 1673. (London, 1673), Dedicatory Poem, unmarked page. Although the clap refers specifically to gonorrhea, which modern medicine knows to be a separate disease from the pox, in the early modern period the two were often paired because gonorrhea, also known as running of the reins, was seen to be ‘one of the manifestations’ of the pox. See Claude Quétel’s *History of Syphilis*, trans. Judith Braddock and Brian Pike (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 4-5. John Archer in *Every Man his own Doctor*, where the poem comes from, gives an example of the pairing of the two when he discusses a cure for the ‘running of the reins’: “I come now to the Cure of this *Running of the Reins*, which indeed is nothing less then the Pox, though some have it more virulent then others [...]” 103. Archer also notes that there was a less virulent form of the running of the reins that could be contracted without sex, but that contraction through sex ‘if neglected infects the whole man and so the Body becomes a miserable subject for that loathsome Disease to prey upon (the Pox) although the Pox may be taken without the *Running of the Reins,*’ meaning that while not everyone who had the pox or gonorrhea suffered from the other, they often came as a pair, with gonorrhea often heralding the onset of the pox. So, while the poem speaks specifically about the clap, it is safe to say that it was also an allusion to Mars suffering from the pox.
‘university-trained physicians’ making up a relatively small number in comparison to the many other practitioners including ‘licensed surgeons, barber-surgeons, apothecaries, midwives, bathmasters, […] cunning-folk, astrological healers, Catholic priests, Protestant clergymen, gentlefolk, executioners, and nobles […]’. Much of the popularity of these other medical practitioners came not only from the limited number of physicians but, as Keith Thomas points out, because of the ‘inadequacy of contemporary medical technique’ and the unease many felt with the ‘nauseous remedies’ and surgeries which came with seeing a physician. The medical marketplace, linked by Harold J. Cook to the market economy, saw huge growth in the seventeenth century as people – who were beginning to take money for their services – were more able to purchase medicines. Along with a wider range of medical practitioners and a growing marketplace, early modern medicine also saw ‘medical promiscuity’ amongst the populace, meaning that many from the highest rank to the lowest ‘consulted several practitioners serially or concurrently.’ This medical promiscuity also reached into ‘self-help’ medicine – which Mary Lindemann explains included advice from friends, family, and neighbors – in which recipe and commonplace books played important roles.

286 Thomas 9-14
288 Lindemann 241. Michael MacDonald also gives this medical promiscuity terms like ‘professional eclecticism,’ ‘therapeutic pluralism,’ and ‘therapeutic eclecticism‘ in which MacDonald is discussing the ‘traditional mingling of magical, religious, and scientific concepts’ and he claims that ‘we should not speak of the rise of medical science, we should talk instead of the decline of therapeutic eclecticism.’ Michael MacDonald, Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 7, 9, and 197.
Other important books brought into people’s homes were medical guides, which allowed those with the money to spend and who wanted medical knowledge to bring medical theory into their homes. The importance of the ordinary person understanding his own body is argued by Philip Barrough [or Barrow] in *The Method of Physick* (originally published in 1583, in its eighth edition in 1652):

"but I have always been of this mind, that it behooveth every man to be cunning in his own constitution, and to know so much as may serve to forestall the coming of many ordinary diseases, which commonly light upon the ignorant: yea and sometime to be able to chase away a malady when it hath already caught hold of the body [...]"

John Archer echoes this idea in his appropriately titled *Every Man His Own Doctor* (original 1671, second edition 1673) when he states:

"and I think it may not only be acceptable, but very profitable to all, to be sincerely and briefly informed how to keep Health, and cure themselves [...] my meaning is, that every Man in prudence should so far be his own Doctor as rightly to know his own Constitution and Complection [...]"

For Barrough and Archer, it is essential that people have a general knowledge of their own bodies so that they are able to not only stay healthy, but also recognize the signs of illness if a disease did strike. Another important attribute of these guides was that they were in the vernacular, which, as A.S. Weber points out, helped to make them ‘one of the greatest threats to the medical monopoly of the College [of Physicians].'

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290 At least one of the books discussed in this chapter, Gideon Harvey’s *Little Venus Unmask’d*, was sold for a small amount – one shilling. H.S. Colwell, “Gideon Harvey: Sidelights on Medical Life from the Restoration to the End of the XVII Century,” *Annals of medical history* 3.3 (Fall 1921): 212.

291 Philip Barrough, *The Method of PHYSICK, Containing The Causes, Signes and Cures of inward Diseases in Mans Body, from the Head to the Foot. Whereunto is added, The Form and Rule of making Remedies and Medicines, which our Physicians commonly use at this day; with the proportion, quantity, and names of each Medicine. By Philip Barrough*. London, Printed by Abraham Miller, and are to be sold by John Blague and Samuel Howes at the Golden Ball in Cornhill near the Poultry (London, 1652), The Preface to the Reader, unmarked page.

The Wellcome Library database states that the 1652 printing of *The Method of Physick* is a ‘mostly page-for-page reprint’ of the eighth edition from 1639.

292 Archer 2

293 A.S. Weber 375-376. Barrough also discusses the importance of the vernacular medical guide in his Preface to the Reader. For a discussion of Tudor vernacular medical books, see Paul Slack’s “Mirrors of
translations or original English works, these medical guides allowed for a dissemination of knowledge which called into question the ‘sole claim to […] medical superiority’ claimed by physicians, and it is little wonder that many of the medical guide writers discussed in this chapter came into conflict with the College including John Archer, Gideon Harvey, and William Salmon. These guides were meant to provide medical knowledge to a wider (paying) audience, and to impart at least one perspective on how to prevent and cure disease. That some of these books found a larger audience is shown by the number of editions and printings that many went through, meaning that the medical theories espoused were at the very least known to the reading public of London, an important group considering they were the ones most in contact with the king and his mistresses. As the dedicatory poem to Archer’s *Every Man his Own Doctor* makes clear, these guides were meant to provide knowledge, but often within a gendered frame.

The association between women and venereal disease was made long before the Restoration. *The Hvnting of the Pox* demonstrates how the pox and women were believed to be connected in the Jacobean period, with a courtesan infecting a young and unsuspecting man. The importance of sex to the pox was obvious, and it is unsurprising that morality was soon attached to how the disease was described. In the 1570s and 80s ‘maister in chirurgerie’ William Clowes said the pox was a ‘pestilent infection of filthie lust: a sickness verie loathsome, odious, troublesome, and dangerous. A notable


294 Ibid 375

295 For example, Barrough’s *Method of Physick* went through eight editions and multiple reprints by 1652 and Gideon Harvey’s *Little Venus* went through six editions by 1700.
testimonie of the iust wrath of God against that filthie sinne [. . .].”296 God’s wrath was visited upon those who took part in the ‘filthy sin’ of lust, just as many in the 1660s believed that the plague was a punishment for (hotly debated) English sins.297 Clowes’s Elizabethan idea on the pox being, in Roy Porter’s term, for ‘providential purposes,’ was echoed in 1678 in A Short Compendium of Chirurgery since the pox was a ‘just punishment of God upon our sins [. . .].’298 The justness of God’s wrath upon the guilty sufferers of sexual disease was not questioned by medical guides, as doctor Gideon Harvey demonstrates in his book entitled Great Venus Unmasked: Or a more Exact


297 For an early example of God’s wrath being used in medical books about the plague or pest, see ANE BREVE DES CRIPTIOVN OF THE PEST QHAIR IN THE CAVSIS, SIGNES and sum speciell preseruatioun and cure thairof ar contenit. Set furth by MAISTER GILBERT SKEYLE, Doctoure in Medicine. IMPRENTIT AT EDINBVRGH BE ROBERT LEKPREVIK. ANNO DO. 1568. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971). Skeyne [or Skene] states, “Sen it hes plesit the inscrutabill Consall, and Iustice of God (Beneuolent reader) that this present plaig and maist detestabil disease of Pest, be laitlie enterit in this Realme it becūmis euerie one in his awin vocatione to be not only most studious be perfectioun of lyfe to mitigat apperandlie the iuste wrathe of God touart vs, in this miserable tyme: Bot also to be maist curagius in suffering of trauail, for the aduancement of the cōmoun weilth” in the wake of the Edinburgh outbreak of 1568, sig.Air. Other causes were also cited, but it is telling that Skyne begins with discussion of God’s justice.

298 Roy Porter, Bodies Politic: Disease, Death and Doctors in Britain, 1650-1900 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 29 and J.S. [identified as John Shirley on inside cover], A Short Compendium of Chirurgery: Containing Its GROUNDS & PRINCIPLES. More particularly Treating of IMPOSTHUMES, WOUNDS, ULCERS, FRACTURES & DISLOCATIONS. Also A DISCOURSE of the Generation and Birth of MAN, very necessary to be understood by all Midwives and Child-bearing Women. WITH THE Several METHODS of Curing the FRENCH POX: The Cure of Baldness, Inflammation of the Eyes, and Toothach [sic]: And an Account of Blood-letting, Cup-setting, and Blooding with Leeches. By J.S. M.D. LONDON, Printed by W.G. and are to be sold by Charles Blount, at the Black Raven in the Strand, near Worcester-House (London, 1678), 114. Wellcome Library 48087/A for identification as John Shirley.
**Discovery of the Venereal Evil.** The term ‘venereal evil’ shows how sexual disease was not seen as only a physical problem, but also one of morality and sin. To suffer from the pox was to demonstrate a sinful life, for although certainly medical writers admitted that other circumstances could lead to infection, such as lying in the same bed as someone afflicted, drinking from the same cup or kissing them, or being an infant child of two infected parents, or that even sexual contraction could be innocent – one spouse receiving the disease from the other – medical guides often focused upon licentiousness as the root cause of the evil.

In identifying the cause of the pox or French Disease, medical guides often examined not simply how the pox was transmitted but the very origins of the disease itself. Questions about whether the pox was a new or old disease within Europe led to theories about whether the disease was ‘new,’ where it came from, and who was responsible for its spread. Ideas abounded, but the watershed moment for most medical

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299 Gideon Harvey, *Great Venus Unmasked: Or a more Exact DISCOVERY OF THE VENEREAL EVIL, OR FRENCH Disease, Comprizing The Opinions of most Antient and Modern Physicians, with the particular sentiment of the Author touching the Rise, Nature, Subject, Causes, Kinds, Progress, Changes, Signs, and Prognosticks of the said Evil. Together with luculent Problems, pregnant Observations, and the most Practical Cures of that Disease, and Virulent GONORRHOEA, or Running of the REINS. Likewise a Tract of general Principles of Physick, with discourses of the Scurvy, Manginess, and PLAGUE. The Second Edition. By GIDEON HARVEY, Med. Spag. Dogm. & Phil. D. LONDON, Printed by B.G. for Nath. Brook at the Angel in Cornhill. 1672.* (London, 1672). *Great Venus Unmasked* is often listed with the original publication date of 1672, but an earlier work entitled *Unmasked* is mentioned in an edition of Harvey’s abridged version of *Great Venus* (entitled *Venus Unmasked*) from 1670. There is mention of a *Venus Unmasked* from 1665 in Gordon Williams’s *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: Athlone Press, 1994), but this dissertation will use the 1672 version of *Great Venus Unmasked*. *Little Venus* itself is rather problematic because the title page of its 1670 printing claims that it is a second edition, but I cannot find an earlier edition. Since names of guides changed sometimes from printing to printing, it is possible that an earlier version went by a rather different name. This dissertation will use the 1670 version of *Little Venus*.

300 See Quétel’s *History of Syphilis* for ideas about the pox and morality, particularly Chapter 4 “From Pestilence to Disease (The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries),” and Peter Lewis Allen’s *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), particularly Chapter 3 “The Just Rewards of Unbridled Lust: Syphilis in Early Modern Europe.” See also Porter’s *Bodies Politic* for the Puritan idea that ‘guilty flesh deserved contempt,’ 38.

guides, no matter their opinion about the origins of the disease, were the years 1493 and 1494. In those years, the French king Charles VIII marched into Italy to lay siege to Naples, and it was through this act of Mars that Venus was able to disease Europe. Some medical guides claim the disease actually began during this campaign, others that it merely allowed for the further spreading of an already active disease, but it is important to see the varying theories in order to examine how gender and sex were implicitly and explicitly employed in understanding the beginnings of a terrifying disease.

For William Clowes, it is only essential to state that the pox or Morbus Gallicus came from the French siege of 1494. Not explaining in detail how the disease itself came about, Clowes only mentions that ‘when the French King toke his iourney to recouer the kingedome of Naples, at which tyme happened amongst the Soldiers and people, this disease to appeare […]’. Although Clowes does not give more information here, he does allude to a prevalent theory in the next paragraph when he says that ‘the disease it selfe was neuer in mine opinion more ryfe among the Indians, Neapolitans, yea in Italie, Fraunce, or Spaine, then is at this daye in the Realme of England.’ Here Clowes is emphasizing the spread of the disease since its introduction to Europe in the 1490s, but his mention of the ‘Indians’ alludes to the belief among some that the pox originated in the Americas, which is to be found in Philip Barrough’s account of the origins of the disease. Originally writing in the 1580s, in an eighth edition in 1652, Barrough states that the pox came to Europe because ‘the Spaniards borrowed it of the Indians, and

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302 Clowes sig.Air
303 Ibid sig.Air-sig.Aiv
304 There is still some debate about where the pox or French Disease originated, with the Columbian Exchange idea gaining some prominence in the twentieth century. Kevin Brown, *The Pox: The Life and Near Death of a Very Social Disease* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2006) 5-7 is a recent example of a publication which lends credence to this idea, as does Allen’s *The Wages of Sin*. 
brought it home in stead of their gold.’\textsuperscript{305} Not only were the Spanish responsible for bringing the disease to European shores, Barrough also mocks them for only bringing back a sexual disease rather than monetary gain. After the Spanish transported the pox to Europe, Barrough claims, they spread it to the French through the trading of infected women:

the Spanish for friendship they bear to the Frenchmen, sent to them of their curtizans infected with this grief, minding to let them have some of their jewels, which they brought out of the Indian country. The Frenchmen (not knowing their kinde hearts) fell in love with them, and (being ravished with their beauty) dealt with them to their great cost and trouble to this day.\textsuperscript{306}

According to Barrough, the Spanish knew of their affliction and made sure to infect prostitutes in order to spread the disease to the unsuspecting French soldiers. Once the French soldiers were infected, it was during the French siege of Naples that the pox really begins to spread in Europe. Interestingly, even though Barrough identifies the Spanish as the originators of the disease in Europe, it is Charles VIII and the French who receive the harshest words:

and afterward Charles the eighth K. of France, who was a man of great power, and delighted much in shedding of bloud, sparing neither man, woman, nor childe; insomuch that he spoiled a great part of Italy, and subdued the Dukedom of Millan, with great hurt, ruine and spoil to the Common-wealth of Florence: and at the last he came to Rome and Naples with his whole host, spoiling all as he went with great cruelty: and for his hire, this disease began first to shew it self plentifully among his people, and specially because his souldiers were much given to Venery.\textsuperscript{307}

Not only was Charles VIII a bloodthirsty man who laid waste to much of Italy, but the innate venery of his soldiers led to the spreading of a devastating disease, perhaps an insinuation that God was punishing Charles VIII and the French for their violence and cruelty. It is only after this description that Barrough claims that the Spanish purposefully

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{305} Barrough 359
\item \textsuperscript{306} Ibid 360
\item \textsuperscript{307} Ibid 359
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
infected the French soldiers through the use of infected courtesans, although it seems that Barrough is blaming the French more for their inability to control their licentiousness than the Spanish for intentionally spreading infection.

Into the 1670s there were still a multitude of theories surrounding the origins of the pox. In the 1670 edition of Gideon Harvey’s *Little Venus Unmasked*, which is an abridged version of his much longer *Venus Unmasked* or *Great Venus Unmasked*, Harvey also claims the siege of Naples as the ‘Nativity of the Pox,’ but in rather a different way than Barrough.  

Harvey also lays the generation of the pox at the feet of the Spanish and French, but through the creation of a ‘mixt’ disease due to circumstance and the inherent characteristics of those involved in the siege. The opinion of Harvey about the French is made clear within the first sentence of his section on the ‘true History of the Pox’:

> The French with their entailed manginess marching into Italy in the Year 1493 under Charls [sic] the VIII. of France, against Alphonso King of Arragon, did daily fret, and promote their evil by drinking gross Italian Wines, eating salt Meats, and broiling under a hotter Sun […] so their disease accrew’d in greater scabs and malignity.

Matters only grew worse once the soldiers reached Naples where, because of their drinking of copious amounts of wine and ‘feeding upon powdered Boars flesh,’ they made ‘their Disease to so extream an high pitch of manginess, that consisting in inflamed

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The description of the origins of the pox in Harvey’s *Great Venus Unmasked* (1672) and the 1670 version of *Little Venus* is virtually identical, so this chapter will use the slightly earlier version from *Little Venus*.

309 Ibid 16

310 Ibid 10. The OED defines mange as ‘any of various skin diseases of mammals and birds caused by ectoparasitic mites, usually characterized by intense itching, inflammation, and hair loss.’ It also says that ‘In humans, the skin disease caused by mite infestation is usually called scabies.’
itching scars, and damnable infection, it was communicated to their inward parts, in as
furious a degree, as to their outward.\textsuperscript{311} Once the French mange had turned inward, it
then created within some of the soldiers a

most detestable rage of letchery, who encountering with ranck Jades, (being pernicious
through their menstruous steems, and disgraced with the worst degrees of Scurvy,
crept in upon them by their ill Diet within the surrounded City,) fell foul of the
handsomest, that probably had been over-ridden, galled, inflamed, and set on Fire by
their Comrades before.\textsuperscript{312}

The mixture of the mangy French soldiers and the scurvy Neapolitan prostitutes – who
had been ‘over-ridden, galled, inflamed, and set on Fire’ by the entrenched Spanish
soldiers – was disastrous because

in this sharp conflict showrs of morbifick emissaries (or diseased steems) darted from
each party, confronted, united, embraced, and were knitted together into intire
compound minimal (or very small) Bodies, which were the flower, soul, and
abridgement of the whole clot […].\textsuperscript{313}

In essence, the pox was the unholy progeny of a union between a French soldier and a
Neapolitan whore, ‘or in short, that the \textit{Pox} is caused by a commixture of a scabby itch,
and an inveterate Scurvy.\textsuperscript{314}

Harvey makes the union between scurvy and mange plain when he later describes
different types of pox, although he is also careful to make it clear that the pox ‘is neither
a Scurvy nor manginess singly by themselves, but a Disease that is engendred or bred out
of a Scurvy and manginess, being complicated and knit together,’ meaning that it was the
illicit sexual act between a French soldier and Neapolitan prostitute that created the
pox.\textsuperscript{315}

\begin{itemize}
\item [\textsuperscript{311}] Ibid 11
\item [\textsuperscript{312}] Ibid 11-12. The importance of menstrual blood will be seen in other theories about the pox, and the
significance of female blood will also be discussed in Chapter 3.
\item [\textsuperscript{313}] Ibid 12
\item [\textsuperscript{314}] Ibid 13
\item [\textsuperscript{315}] Ibid 16
\end{itemize}
Pox ‘more resembling its mother Scurvy than Manginess’ and the French Pox a mangy pox which fits Harvey’s claims about innate French manginess.\(^\text{316}\) Harvey also notes how the scurvy which is related to the pox is not the endemic version common in England, but an epidemic that was not seen before 1495.\(^\text{317}\) It would seem that the Neapolitan whores returned to the Spanish garrison because Harvey claims that the pox was spread ‘among the Hollanders, and Flemmings, being transported thither by the Spanish Souldiers, that were sent from Naples to Garrison among them […]’ which is something of a reversal from Barrough’s assessment that the Spanish intentionally infected the besieging French soldiers.

*Practical Physick* (1676) discusses many of the theories brought forward for the origins of the pox, including cannibalism which is also mentioned by Harvey, but ultimately agrees with the idea that it came from the Americas. One of the many translations of the German physician Daniel Sennert’s writings, *Practical Physick* is rather like Barrough’s account in saying that the pox was ‘first brought out of the Indies, by the Spanish Souldiers infected by the Indian Women which were sick of this Disease, into Italy, and disseminated through the French Camp, and hence spread throughout all Europe,’ but *Practical Physick* also emphasizes the role of contagion.\(^\text{318}\) Describing how

\(^\text{316}\) Ibid 115-116

\(^\text{317}\) Ibid 17

\(^\text{318}\) Daniel Sennert, *Practical Physick*: Or, Five Distinct TREATISES Of the most Predominant DISEASES Of these Times. The First of the Scurvey. The Second of the Dropie. The Third of Feavers and Agues of all sorts. The Fourt of the French Pox. And The Fifth of the Gout. WHEREIN The Nature, Causes, Symptoms, various methods of Cure, and waies of preventing every of the said Diseases, are severally handled, and plainly discovered to the meanest capacity. Written in Latine by the Famous Dr. Daniel Sennertus, late publick Professor of Physick in the University of Wittenburgh. In English, by H. CARE, Student in Physick, and Astrology. London, Printed for William Whitwood, at the sign of the Golden Bell in Duck-Lane. 1676 (London, 1676), Treatise 5, 44. Each treatise is individually numbered within the larger publication. Sennert was also translated by others such as Nicholas Culpepper, but Henry Care’s 1676 version is interesting not only because of its publication in the 1670s, but also because Henry Care was himself a ‘writer and polemicist’ who wrote anti-papery tracts during the Popish Plot. See Lois G. Schwoerer’s ‘Care, Henry (1646/7-1688),’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University
the disease was originally contracted by the Spanish in the Indies, the guide also shows another major theme throughout the medical guides apart from the watershed moment of the siege of Naples, and that is the major role of sex and women: “Therefore this evil is chiefly contracted by contact, and truly most frequently by whorish Copulation, when that virulence is communicated to the naked genital parts being soft, and porous, from the genitals of the other infected person [...]”\(^{319}\) Although using gender neutral terms in this part, *Practical Physick* then goes on to say that ‘Indian Women’ infected the Spanish soldiers, and in the next paragraph is even more damning of women when it states that,

> truly men contract this evil from women that are infected, because in the act by reason of the concourse of spirits, and the motion, the Womb being heated, Vapors are raised from the malignant Humors in the womb, which are suckt in by the mans yard being of a porous constitution, and are received into the veins.\(^{320}\)

It is then stated that an infected male could spread the disease to a woman, so the pox was not only spread from women to men, but the role of the woman seems far more sinister than that of the male. A man ‘may infect a sound woman, either by his yard, if that be infected and exulcerated, or by his seed, although his yard be not ulcerated, or both ways [...]’, so a man is merely infected or not, whereas it is the ‘malignant Humours in the womb’ of women taking part in ‘whorish Copulation’ which creates the disease.\(^{321}\) Men are certainly not innocent because of their participation in illicit sex, but the mysteries of the female womb seem to be of particular concern in *Practical Physick*.

John Shirley’s *Short Compendium of Chirurgery* (1678) claimed that the pox was not only a ‘just punishment of God,’ but also that some believed that the disease was

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\(^{319}\) Ibid 44
\(^{320}\) Ibid 45
\(^{321}\) Ibid
‘unknown […] to Antiquity,’ meaning that this particular punishment was only a few hundred years old. Not mentioning the siege of Naples in particular, although the dating of ‘some hundred years since’ of the origin of the disease suggests it, Shirley instead looks to place the beginning of the pox within copulating bodies. Like Harvey, Shirley sees it as a mixture of diseases, but rather than the specific mating of a mangy Frenchman and scurvy Neapolitan, Shirley gives a broader definition:

*An Indisposition composed of all other Diseases and their Accidents engendred [sic] by a contagious touch, but most commonly by impure Copulation, whence the Seed of several Men Fermenting, ariseth a Venenous either fixt, or volatile acid Salt, having usually its seat in gross and viscid Flegm, whence it proceeds to the Invasion of the other Humours.*

That the disease was most often created by the mixing of multiple seed obviously points to the gendered meaning of the pox since it would be commonly thought that it was within the womb of the prostitute or promiscuous woman that such mixing would take place. It was in the crucible of the woman that pox was created, making her more culpable than even Harvey’s scurvy Neapolitan because the disease was created entirely within the woman’s body, not mated with a mangy man. Through the body of promiscuous women, God’s punishment for sin was being meted out.

Like Shirley, the 1690 medical text entitled *A New Method of Curing the French-Pox* also subscribes to the idea of the pox being original to the sexually active woman. A translation from the original French with additions by ‘professor of physick’ William Salmon, the shame of contracting a disease such as the pox is compounded in the guide because, ‘We cannot therefore find the Original of the Venereal Ferment, any where but in Seed that is much corrupted, nor is there any Seed that is corrupted, but in the Wombs

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322 Shirley 114  
323 Ibid
of common Women which keep company with many Men.\textsuperscript{324} The guide goes on to explain that only through seed combining and colliding in a woman’s womb could corruption occur.\textsuperscript{325} Such an explanation makes women’s bodies the sole progenitor of disease through its mangling of the male seed. Women not only bore the shame of disease, but the guilt of creating it. The womb was destroying the seed within it, rather than performing its duty of creating life, yet another controversial issue surrounding female bodies as shown in discussions of pregnancy in Chapter 3. The mysteries of the female body were further explored in a question and answer section in A New Method which posed the problem, “Why a Woman, who has not actually the Venereal Distemper, does nevertheless give it,” answering that:

if after a Woman has known many Men, another keeps Company with her, at such time as the first Seeds shall be fermented (yet without making any impression upon the Matrix of the Woman, and who by consequence has not the Pox, although she has the Cause near enough) that Man, I say, shall carry off with his Yard that Venereal Ferment, and shall frequently free the Woman from the eminent Danger she was in, of having the Pox within a very little time [. . .]\textsuperscript{326}

Not only were women able to pass on diseases to men, but their mysterious bodies were also believed to have the capability of making women immune from the very diseases that they cultivated.\textsuperscript{327} Indeed, if the guide is to be believed, it benefitted a woman to be

\textsuperscript{324} William Salmon, A New Method Of Curing the FRENCH-POX Written by an Eminent French Author. Together with the Practice and Method of Monsieur Blanchard, As also Dr. Sydenham’s Judgment on the same. To which is added Annotations and Observations By WILLIAM SALMON, Professor of Physick; living at the blew Balcony by the Ditch-side near Holbourn Bridge, London (London, 1690), 29.
\textsuperscript{325} Ibid 29-30. Laura J. McGough discusses this theory within early modern Venetian medicine and society by stating that the use of the prostitute ‘dr[ew] on the complex […] traditions that linked prostitutes to disease’ because ‘a mixture of many men’s seed within one woman’s body could […] also be seen as unnatural and capable of producing a monstrosity in the form of disease.’ Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice: The Disease that Came to Stay (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 66. She also claims, however, that focusing only on prostitutes takes attention away from other ways in which the pox could spread, and also how the disease became ‘endemic to early modern Venice in a cultural sense’ because of its various representations, 70.
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid 112
\textsuperscript{327} Mary Spongberg, Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth Century Medical Discourse (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 20.
as sexually active as possible in order to ward off contracting the disease brewing within her.

The ideas of Shirley and *A New Method* were not new, since other writers such as Antonio Musa Brasavola wrote in the sixteenth century about ‘the origins of the disease within a prostitute’s body,’ and other such theories are mentioned in various medical guides.\(^{328}\) Harvey discusses and dismisses all of the theories about the origin of the pox, including cannibalism, astrology, and the Spanish bringing it back from the Americas, but also an often cited theory from Paracelsus that ‘this Disease was bred between a *French* Leper, and a *Neapolitan* Whore, whilst she had her courses upon her,’ which in many ways sounds familiar to his own idea of the creation of the pox through a mangy Frenchman and a scurvy Neapolitan.\(^{329}\) In *Practical Physick*, it is noted that Aurelius Minadous in the late sixteenth-century claimed that ‘this virulency did first break forth from the most filthy wombs of most impure Harlots […] but he thinks this evil proceeded first, when women were made very unclean, when they had received a various mixture of seeds.’\(^{330}\) That the guide calls this theory ‘a peculiar opinion’ shows that *Practical Physick* did not subscribe to it, but that it was known within medical circles.

Perhaps most extraordinary, however, was another claim from *A New Method* which almost entirely placed the blame for the pox upon women. In arguing for the theory that the pox was indeed an ancient disease, *A New Method* states that ‘the Pox does proceed from a Corruption of Seeds which have been mixed in the same Matrix, Reason does oblige us to believe that the same thing happened to the Debauchés of olde,

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\(^{328}\) McGough 66.  
\(^{329}\) Harvey, *Little Venus*, 6  
\(^{330}\) *Practical Physick* 40
and that consequently, they could not be free from the Pox.\footnote{Salmon 3. Interestingly, A New Method also has attached Mr. Stephen Blankards’s [or Blanchard on the title page] PRACTICE Relating to the Venereal Distemper (London, 1689) and The History of the Venereal Distemper, possibly by Thomas Sydenham as it is claimed on the title page that there was a section about the pox by him in the book. Practice agrees with A New Method that the ‘Disease is more Ancient then is commonly believed,’ 167, but History claims that the disease was new to Europe: “whence it is that the Disease is thought to be Epidemical in those parts of America, where we first had our Colonies: But I rather incline to think that it took it’s Original from some Territory of the Blacks, near the Confines of Guinea; seeing I was informed not by a few of our Country-men, Persons of good Credit, who inhabit the Caribee Islands; that the Slaves that are newly brought from Guinea are infected with this distemper, even before they are set on shoar […], 221 [misprinted as 121 since it follows 220]. History believes that the disease may have spread in the American colonies, but through the bodies of enslaved Africans not the native population.} This is an inversion of the argument Harvey gives against the pox being caused by the collision of seeds within a prostitute ‘because there having been whores from the beginning of the World, who drove a common Trade, they would necessarily have bred the Pox long before the siege of Naples.’\footnote{Harvey, Little Venus, 36} For Harvey, then, it was a fact that the pox began at the siege of Naples, so logically the disease could not simply be caused through the mixing of seeds in a prostitute because then the disease would have appeared in Europe much sooner. A New Method takes for granted that the pox is an old disease, but goes even further in its analysis of the creation of the disease. Not only was it known to the ancients because of the existence of prostitutes, but a woman could create disease simply through sex with multiple partners:

But ‘tis known, that if a Virgin, that is perfecty [sic] sound (if the Matter be so ordered as to free her from all suspicion of the Venereal distemper) shall keep Company with half a dozen young Fellows, as sound as her self, and be debauched with them severally, time after time, some one or other of them shall quickly have the Pox, and all of them, by a repetition of Venereal Acts, shall at last be infected.\footnote{Salmon 3}

Although all of the people involved in such venery were originally healthy, A New Method states as fact that repeated sex between one woman and multiple males will create the pox, meaning that the danger lay potentially in all women, not only those who
were prostitutes. Such insinuations also point to the prurient edge found within some of these medical guides as discussed by Sarah Toulalan.\textsuperscript{334}

In examining how various medical guides theorized about the origins of the pox or French Disease, it becomes clear the role that sex and women held within medical and social contexts. Although not always the sole creators of the disease, the associations between women and illicit sex are plain, with the warning being to the men to control their own lusts rather than open themselves up to the dangers of the female body, as is apparent with the mocking of French soldiers for their inherent venery. The question of ‘where did syphilis come from?’, as Anna Foa notes, is important because ‘the answer to this question was not neutral but involved important questions of a moral and religious as well as a scientific nature.’\textsuperscript{335} Placed within books of medical knowledge, the lingering by many writers on the origins of the pox or French Disease demonstrates how morality – often gendered – was linked into social and medical practice. The tenets of morality were also important to medical writers because they did not wish to be criticized for taking part in sin, and authors often felt the need to justify helping the guilty to regain health. As Claude Quétel describes, the proffering of cures further underlined the importance of God as it was only through God’s grace that such cures existed.\textsuperscript{336}

That authors still felt uneasy about the repercussions of offering cures is evident, however, in such works as Archer’s \textit{Every Man his own Doctor}. Archer’s seeming hesitancy to publicize his cure is based upon not wanting to seem a party to sin:

\textsuperscript{334} See note 301  
\textsuperscript{336} Quétel 73-74
So in this case shall a man wound himself because he hath a Balsome to cure it; and if any Man think I will use this my Grand Secret to every Man for nothing, or instruct all or any, to make a Trade of sin, he is deceived. […] Hereafter, possibly I may reveal it to some that may rightly implo[y] it.337

Claiming that he wants to help innocents like those who were remarried but infected by their last spouse, Archer makes it clear that he is not a party to sin because of his method of prevention (since a method of prevention could be seen as more sinful than a cure) ‘which I do publish not to encourage Sin, but to hinder Sin and Ruine of Families, and the Persons of the Married […] yet I will not instruct any, on purpose to go on in Sin without fear, therefore I say, Evil be to him that intends Evil to himself […]’.338 Archer is adamant in his innocence of the charge of helping to facilitate illicit sex, and he echoes this claim in his later work Secrets Disclosed (1684) in which he discusses the differences between scurvy and the French Disease, and how to recognize the signs of the pox. Archer says explicitly ‘that I shew not the materials for Cure’ but that understanding the signs will help people to diagnose themselves and seek proper medical treatment. Archer says that knowing the signs but not the cure is for the safety of the sufferer: “therefore it is safest to keep Knives out of Childrens hands lest they endanger their Lives; but the knowledge of the Disease, and how to judge of your condition, I think absolute necessary for every Patient and Physician.”339 Having the knowledge to know the symptoms of the pox would allow a person to then seek a physician for treatment, which for Archer made him innocent of any charges of abetting licentiousness. Gideon Harvey also emphasizes

337 Archer 78
338 Ibid 77
339 John Archer, Secrets Disclosed, of CONSUMPTIONS Shewing How to distinguish between Scurvy and Venereal Disease ALSO How to prevent and Cure the Fistula by Chymical Drops, without Cutting; Also Piles, Hemmorhoids, and other DISEASES. By JOHN ARCHER, Author of the Book called, Every Man his own Doctor; to be Sold by the Booksellers, and also to be had from the Authors House at Knightsbridge, or at the Sadlers against the Mews by Charingcross. LONDON, Printed for the Author, 1684 (London, 1684), 26-27.
that he is only writing for the public good when he states towards the end of the
Introduction for Little Venus, ‘The number of this Impression is very small, being
unwilling it shou’d fall into vulgar hands, only intending to distribute them among such
as may employ the advantage they reap thence to publick good [...].’ Both Archer and
Harvey are protesting any associations between their guides and an encouragement of
venery, stating instead that they wish to serve the greater good with their writing.

The genuineness of the protests of authors like Archer and Harvey that they
cleaved to strict morality, however, are not entirely borne out within their writings.
Although he does not wish to ‘make a Trade of sin,’ Archer claims it would be far worse
to keep his talent “hid or unemployed,” and he goes on in later pages to discuss his
remedy, which consists of exercise, diet, avoidance of lechery, ‘dyet drinks’ and pills
provided by Archer. How much Archer was truly hesitant in sharing his cure is made
debatable since he sold the book – and presumably the pills needed as part of the cure – at
his home and the word ‘pox’ was the second largest on the title page, but he is careful to
first emphasize the importance of morality above cure. Likewise, although Harvey says
that Little Venus will only have a small printing, the multiple editions over the years belie
this claim, as does the price of one shilling claimed by H.S. Colwell. Whether or not
Archer and Harvey truly intended for their guides to not take part in the ‘Trade of sin,’ it
is interesting that they had to at least go through the motions of claiming morality. Even
if done sarcastically, the call to the ‘publick good’ demonstrates how entrenched morality
was within medical and social reactions to the pox.

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340 Harvey, Little Venus, Introduction [unmarked page]
341 Archer, Every Man, 78 and 98-101
342 See note 290
In censuring the ‘filthy sin’ of lust, medical guide authors pointed to the role women were seen to play in not only the spreading of disease, but even in its very creation. As Winfried Schleiner discusses, earlier authors such as Clowes and Barrough saw the pox through the ‘male perspective,’ with Barrough ‘see[ing] the infection as coming from women’ and Clowes wanting to use the pox to effect a sort of moral revolution within England.\textsuperscript{343} The pox or French Disease was not simply a disease, but a platform upon which could be placed ideas about morality and society. That the pox was often described with highly gendered terms also reflects perceptions of women and their links to a vicious disease transmitted (usually) through sex. Seen as a source of lust, women’s very bodies were believed to be a sort of incubator for disease. Prostitutes, as one might expect, were particularly targeted and seen as harboring disease, although the men who frequented them often did not see the same censure. But as guides like \textit{New Method} state, any woman could potentially create the pox - one need not be a prostitute.\textsuperscript{344} During the Renaissance, Schleiner claims, it was ‘the assumption that women are the agents, the active infectors’ and that there are many examples of medical men who subscribed to these assumptions.\textsuperscript{345} The discussions of the origins of the pox within medical guides such as Harvey’s, even if it is only to dismiss them, underlines how such theories were widely known to those who sought medical knowledge, and how they survived into the Restoration period.

Even those medical guides which did not argue along with \textit{A New Method} that the pox originated within a woman’s womb, often stressed the role of the infected woman in

\begin{multicols}{2}
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\textsuperscript{343} Winfried Schleiner, \textit{Medical Ethics in the Renaissance} (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1995), 167 and also Fabricius Chapter 5 “Chroniclers of Syphilis and Prostitution.”
\textsuperscript{344} Fabricius 137. See Fabricius’s Chapters 5 and 6, “Chroniclers of Syphilis and Prostitution” and “Prostitution in England,” for more on prostitution in England and ideas of disease during the Elizabethan and Stuart periods, and Brown’s \textit{The Pox}, 57.
\textsuperscript{345} Schleiner 183 and 196
\end{footnotesize}
\end{multicols}
its spread. As *Practical Physick* states, ‘truly men contract this evil from women that are infected,’ and the man could then go on to infect healthy women, but the original blame falls on the infected woman.\(^{346}\) The implication is that the man could go on to infect a ‘sound woman’ – possibly his wife – but if she were to infect another man, that would simply be a sign of her licentiousness, while the male is simply the victim of both his illicit lover and his ‘sound’ partner. Archer continues this lopsided view of the correlations between sex, gender, and disease when he talks about the importance of venery to a man’s health, but that it must be practiced in moderation and ‘lawfully,’ meaning according to God’s Law, and with only one woman. Having only one woman is the best measure to avoid the pox, according to Archer, because ‘more [women/sex] might hinder his Health’ by divesting a man of his natural heat, thought to be so important to the masculine body.\(^{347}\) Archer takes his point even further by denigrating women as nothing more than disposable objects:

> [. . .] Consider there is many a Woman, very desirable to look on, yet if you enjoy them, you will less prize them, and you can find no more pleasure in them, but the evacuation of your own heat and vigor, therefore it is down right Folly and madness, to run such great hazard of Soul, Body, Estate, and good Name, for a Toy of no value.\(^ {348}\)

Archer’s form of chastity then was not necessarily out of a belief in monogamy, but rather that the risk of disease was not worth sex with a female ‘toy of no value.’ *Practical Physick* echoes this idea when it condemns men for their willful entering into sex with ‘suspected Harlots’ and how ‘publique Stews full of infected whores are tolerated’ and even goes so far as to say that containment actions found during the plague would be appropriate for these whorehouses:

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\(^{346}\) *Practical Physick* 45

\(^{347}\) Archer, *Every Man*, 76

\(^{348}\) Ibid
therefore if the same diligence and curiosity, which is used in some places in the time of the pestilence to exclude the infected and suspected persons, from the society of others, were made use of to restrain that rambling whoring, perhaps this disease also though it be contagious, might be rooted out.\textsuperscript{349}

Like those infected with the plague, harlots should be shut away to contain the pox, emphasizing again the perception that women were the infectors, not that the pox was simply sexually transmittable.

The concept of the foreign was built not only into perceptions of the female body but also into analysis of the pox itself, made apparent by its morbidly amusing other name, the French Disease or morbus gallicus.\textsuperscript{350} Gideon Harvey’s \textit{Great Venus Unmasked} and \textit{Little Venus} look to chart the many names of the pox and theorize upon the source of its first coming into England. Noting that ‘names illustrate the nature of things,’ Harvey goes on to list a large number of names given the disease by various nations, showing how England was not the only one to name the pox after another nation.\textsuperscript{351} He states how the French named the pox after Naples, while the Dutch called it the Spanish pox. Other names included the Court disease and the ‘nickname’ Syphilis.\textsuperscript{352}

If Harvey is correct and names show ‘the nature of things,’ then in England the nature of

\textsuperscript{349} Practical Physick 36
\textsuperscript{350} In searching through the etymology sections of the \textit{OED}, the general word ‘pox’ meaning ‘Any of several infectious diseases characterized by a rash of pustules’ was first used in 1476, while ‘Frenche pox’ was first used in 1503 (in \textit{Privy Purse Expenses Elizabeth of York}) and ‘Morbus gallicus’ in 1543 from B. Traheron’s translation of J. de Vigo’s \textit{Most Excellent Wks. Chirurg}. The use of the term French pox or French disease was known in England, then, soon after the supposed watershed outbreak during the siege of Naples in the early 1490s. Another term was Lues venereal, which Clowes used in his guide.
\textsuperscript{352} Ibid. There is some controversy about the use of the term syphilis in relation to the pox or French Disease. While scholars like Quétel link them, others, like Jon Arrizabalaga, John Henderson and Roger French in \textit{The Great Pox: The French Disease in Renaissance Europe} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) vehemently claim that the pox or French Disease was not the same as syphilis, 1. The listing of ‘Syphilis’ in Harvey, however, shows a contemporary view that at least some linked the terms, although this paper will use the term pox or French Disease unless syphilis is used within a particular source.
the pox was French. The pox was a foreign entity, not only to individual English bodies but also to the nation of England itself. Building upon the idea of sin, Roze Hentschell states that the ‘foreignness’ of the disease was emphasized, as ‘the moral decay of the country’ was brought about by ‘foreign iniquities.’\textsuperscript{353} The pox was, as Anna Foa argues, ‘a disease/evil (male) that came from the outside – from a neighboring country or, better yet, from the country of the enemy.’\textsuperscript{354} The pox or French Disease was not only a disease, but also a metaphor for the infiltration of the foreign. A terrifying disease named after an enemy further reveals the social and cultural meanings attached to the pox, but also exposes the politics of the disease as the English named it after their longstanding enemies the French. But Foa also explains how diseases could be deliberately shaped to be ‘projections onto the Other,’ and that these Others could be external and internal.\textsuperscript{355} While Foa is more interested in interpretations of the Indians and Jews in her analysis, she also mentions the French and women as Others, while another group could be added to this within the English context, Catholics. All of the nationalities consistently mentioned as part of the ‘birth’ of the pox – French, Spanish, Neapolitan – were Catholic, and so analysis of the pox or French Disease took on the further context of religious corruption.\textsuperscript{356}

The emphasis by many English medical writers upon the ‘Frenchness’ of the pox gave a particular foreign face to the disease, one that during the Restoration was connected to Catholicism and absolutism. As Hentschell notes, even traveling to France

\textsuperscript{353} Hentschell 133. Diane Cady follows this theme by saying ‘the disease [pox] is not easily separated from nationality. It is as if the pox refuses the natural and chooses the nation.’ Diane Cady, “Linguistic Dis-ease: Foreign Language as Sexual Disease in Early Modern England,” in \textit{Sins of the Flesh: Responding to Sexual Disease in Early Modern Europe}, ed. Kevin Siena (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 159.

\textsuperscript{354} Foa 26

\textsuperscript{355} Ibid 28 and 31-42

\textsuperscript{356} Hentschell 138
was seen as a dangerous activity because one could become infected, ‘physical[ly] and moral[ly],’ by all things French, much like an Englishman could, as we have seen earlier, ‘turn Turk.’ Further, although Harvey later explains how he thought the pox came to be, he surmises that the English named the pox after the French ‘because the French did first make present of it to the English Madams; or some English brought it first along with them out of France.’ According to Harvey, the pox was correctly labeled as ‘French’ by the English because it was through French contact that the disease was spread to England. That Harvey claimed that the conduit of the French Disease was either a traveler, so someone who was infected by Frenchness through direct contact, or English Madams indicates how the foreign was deemed to infiltrate England. The dangers of travel in France have already been noted, but Jean Howard discusses how the body of the whore was seen to infect ‘the body politic’ in early Stuart whore discourses either by making ‘a foreign disease into a domestic one’ or ‘changing Englishmen into foreigners.’ Women served as the conduits of disease, and according to many medical guides any woman could since all were potentially licentious, bringing the foreign French pox into the English nation/body. Women, then, could infect their fellow Englishmen not only physically, but also morally. Just as the pox was seen as a punishment for immorality, that same immorality could be seen as a sign of the foreign, since the disease and the uncontrollable venery associated with it were patently not English.

The French Disease stood not only for a physical ailment, but also a corruption of the English body, society, politics, and religion. That women were often placed at the

357 Ibid 140
358 Harvey, Great Venus, 2
359 Jean E. Howard, Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 144. The idea of changing Englishmen into foreigners echoes again the idea of ‘turning Turk’ and Bernadette Andrea’s argument about the conversion of male Christians through sex with female Muslims.
center of discussion of the disease’s origin and spread indicates how they were also seen
to potentially play a major role in the infection of the wider English society and body
politic with their foreign corruption. This perception of women is particularly important
when connected to the Restoration court and mistresses seen as having too much
influence over Charles II, particularly since some of them were foreign and/or Catholic.
The danger to the king’s bodily health was acute because of the women surrounding him,
but even more hazardous was the belief that the disease these women carried was not
merely physical but moral. A woman that could infect the king’s body could also infect
his mind and soul, making Charles himself foreign. The medical context of the pox
makes clear the role of women in the disease, and turning to libels of court mistresses
will demonstrate how these ideas and assumptions informed the accusations of disease
and what they meant to a Restoration audience.

**Diseased Women and the Foreign/Catholic Infection**

‘Soaked in pox and Popery’

‘Fucksters you that would bee happy
Have a care of Cunts that Clapp yee,
Scape disease of evill Tarshole,
[…] Take the Councill I have sent yee,
Then fuck on and nere repent yee’.

Although many wanted the Restoration to serve as a return to the England of the days
before the Civil Wars and Oliver Cromwell, many issues remained unresolved, including
the perennial problem of religion. Conflicts erupted amongst the various Protestant
factions, and the Catholics provided a constant source of anxiety. Much like the

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360 “The Ladies’ March,” CSR, 58 l 82.
361 “Advice to a Cuntmonger,” Rochester, Love, 269 ll 1-3 and 9-10. Although printed in this book, Love lists this poem under the section Appendix Roffensis, so the attribution to Rochester is suspect. Another version of this poem, with some shifting of lines and changes in words, can be found in ECS, Avon, 260-261. No date is listed in either Love’s book or the manuscript poetry collection.
foreignness ascribed to the pox, Catholicism did not belong to England and was a spreading contagion that needed to be cured. Linkages between women and Catholicism further underline the disease metaphor, as women were associated in the ‘Protestant imagination’ with priests, and as Frances Dolan explains, the fact that Catholics were ‘both dangerously strange and intimately familiar – foreign and local – ally them to women, who, like Catholics, tend to defy definition or category.’ Women were associated not only with disease but also with Catholicism, both of them foreign entities which needed to be stamped out in order for the English nation to remain intact.

The connections made between women, disease, and Catholicism were particularly disturbing to Englishmen contemplating the king’s court. The king did not merely rule over a libertine court, he also ruled over a court filled with female Catholics. Charles’s wife, Catherine of Braganza, was a Catholic Portuguese princess, his mother Henrietta Maria a French Catholic princess, and court favorites such as Frances Stuart and long-time mistresses Barbara Palmer, Countess of Castlemaine (later Duchess of Cleveland) who converted in 1663, and Louise de Kéroualle, who became the Duchess of Portsmouth in 1673, were all Catholic. Another important member of the court, James, Duke of York, brother and heir of the king, was known publicly as Catholic after the Test Act of 1673. As of the early 1670s, the English court appeared to be filled with Catholics, causing many in Protestant England concern, and the voices and pens of censure were not quiet.

362 Frances E. Dolan, “Gender and the “Lost” Spaces of Catholicism,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 32 No. 4 (Spring 2002): 643-644. For more analysis of gender and Catholicism, see also Dolan’s *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) and “The Wretched Subject the Whole Town Talks of”: Representing Elizabeth Cellier (London, 1680),” in Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts, ed. Arthur R. Marotti (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999). Elizabeth Cellier was accused of treason for her supposed role in the Meal-Tub Plot, for which she was tried in 1680 and found not guilty.
The association between court women and Catholicism becomes even more dangerous when combined with ideas of disease. As the medical guides indicate, it was within the bodies of women that sexual disease flourished, waiting to be spread to the male body where it would corrupt not only his body, but also his very soul. Catholicism was also a mortal threat to the soul. The strong linkages in the Protestant mind between Catholics and women, as Dolan claims, show how women were seen as the ‘carriers’ of a foreign religion, waiting for the opportunity to spread their contagion. That there were so many actual Catholic women at the English court, including many royal mistresses, or those perceived or smeared as mistresses, created a triangle of Catholicism, disease, and women which painted a threatening picture of physical and moral corruption that had encircled the throne of England.363

Accusations of disease against the notoriously libertine male courtiers of Charles II’s court underscore the connections between disease and the foreign. John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester and George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham were both alleged to suffer from the pox, and however true or false these claims were – it seems likely that venereal disease combined with years of alcoholism led to Rochester’s early death in 1680 – it is interesting to see what forms these accusations took. In 1669, Rochester was challenged to a duel by John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave over comments Rochester supposedly made about Mulgrave. Although Rochester denied saying anything, they still met to duel, but Rochester claimed that he could only fight on horseback because of his ‘weak condition,’

363 See Alastair Bellany’s The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News culture and the Overbury affair, 1603-1660 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Chapter 3 “The sins of the Overbury murderers” for a discussion on the associations made between popery, pox, and women in the famous Jacobean court scandal surrounding the Overbury murder. For an example of accusations of disease against Louis XV, see Arlette Farge and Jacques Revel’s The Vanishing Children of Paris: Rumor and Politics before the French Revolution, trans. Claudia Miéville (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) in which they discuss rumors of the king bathing in children’s blood to cure leprosy, a disease which, like the pox, ‘was the mark of sin’ and a ‘disease of the soul,’ 109 and 112.
and the duel was eventually called off.²⁶⁴ Years later, in 1677, writing in his perpetual argument with Rochester over satire, Sir Carr Scrope [or Scroope] alluded to the duel:

Rail on, poor feeble scribbler, speak of me
In as ill terms as the world speaks of thee.
Sit swelling in thy hole like a vex’d toad,
And all thy pox and malice spit abroad.
Thou canst blast no man’s name by thy ill word:
Thy pen is full as harmless as thy sword.²⁶⁵

Weak as both a writer and a fighter, Scrope describes Rochester as little more than an angry toad, bloated by pox and malice. The claim of illness during the duel made Rochester unmanly, making his pen and sword – and perhaps, given the phallic imagery of both, his penis – useless.

The charges of disease against Buckingham were about his manliness but also his political maneuverings. Known for his complicated political life and ability to switch opinions, Buckingham was also a known libertine who, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, was considered a pimp for the king. Attempting to gain influence through placing women in Charles’s bed, Buckingham was associated with sex not only because of his personal life, but also his role of courtly pimp. In 1668, Buckingham was mocked in “The Session of the Poets” about his play The Rehearsal. “The Session” claims ‘The Duke e’re did ask the advice of his friends [Martin Clifford and Thomas Sprat who helped him write the play] / And so wish’d his play as well clapp’d as his Grace.’²⁶⁶ Making fun of the duch’s playwriting, the author jokingly claims that the duke simply wants his play to be as well received as the gonorrhea, often seen as a ‘manifestation’ of the pox, was within his own body. A more serious use of the pox is found in the poem “On the Prorogation” written

²⁶⁵ Sir Carr Scrope, “The Author’s Reply,” POAS, Vol 1, 373 ll 1-6
after the proroguing of Parliament in April 1671. In a section railing against Buckingham, the author says, ‘May pox and plague and Devil hence thee fetch!’ and in the next line calls for ‘some prorogu’d, incensed Felton, rather, / Send this curs’d son to find his guilty father!’ An allusion to John Felton, who assassinated Buckingham’s father the 1st Duke of Buckingham, the poem wishes death upon the current Buckingham for his actions, be it through disease or murder. Buckingham is also accused of being ‘Fram’d to the measure and the pipe of France,’ alluding to the duke’s pro-French leanings, but the poem also claims that Buckingham is too changeable in his politics:

He all things is, but unto nothing true,
   All old things hates, but can abide no new.
But please your pocky Grace to give me leave
   To ask why thus you do our Prince deceive?

Unpredictable in his politics and deceiving the king, Buckingham is also seen as connected with France, making his political stance unknowable and dangerous. In a general condemnation for Buckingham’s life and politics, “Litany of the Duke of Buckingham” takes a step further by unmanning the duke through a charge of sexual disease and sodomy:

From making our boast of giving three glisters,
   By giving our claps to three cheated sisters,
   […] From transposing nature upon our bon gars,
   On [Edward] Kynaston acting both Venus and Mars,
   From owning twenty other men’s farce [sic].

The accusation of sodomy sought not only to take away Buckingham’s masculinity, but also to criminalize his sexual behavior since sodomy was considered a felony, punishable

368 Ibid 182-183 ll 65 and 88-91
by death.\textsuperscript{370} “Litany” further effeminizes Buckingham by making him a passive as well as active sodomite since he was ‘both Venus and Mars’ with Kynaston. Not only was Buckingham spreading disease, but he was unmanly and criminal in his sexual acts, which when added to his link to the French makes Buckingham both associated with the foreign and feminine.

Charges of pox against Rochester and Buckingham demonstrate that it was not only court women who were libeled with sexual disease. Depicted as pox-ridden libertines, both Rochester and Buckingham were censured for their behavior, but there is also an element of unmanning both courtly men, making them seem weak. Rochester was unable to aptly wield his sword or pen, and Buckingham acted as ‘both Venus and Mars’ with Kynaston, making him less manly but also criminal in his sexual activity. Additionally, Buckingham was associated with pro-French policy for at least part of his political career, making him also a conduit for the foreign, linking both Rochester and Buckingham to depictions of court mistresses and their associations with the pox.

\textsuperscript{370}Thomas Blount, \textit{GLOSSOGRAPHIA: OR A DICTIONARY}, Interpreting all such Hard Words OF Whatsoever Language, now used in our refined EnglishTongue; With Etymologies, Definitions, and Historical Observations on the same. Also the Terms of Divinity, Law, Physick, Mathematicks, and other Arts and Sciences explicated. Very useful for all such as desire to understand what they read. The Second EDITION, more correct; wherein above Five hundred choice Words are added. By T.B. of the Inner-Temple, \textit{Barrister}. LONDON: Printed by Tho. Newcomb for George Sawbridge at the Bible on Ludgate hill, 1661 (London, 1661), page unnumbered in text but listed on EEBO as document image 136. Alan Bray argues, however, that actual prosecution of ‘sodomites’ and homosexuals during this period was rare and usually only occurred when ‘what was at issue was primarily the maintenance of the social order.’ Alan Bray, \textit{Homosexuality in Renaissance England} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 [originally published in 1982]), 74. Bray also complicates the definition of ‘sodomy’ since it did not equate directly with homosexuality (itself a difficult term to use within the early modern period according to Bray) but could also incorporate ‘heterosexual sin’ and seems to be related to ‘a more general notion: debauchery […]’, 14-16, but Bray also discusses the change to the term ‘molly’ by the early eighteenth-century which Bray argues signaled a specific homosexual subculture, Chapter 4 “Molly.” See also Valerie Traub’s \textit{The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) for more on the evolution of the definition of sodomy.
The connections between court mistresses and disease are made more apparent when related to public perceptions of their sexual behavior. Their general promiscuity was taken for granted in many libels, with “Advice to a Cuntmonger” stating that

Whitehall Cunts are grown soe Common,
Foule and wide they’re fitt for noe man;
Rumbed by Porters, ram’d by Chaire man,
Towsd and teased from King to Carman.371

In essence, all court women were likened to prostitutes, opening them up to accusations not only of commercialized licentiousness but also of infection with disease.372 The term ‘common’ from the libel underscores this idea as it was the ‘common woman’ from the medical guides who created disease in her corrupted womb, and the lines between whore and court woman were often blurred as will be discussed in Chapter 3. The advice given in the earlier lines from “Advice to a Cuntmonger” does not follow Clowes and Archer’s suggestions about moral reformation, however, but rather to ‘Have a care of Cunts that Clapp yee’ and ‘Take the Councill I have sent yee, / Then fuck on and nere repent yee,’ meaning that men were admonished to be more careful in their illicit sex rather than choose to be abstinent or monogamous.373 The advice goes on to claim that ‘Citty Cunts are dangerous sport’ while ‘Country Cunts have nasty whites’ and concludes with ‘Every Tarse indulging Sparke / Shall enjoy in Whetstone Parke / A Drunken, Sound obedient whore. / What can A Mortall wish for more?’374 These concluding lines turn all of the advice on its head, indicating that sex with ‘A Drunken, Sound obedient whore’ is worth all of the risk because no woman was free from the suspicion of the pox. Rather than

371 “Advice to a Cuntmonger,” 269 ll 15-18
373 “Advice to a Cuntmonger,” 269 ll 2 and 9-10
374 Ibid 269-270 ll 11, 25, and 31-34
concern oneself over disease, the author claims, simply take it for granted that every
woman is infected because of their promiscuity. That even court women were willing to
have sex with anyone from a king to a carman indicates the depths of their depravity and
shows how no woman was above suspicion. “Advice to a Cuntmonger” also
demonstrates how many of these derisory libels were tinged with the prurient. Although
mocking large groups of women for their sexual incontinence, the near pornographic
images often invoked link them to the medical guides, as discussed previously, since they
claimed a certain moral superiority while also being linked to the obscene. The double-
sided nature of the libels and medical guides shows the fascination with and gendered
perceptions of sex. Titillating and perilous, sex and women carried both the joys of Venus
but also the horrors of sexual disease. Court women were especially dangerous because
of their special relationship to Charles, and it was this association between the women
and the famously licentious ‘Merry Monarch’ which caused concern. Certainly the
physical illness was an issue, but even more worrying was disease as metaphor for
corruption, particularly of the Catholic kind.

Critics’ opinions of the court and its corruption by Catholic influence were made
evident within libels which critiqued the behavior not only of the courtiers, but also of the
king himself. It was through Charles’s sexual escapades, the satires argued, that courtiers
were usurping royal authority and weakening the king’s hold upon his own kingdom. The
idea of influence through sex was most clearly, and infamously, articulated in a mid-
1670s poem by Rochester entitled “A Satyr”: “His Scepter, and’s Pricke are boeth of
one Length, / And she may sway the one, who plays with th’other.”375 The royal scepter,

375 “A Satyr,” Rochester, Love, 87 ll 11-12. Love gives five different versions of “A Satyr” in this
collection, with various sentence and word changes. Interestingly, two of the five change the line that the
and by insinuation the king’s authority, were open to any able to sexually satisfy him. The censuring of licentiousness, and the sin and corruption which followed it, then, was not merely a cry for morality – although one often tinged with the pornographic - but also as a warning of dangers to come. Accusations in “The Dissolution” against the Duke of York come after a foreboding look into England and its monarchy’s future if the king did not stop the further spread of corruption within his kingdom by no longer listening to ‘Romish Lyes’:

When King to Comons makes fine speeches
And draws his Reasons from his breeches
[. . .] And Government by a Disease
Made up Vice and Sensuall Ease
[. . .] When Female Buttocks dictate thus
Good Lord what will become of us.\textsuperscript{376}

Charles is only able to ‘think’ through his sexual conquests, opening him to ‘Romish Lyes’ that allow both himself and his government to become diseased with Catholicism. That such actions are through the female buttocks further associates the connection between women, sexual disease, and Catholicism, but also indicate the illicit nature of the sex because buttocks was another term for ‘common strumpet’ by 1673.\textsuperscript{377} Through the king’s weakness for sex, a woman was able to disease the king both physically and politically. The author goes further and declares that if the king cannot rule properly, and under his own accord, then it was time to change leadership:

From Dukes that are but little better
From a whore by nation & by nature
From kings that Rule by their direction
And subjects guide by Devils Protection

\textsuperscript{376} “The Dissolution,” ECS, BL Add, 92-93.
\textsuperscript{377} OED
From a sous Pilot att the helm
Good Lord Deliver this poore realm.\textsuperscript{378}

By using the clichéd image of Plato’s ship of state, the author points to the traditions surrounding monarchy that were being destroyed by the king’s negligence and drunkenness, and because of his inability to turn away from the female buttocks.\textsuperscript{379} Much like the destruction of the notion of the king’s two bodies, the king as pilot of the ship of state was being damaged by Charles’s role as fleshly man rather than angelic king. The fears of the author extend not only to the king’s seeming abdication of power, but also to those influencing the king, including Catholic women.

Issues of disease and the king were also made clear in satires, demonstrating the corruption at the heart of the court. One 1680 satire, entitled “The L\textsuperscript{d} Laras his Ghost” goes as far as to claim that the king himself is a corruption when it states,

\begin{verbatim}
With foolish kings; but now know’s the worst
Though fire, sword, & plague, and dreadfull friends,
    This Royall Plague, all other farre transcends.
    From him the Fountains, all our mischeif flowes
    [. . .] With Rome he plots, Religion to ore throw.'\textsuperscript{380}
\end{verbatim}

The king himself is a ‘plague’ which infects the land, flowing forth into the country and creating much ‘mischeif.’ The image of the ‘poisoned fountain’ harkens back to a speech

\textsuperscript{378} Ibid 94. Another example of the changing of government is given in the more extreme “A Duell Between Two Monsters upon my Lady Be-ts C-t with their chang of Government from Monarchicall to Democraticall,”\textit{ ECS}, Kungl, 63-69 in which two monarchs/monsters kill each other, resulting in the establishment of a commonwealth.

\textsuperscript{379} ‘Buttocks’ also has a nautical definition - ‘The breadth of the ship astern from the tuck upwards,’\textsuperscript{OED}.

\textsuperscript{380} “The L\textsuperscript{d} Laras his Ghost” from an unnamed poetry collection, British Library Sloane MS 655, 16 ll 32-37. Another version of the same poem is given in the collection and entitled “The Lord Lucas Ghost” with rather different lines: “But Plague and fire [?] sword such dreadful things/are like Mischeifes to this plague of Kings/This Jule of Arthur has so oft with King been Curst/Suffers [?] y\textsuperscript{e} worse/from him y\textsuperscript{e} fountain all of Mischeife flowes/from him y\textsuperscript{e} fire him y\textsuperscript{e} war arose/with Rome hee plots religion to ore throw/with France Combines to inslave y\textsuperscript{e} people too,” 43 ll 30-38. A date is given for “The Lord Lucas Ghost” of August 1680, and Lucas seems more likely the name of the lord than Laras. There are two possibilities for the Lord Lucas – one being Sir Charles Lucas, Royalist commander executed in 1648 by Fairfax after the siege of Colchester and posthumously raised to the peerage in 1666, the other Sir John Lucas 1\textsuperscript{st} Baron of Shenfield, a Royalist landholder created baron in 1644 and who died in 1671, so both were ‘ghosts’ by 1680.
from John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) which, as Alastair Bellany explains, alludes to court immorality causing ‘moral decay’ and ‘disorder’ in the forms of death and disease to spread throughout the land. The use of the fountain image, although it cannot be proven to come directly from Webster’s work, certainly carries the same message of courtly immorality as ‘an inherently political issue,’ but also echoes earlier discussion of James I’s *Basilikon Doron* and the importance of monarchical morality.\(^{381}\) Charles II faced similar accusations, as he was seen to allow the pollution of his court to filter into the country as a whole.

Most often, Charles is depicted as the victim, however willing, of infection. In accusing Charles of associations with Rome, “The Dissolution” points to how the king’s ties to Catholics were to be found within his very blood: “When French runs thro the Princes veines / And He by theirs not our Law Raignes / When French creeps into Royall bed.”\(^{382}\) Frenchness runs through the very veins of the king, infecting his blood. The author might be alluding to Charles’s French mother Henrietta Maria, but the more damning accusation comes in the next two lines when the king is accused of ruling by French laws, perhaps alluding to fears of tyranny, and allowing the insidious influence into his bed, in the form of the French Catholic Portsmouth. It can also indicate that Charles had actually contracted the pox, unsurprising given his numerous sexual partners, and because semen and blood shared an important bond in medical theory since seed was considered ‘the flower of all the blood of the Body, so must it likewise consist of the

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\(^{381}\) Bellany 2. The first performance of *The Duchess of Malfi* in the spring of 1614 also places it in the middle of the Overbury murder. Overbury died in September of 1613, and about a year and a half after the play’s first performance rumors of murder were circulating, 6-7.

\(^{382}\) “The Dissolution,” 93.
spirits contracted, and flower of all the infection, or infected blood of the whole Body.’\textsuperscript{383} The French which ‘runs thro the Princes veines’ could be an amalgamation of his French mother, mistresses, and the pox which has infected his blood and seed. At least one libel from 1679 entitled “Colin” [or “Colon”] indicates that the king was physically diseased, suggesting that the king had been ‘clapped’ by Buckingham’s old lover Lady Shrewsbury. In this libel, Portsmouth is supposedly giving up her position as the king’s mistress in order to return to France, and Lady Shrewsbury puts in her own bid:

Shrewsbury offered for the place  
All she had gotten from his grace;  
[...] Had often licked his amorous scepter  
Until the jaded stallion leapt her;  
But long ago had the mishap  
To give the King Dick Talbot’s clap.\textsuperscript{384}

Charles is insinuated to have been physically infected at least once through Lady Shrewsbury, and perhaps carried another disease through Buckingham and ‘all she had gotten from his grace.’ That the poem emphasizes how Shrewsbury received sexual disease from men like Buckingham and Talbot perhaps points to the idea in Chapter 1 that female influence was often on behalf of male courtiers, but also indicates that it was through the female and promiscuous body of Shrewsbury that the king would be infected. Like the polluted fountain, Charles’s befouled blood threatens not only his physical wellbeing but also England. By having sex with a Frenchwoman, Charles risks his nation by diseasing his own body with foreign influence.

Charles is not innocent because of his sexual promiscuity, but it is through women that the illness of the foreign and Catholic enters his body and soul. While he inherited Catholic blood from his French mother, Charles exacerbates his disease by sex with

\textsuperscript{383} Harvey, \textit{Little Venus}, 22-23  
\textsuperscript{384} “Colin,” \textit{CSR}, 25 ll 64-65 and 68-71. Dick Talbot was Colonel Richard Talbot.
Catholic women such as Portsmouth. A cure could never be obtained while the king continued with this behavior, as Barrough explains when he warns men from having sex while taking the guaicum wood cure for the pox:

Chiefly *Venus* must be shut out of the door quite, especially while this decoction is in giving. Some by committing this act but once in this cure, have failed of remedy through the same. There be devilish women desirous to be handled and dealt withal, who will beautifie themselves, to inflame mens hearts [...].

Here Barrough suggests that no cure for the pox can be found while men still indulge in illicit sex, while also slighting women for their role in the continuation of the disease. If taken outside of Barrough’s physical meaning of abstaining from sex to become cured of the pox, many libel writers make a similar statement about the king’s rule and mind since he could not become ‘well’ while he still slept with women who infected him with their influence. Only by, in Barrough’s terms, ‘abandon[ing] these your company, and thrust[ing] them out of the doors and house’ could the king be truly free of contagion.

With such a contaminated fountainhead, it is unsurprising that the whole of the court was deemed equally polluted. Court women were especially targeted since, as the medical guides claim, the source of bodily corruption lay within the female body. With satires taking for granted that court women were lascivious and little better than prostitutes, it is unsurprising that accusations of disease were thrown with a numbing frequency. One satire entitled “To the Tune of If Dr. P ____ take Exceptions” discusses a number of women and their numerous dalliances, and accuses some of being diseased.

Describing Arabella Churchill, a mistress of the Duke of York, the poem claims:

> Churchill is a flaming Beauty  
> And her favours will dispence  
> Never doubt She’ll be as true to yee

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385 Barrough 372  
386 Ibid
As She has been to her great prince
But have a Care of her poxing
For her Intrigues Still ends in Fluxing.\textsuperscript{387}

Another supposed mistress of the Duke of York, Susan Armine, Lady Bellasis is treated even more harshly when the satires claims that sex with her has nasty repercussions: “For now his p—ck gets every meeting / a Bloody nose and Constant weeping.”\textsuperscript{388} Many of the same women are also derided in a similar satire called “The Ladies’ March” from the early 1680s. Another poem which quickly mocks one court woman after the next, “The Ladies’ March” is even broader in its derision. Targeting Lady Bellasis once again it states, ‘The next that marched was Bellasis, / She who can pox you with a kiss.’\textsuperscript{389} Other accusations included that the Earl of Orrery’s estranged wife Mary passed on the pox to a Lindano who died through the mercury cure,\textsuperscript{390} Lady Ancram was only free from diseasing anyone because she was ‘too old to chancre ‘em,’ Sophia Bulkeley (nee Stuart) had been ‘recipient much of ballocks’ glister,’ Elizabeth Felton was ‘lewd and pocky, / Lord have mercy on her jockey!,’ and another mistress of the Duke of York, Katherine Sedley, had given birth to a child ‘soaked in pox and Popery.’\textsuperscript{391} “The Ladies’ March” shows a rather indiscriminate derision of court women since many others were named and derided for their sexual behavior though not specifically disease, but it is the accusation against Sedley and her baby ‘soaked in pox and Popery’ which in many ways encapsulates the fears surrounding women and sexual disease.

It was through the image of the pox ridden and Catholic court mistress that the gendered perception of sexual disease becomes particularly apparent in Restoration

\textsuperscript{387} “To the Tune of If Dr. P____ take Exceptions,” ECS, Avon, 418.
\textsuperscript{388} Ibid
\textsuperscript{389} “The Ladies’ March,” 58 ll 75-76
\textsuperscript{390} Wilson claims that Lindano could possibly be ‘M. de Lindenau, Envoy Extraordinary from Denmark to England, 1668-72,’ 59 n 12.
\textsuperscript{391} “The Ladies’ March,” 56-58 ll 15, 36, 45-46, and 83
libels. Certainly Protestant women like Nell Gwyn were also derided for their sexual promiscuity, diseases and influence over the king, but associations between Catholic women and disease served a particular and pointed purpose. The 1680 libel “Satire on the Court Ladies” puts it bluntly when it claims that Portsmouth ‘Destroys our prince’s honor, health, and soul.’ Such connections were not solely found within vicious libels, but also within politically earnest pamphlets such as Articles of high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanors against the duchess of Portsmouth (1680). Published anonymously, but apparently to serve as the backbone for a serious charge of treason at the upcoming Parliament, the Articles contain twenty-two accusations of various wrongdoings by the duchess, but the first one indicates the role of her infectious body and Catholicism:

Imprimus. That the said Duchess hath, and still doth cohabit, and keep Company with the King, having had foul, nauseous, and contagious Distempers, which, once possessing her Blood, can never admit of a perfect Cure, to the manifest Danger and Hazard of the King’s Person, in whose Preservation is bound up the Weal and Happiness of the Protestant Religion, our Lives, Liberties, and Properties, and those of our Posterity for ever.

392 See for example “An Essay of Scandal” in which Gwyn is described as “That hairbrain’d wrinkled, Stopt up Whore / Daily Stuck, Stab’d by half the pricks in Town / Yet Still her Stubborn Courses come not down / But lye and nourish old diseases there / Which thou and many thy poor Subjects Share,” ECS, Avon, 407. The connection between disease and menstrual blood has been discussed in this chapter – female blood will also be discussed in Chapter 3 – and it is implied that because of her role as mistress and her transmission of disease to the king, one does not need to sleep with Gwyn in order to feel the impact of her infection because of the influence she held over the king himself. That such a criticism is softened in other libels is shown in “The Ladies' March” which treated Gwyn rather mildly in comparison to other court women: “Now the lass with riveled belly, / Some call her Nell, Some Mrs. Nelly, / A saint to be admired the more/Because a Church of England's whore,” 58 ll 61-64. Gwyn will also be discussed more in Chapter 3, particularly in relation to her supposed rivalry with Portsmouth.

393 “Satire on the Court Ladies,” CSR, 37 l 22.

394 Articles of High-Treason, and other High-Creims and Misdemenors, against the Duchess of Portsmouth, The Harleian Miscellany: or, a Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, As well in Manuscript as in Print, Round in the late Earl of Oxford’s Library. Interspersed with Historical, Political, and Critical Notes. With a Table of the Contents, and an Alphabetical Insex. Vol. III (London, 1745), 484. For more on the publication and possible authorship of the Articles, see Chapter 1.
Portsmouth was contagious and dangerous not only to the king, but to the entire nation because of its dependence upon the ‘King’s Person.’ This fear is not merely physical as the Articles contend that Portsmouth and her disease could damage, or indeed destroy, England’s religion and the lives and liberties of its people. The mentioning of religion and liberties are an obvious allusion to Portsmouth’s Catholicism and the absolutism associated with the French court of Louis XIV. By allowing such a woman into his bed, Charles II was bringing the pox not only upon himself, but the French Disease upon his whole nation. That Portsmouth could never be cured of her illness is clearly stated, meaning that she could never be considered an appropriate companion for the king because she was diseased with the pox, Catholicism, and the taint of absolutism. That this was the first charge leveled at Portsmouth in the Articles suggests the importance the authors gave to it, since Portsmouth’s very body was a danger to the king and country, let alone her influence, religion, and politics. A broadside entitled “A Satyr” attributed to 1680 underlines this charge when it states,

Then Portsmouths Frenchified-Bitch,
That Damn’d Papistick-Drab;
An ugly, and most nasty Witch,
Eat up with Mange and Scab.
This French Hag’s Pocky Bumb
So pow’rful is of late;
Although it is both Blind and Dumb,
It Rules both Church and State.395

Harkening to the dismay of “The Dissolution” over the influence of the female buttocks, “A Satyr” not only emphasizes Portsmouth’s French heritage, but also her connection to

395 “A Satyr” (London, 1680). Both the date of 1680 and publication in London are suggested by Wing on EEBO, although the dating of 1680 seems accurate because the broadside mentions the trial and acquittal of George Wakeman, physician to Catherine of Braganza, in 1679 for charges of trying to poison the king.
the pope and her many infections including mange, which according to Gideon Harvey was an inherent characteristic of the French.

The *Articles* and “A Satyr” show how the associations between women, Catholicism, the foreign, and disease were rife within criticism of the Restoration court. It was not enough to say that Portsmouth was a whore, but she had to be a French diseased whore, revealing her true danger to the English court and nation. Barbara Palmer was similarly cast during the bawdy house riots in 1668 discussed in the Prologue, particularly in *The Gracious Answer of the most Illustrious Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of Castlem* ---- (1668) where it was surmised that the English Castlemaine was plotting to spread the Catholic contagion through sex, manipulation, and foreign invasion. Castlemaine’s conversion to Catholicism in the early 1660s made attacks on her religion as well as her role as royal mistress predictable in the charged atmosphere following the apprentice riots, but her eclipse by Portsmouth in the 1670s made the French Catholic woman an even better target for English Protestant anger. Indeed, the *Articles* charge Portsmouth with trying ‘to alter and subvert the Government of Church and State […] to introduce Popery and Tyranny in the three Kingdoms’ and that she attempted to further French interests whenever possible. The desire to impact church and state echoes sentiments in “A Satyr,” but also demonstrate the broad scope of the disease that Portsmouth was endangering the country with – the destruction of English liberties and Protestantism.

The *Articles* go on to charge Portsmouth with various degrees of greed and other abuses of her influence, but also of trying to poison the king as discussed in Chapter 1. A serious allegation, and certainly a reason to charge her with treason if believed to be true,
this accusation also alludes to ideas of the pox as a poison. Johannes Fabricius explains that by the early seventeenth-century an association between the pox and poison was known in England. Thomas Dekker’s *The Honest Whore, Part 1* (1604) described the pox as ‘the harlot’s poison,’ and similar allusions are made in other plays and poems into the Caroline period.\(^{397}\) Gideon Harvey’s *Little Venus* also calls the pox as it sits in the body ‘venom,’ showing how the metaphor was also found within medical guides. Harvey also mentions in a lengthy list of theories he dismisses on the origin of the pox the rather curious idea that ‘it was caused by Greek Wine, dash’d with Lepers blood, which the French drank, being purposely left for them […] by the Spaniards.’\(^{398}\) That Harvey goes on to note the role of Italian wine in the creation of the pox shows certain similarities with this theory, but also how the disease was linked with poisoning. An untitled lampoon from a poetry collection dated 1680 states ‘But in those hot & rigid Paines / When venome runs through all thy veins / The Product of thy tainted veins,’ again showing the association between the pox and poison.\(^{399}\) Sufferers of the pox or French Disease were essentially poisoned by it, as it coursed through their veins and tainted their entire body. James, Duke of York is accused in the 1673 libel “Advice to a Painter to Draw the Duke by” of carrying the pox and poisoning his first (and Protestant) wife Anne Hyde with it, and comments on the dangers his second wife Mary of Modena faced:

> Then draw the Princess [Mary of Modena] with her golden locks,  
> Hast’ning to be envenom’d with the pox,  
> And in her youthful veins receive the wound  
> That sent Nan Hyde before her under ground.\(^{400}\)

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\(^{397}\) Fabricius 133-136. The quote from Dekker Fabricius cites as [along with another quote calling the pox ‘The lecher’s French disease’] (3,2:41-2), 133.

\(^{398}\) Harvey, *Little Venus*, 6

\(^{399}\) Untitled, Sloane MS 655 (1680), sig.1v.

\(^{400}\) “Advice to a Painter to Draw the Duke by,” *POAS*, Vol 1, 216 ll 41-44.
The libel then goes on to accuse the Duke of York of infecting Arabella Churchill and more ‘is in store for a new set of Maids,’ not only accusing the duke of licentiousness but also of spreading the pox.\textsuperscript{401} An earlier line in the libel states ‘He [Henry Mordaunt, second Earl of Peterborough] who long since abjur’d the royal line / Does now in Popery with his master join,’ which coming directly before the lines about passing venom on to women also highlights the role of Catholicism with the pox.\textsuperscript{402} The Duke of York, like court women, served as a conduit for the foreign, and was so pernicious that even fellow Catholics like the Italian Mary of Modena were to fall victim to his virulent disease.

The \textit{Articles} call Portsmouth treasonous because of her supposed attempts to poison the king’s body through tainted food, but also through infection which was more insidious because it could impact not just his body but also his mind and soul. The potential venom hiding in the veins of any woman - and some men - was cause for concern, but when seen in the body of royal mistresses was made dangerous. Through the influence allowed them by the king, these diseased and poisonous creatures had the opportunity to infect the king with their foreignness, Catholicism, and feminine wishes. No English person could protect themselves from the pox of the court mistress because through the polluted fountain of the king and his court, the Protestant religion and English liberties themselves were endangered. The only way to save the nation was for the king to regain health, and the only cure was to be rid of the pox-ridden women so prevalent at the Restoration court.

\textsuperscript{401} Ibid l 46  
\textsuperscript{402} Ibid ll 39-40
Conclusions

‘Her name was Venerius, people said, the Diuell ought him shame;
And made this foole to fall in loue, when first he heard her name.’

The links between disease, Catholics and women reveal the anxieties of the Restoration period. The pox as a physical disease was certainly to be guarded against, but the metaphor for corruption is also vital in the understanding of political, social, and religious fears. Medical guides point to this as often they not only tried to tend to the body of the afflicted, but also to the sin which brought about the ‘venereal evil.’ The moral judgment associated with venereal disease was linked to its association with women and the ways in which women’s bodies were able to produce or serve as conduits for disease into not just men, but into England in general. Diseases such as the pox or French Disease were created through corruption and licentiousness, and women’s bodies served as the incubators of disease. That any woman could be suspected of carrying the pox, no matter how innocent they seemed, showed that sexual disease was considered a female problem imparted onto men. The prevalent assumption that court women, not just Charles’s ‘official’ mistresses, were licentious and given to disease also lent to ideas of rottenness spreading from within the core of England itself, its court.

The emphasis placed on discovering the origin of the pox within medical guides points to the important moral and political influences upon early modern medicine. Many highlighted the importance of the French siege of Naples in the early 1490s in the spread of the disease in Europe, although authors differed significantly on many other points, including whether the disease was ‘new’ or ‘old,’ and whether it was actually created during the siege or was transported from the Americas. The role of women is prevalent

403 Westminster sig.Br
throughout these theories, since although men were not considered innocent because of their licentiousness, it is the mysterious body of the woman which allows medical writers to assume that it was within the noxious womb that disease could develop. Certainly A New Method made this point clear with its contention that the pox sprung entirely from the mixing of seed within a woman’s womb, but other theories that did not agree with the idea of a spontaneous contagion still underscore that it was ‘common women’ who were often responsible for the spread of the disease, but do not censure to the same degree the men who had sex with those women.

That the English named the pox the French Disease further points to how the disease came to have a larger meaning than simply a medical condition. In naming the disease after another nation, as many other countries did, the English showed how the disease took on social and political significance because it symbolized the invading foreigner. For the English, that foreigner was the French so, as Kevin Siena claims, the French Disease managed to be not only a disease but also ‘a pathologizing of all things French.’

To become French, and by association Catholic, was to suffer from a debilitating disease. The role of women in the spread of the French Disease is clear through English associations of women with Catholicism, and English perceptions of women as conduits to the foreign, and of women as sexually licentious. As the medical theory suggested, it was through women that men became infected since there is not much gender neutrality in the terms used in the guides, just as women were the ones able to infect men with foreignness.

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Within a libertine court, it is not surprising that accusations of disease were frequent, nor that at times they were true. For example, it is believed that the Duchess of Portsmouth suffered from the clap, or gonorrhea, in 1674 and she spent much of that year trying to cure herself of the disease by going from spa to spa, and it is believed that Rochester died partly from the pox. Perhaps the real risk of disease made the libels all the more biting, although the general hurling of the accusations make it seem that it was more a standard critique than a true statement. Disease imagery also allowed for forays into the character of the court, and for assertions about both the physical and moral well-being of the king himself, who many feared was imperiled by the people he chose to surround himself with, particularly Catholics.

Seen as a foreign threat from within, Catholicism remained a perceived threat throughout Charles’s reign, while the image of the diseased and corrupted woman neatly wrapped together critiques of Charles’s famed sex drive, the influence women were seen to have over him, and the abundance of Catholics at court. Disease was bound to seep into the court and its king through the company he kept, particularly through the women who literally and figuratively diseased him. The image of the corrupted fountain is one which showed the power of disease accusations, as it implied that inevitably the king’s fluids would be invaded and then flow outwards. Influence was to be gained either by being the woman in the king’s bed, or as many libels indicate, being the man controlling the woman in the king’s bed.

405 Charles Beauclerk, *Nell Gwyn: Mistress to a King* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005), 227. Beauclerk’s biography of his own ancestor Gwyn is clearly biased in her favor and regards de Kéroualle with little approval. A letter from Henry Savile to the Earl of Rochester in December of 1677 alludes to the then Duchess of Portsmouth as being ‘ill to the greatest degree,’ although the exact nature of that disease can only be speculated upon. See *The Rochester-Savile Letters 1671-1680*, ed. John Harold Wilson (Columbus: Ohio States University Press, 1941), 52-53.
That accusations of disease against court women were widespread is seen in the various libels directed against them, and the particular charges against Portsmouth show how they could be used politically. The Articles published in 1680 were apparently part of a serious attempt to charge Portsmouth with treason, and the very first allegation against her was that she infected the king and endangered not only Charles’s person but also the church and state of England itself. Not merely a vicious attempt at mockery, Articles shows also how accusations of sexual disease had political, social, and religious implications. All women were suspected of carrying the pox, but those with the most influence on the king posed a real threat because they could spread their contagion. Court women were often slurred with the taint of disease, particularly those that were Catholic, like Portsmouth as well as Castlemaine in 1668. The link between the pox and poison made the charges of corruption at Charles’s court more powerful because it showed the peril to the king’s person and, through him, to England itself.

Focusing on perceptions of disease in the Restoration allows for a deeper understanding of the politicized construction of sex, gender, and women in the anti-court literature of the period. The links made between women and the ‘filthy sin’ of lust were common, and medical guides indicate how disease itself was believed to be an unnatural product from the female body. As the courtesan/hound Venerius – a Neapolitan courtesan, pointing again to the importance of the siege of Naples to the spread of pox within Europe - shows in The Hvnting of the Pox, the male body was greatly endangered through sex. Moral judgments attached to the ‘venereal evil’ made the shame of not only spreading but creating disease all the greater for women. Satires of court women demonstrate how vitriolic accusations of disease could truly be, particularly when
combined with fears of the Catholic and foreign. In trying to get Charles II to break free from the chains of sexual enslavement, libels point to the polluting and filthy nature of the women surrounding him, who were seen as little better than common prostitutes. At all costs, England and its king were not to be like Morbus Gallicus, who was hunted and hounded to death after enjoying the embraces of a fair yet fatal courtesan.
Chapter 3
Nell Gwyn and the Duchess of Portsmouth’s Pamphlet War:
Politics, Blood, Maternity and Two Wanton Ladies of Pleasure

‘but women sure, are not such dangerous things, their Tongues the only Weapons are, and they
enough to make great Pluto start, not being used to peals of Thunder, nor shrill Eccho’d sounds’.

‘Beware Gallants now listen and I will you tell with a fa, la, la, la, la, la / A pleasant discourse
that I heard at Pell-mell, with a fa la, &c. / Between two fair Ladys of the wanton strain, / The one
to the other did sigh and complain’.

A crowd began to form around the coach rumbling through the streets of Oxford in the
early 1680s, but there were no smiles or cheers. Instead, angry shouts and pumping fists
assaulted the coach and its unseen occupant, believed to be Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess
of Portsmouth, Charles II’s French Catholic mistress. Pouring out their frustrations and
anxieties about the current state of the country, the crowd looked to voice their
disapproval at the woman thought to be inside the coach. The woman whose face
appeared at the window, however, was someone considered quite different from
Portsmouth - Nell Gwyn. The famed comedic actress turned king’s mistress, known for
her sharp tongue and ready wit, poked her head out the coach window and said “Pray,
good people, be civil, I am the Protestant whore!” After which the formerly agitated mob
instantly began to cheer, letting a smiling Gwyn pass without further trouble.

The charming story, while oft repeated and certainly famous, has no grounding in
historical fact, and may be an eighteenth-century fabrication. That the story is most

406 A True Account Of the late most doleful, and lamentable Tragedy of Old Maddam Gwinn, Mother To
407 ‘A Pleasant Dialogue betwixt Two Wanton Ladies of Pleasure; Or, The Dutchess of Portsmouths woful
Farwel to her former Felicity’ (London, 1685). Publication suggested by Wing.
408 Charles Beauclerk, Nell Gwyn: Mistress to a King (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005), 307. This
biography of Nell Gwyn – only the most recent in a long line of them stretching back to the eighteenth
century - is questionable not only because it continues the tradition of sentimentalizing the life of Nell
Gwyn, but also because it is written by one of her descendants and attempts to speculate on Gwyn’s
psychology.
409 Beauclerk’s biography does not question the story’s validity, but others have. See Alison Conway,
“Defoe’s Protestant Whore,” Eighteenth-Century Studies 35.2 (Winter 2002), n 3 and James Grantham
likely a fake only lends more credence to the impact and meaning of representation, and the importance of royal mistresses within politics and also collective memory. The details of the story may be apocryphal, but the central and basic themes of the crowd’s love for Nell Gwyn, hatred of the Duchess of Portsmouth, and the general discontent of the crowd, go to the very heart of the tumultuous early 1680s in England. By looking for such themes within contemporary sources, one finds several ‘confrontations’ between Nell Gwyn and the Duchess of Portsmouth in a pamphlet war\textsuperscript{410} beginning in the early 1680s and continuing until shortly after Charles II’s death in February 1685. That these pamphlets, ostensibly in the voices of the combatants themselves, were most certainly written by other (male) authors further emphasizes the central role representation played.\textsuperscript{411}

\textbf{Introduction}

This chapter will use the pamphlet war between the English Nell Gwyn and French Duchess of Portsmouth to uncover the political significance of important assumptions couched within this war of words. Scholars interested in the broader gendered and sexual histories of Restoration England, as well as some earlier studies of royal mistresses, have already explored some of these pamphlets’ more overt themes. James Grantham Turner discusses the early 1680s pamphlets within the broader context of pornography and how the seeming binary between the loved/apolitical Gwyn and hated/political Portsmouth is

\textsuperscript{410} My own slightly dramatic, yet not undeservedly so given the time period, turn of phrase. The phrase is also an umbrella term as the publications discussed in this chapter include broadsides and ballads.

\textsuperscript{411} For more on the idea of representation, see Chapter 4.
complicated by criticism of both as whores and even tyrants. Turner’s creation of the word *pornographia*, which he uses ‘to distance it from modern debates and to emphasize its etymological roots in the lower-class ‘whore,’’ reveals his intention of examining the figure of the whore, but also ideas of carnival, the Interregnum’s creation of the ‘parliament of women’ motif, and the blurring of high and low society with the accusation of whoredom cutting across all strata. Turner is interested in what it meant ‘to write prostitution across as person or institution,’ revealing how the figure of the whore had political as well as sexual purposes. He also contends that *pornographia*’s attempt to cut across hierarchies succeeded only in making the figure of the ‘ruling-class courtesan’ more ambiguous and transgressive. As Turner states, ‘In Court culture the personal is always political, and private parts open into public issues,’ showing how accusations of whoredom against court women had wider implications than simply denigrating their sexual continence. Another scholar to examine these supposed battles is Sonya Wynne, who describes many of these pamphlets and broadsides and their meaning within the context of actual and perceived female influence and authority within court politics. Wynne explores the pamphlets’ comparisons between Gwyn and Portsmouth, and how both are criticized and maligned in the various publications. This chapter will extend Turner and Wynne’s analysis to delve deeper into the political and

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412 See Turner’s Epilogue “‘In Bathsheba’s Embraces old’: *pornographia rediviva* at the close of Charles II’s reign.”
413 Ibid xii
414 Ibid Preface. See Melissa M. Mowry’s *The Bawdy Politic in Stuart England, 1660-1714: Political Pornography and Prostitution* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004) for a discussion linking prostitutes (or the figure of the bawd) with republicanism.
415 Ibid 1 and 3
416 Ibid 10-14
417 Ibid 14
social meanings of this pamphlet war, focusing on both the seeming dichotomy of the English Protestant and French Catholic whore, and the more buried concepts of pregnancy and lactation that while apparent to the contemporary eye and mind, are often missed by modern readers.

As Turner makes clear in his argument, the accusation of whoredom cut across status boundaries, and made the lines between brothel and court indistinct.\textsuperscript{419} In certain ways, then, Gwyn and Portsmouth had important similarities: both were mistresses branded as whores, both were seen to hold an untoward influence over the king (even if differing in degree and level of danger), and both were mothers of the king’s illegitimate children. The importance of the third point, that of maternity, is found within these pamphlets not only when they directly mock the lineages of the humble Gwyn and haughty Portsmouth, but also in the medical concepts of maternity and the mother which help to underpin the pamphlets’ arguments. The very bodies of the pregnant and nursing woman, and the various mysteries contained within, were significant if somewhat hidden players within this pamphlet war. As we have seen, the female body was often represented as the carrier of disease and corruption, but it also signified the mysteries and anxieties of procreation. Seeing the publications from the perspective of female bodies allows for a better understanding of the gendered assumptions layered within political and social discourse during the Restoration.

The image of the mother and her important political and social meanings is particularly poignant and pointed in the Restoration because of Charles II and his wife

Catherine of Braganza’s inability to produce an heir. That Charles was able to have children with many of his mistresses, including Gwyn and Portsmouth, added a further layer of complexity to the charged notions of the female body and maternity, as well as conceptions of blood itself. As examined earlier, fluid flowing through veins could be seen as a carrier of disease and destruction, but it also played an important role in the making of children, and also fueled arguments over their creation and molding. These fluids, pumping within the bodies of the royal mistresses, take on a particular meaning within the context of their pamphlet war as focusing on issues of motherhood loops back into the more blatant labels of English/French and Protestant/Catholic, and also reveal anxiety surrounding the very body of the royal mistress. Just as her body had the potential to carry disease, it could also carry and help shape the king’s child, which had important social and political implications in a dynastically troubled period. By looking at contemporary medical works on motherhood and the female body, and building upon scholars such as Mary E. Fissell and Rachel Weil who discuss the political implications of depictions of reproduction, this chapter uncovers Restoration gender assumptions and anxieties personified by court mistresses and their bodies as demonstrated in the 1680s in this printed war of words.420

While this chapter uses manuscript sources to supplement its arguments about the pamphlet war, it focuses mainly upon a sequence of printed pamphlets that constituted the debate: A Pleasant Battle between Two Lap Dogs of the Utopian Court (1681), A Dialogue between The Dutchess of Portsmouth, and Madam Gwin, at parting (1682), A Letter from the Dutch of Portsmouth to Madam Gwyn (1682), Madam Gwins Answer to

the Dutchess of Portsmouths Letter (1682), A Dialogue between the D. of C. and the D. of P. (1682), A Pleasant Dialogue betwixt Two Wanton Ladies of Pleasure (1685), and The Dutchess of Portsmouths Farewel (1685). All of these publications are anonymous, and the only publication information is a listing of who they were ‘printed for.’ It is possible that A Letter from the Dutch of Portsmouth to Madam Gwyn and A Dialogue between the Dutchess of Portsmouth and Madam Gwin, at parting were both printed for the same person, who is listed simply as ‘J.S.,” while A Dialogue between the D. of C. and the D. of P. was printed for a J. Smith, possibly the same J.S. All of the pamphlets are short, with the longest having four pages, making it highly possible that each of these publications was relatively cheap. It is also important to note the gap in the pamphlet war between 1682 and 1685, which Sonya Wynne discusses was because ‘suppression of political opposition to the court affected political satire on the mistresses, and it largely disappeared after 1682,’ to return again shortly after the death of Charles II. Some of these pamphlets also speak directly to each other, while others are reacting to the same event. Madam Gwins Answer is obviously in response to A Letter and both are in a group of pamphlets with the two Dialogues discussing the departure of the Duchess of Portsmouth for France in early 1682. A Pleasant Dialogue and The Dutchess of Portsmouths Farewel are both broadside ballads printed within three days of each other.

421 A full list of who each pamphlet was printed for - A Pleasant Battle between Two Lap Dogs of the Utopian Court, R.B.; A Dialogue between The Dutchess of Portsmouth, and Madam Gwin, at parting, J.S.; A Letter from the Dutch of Portsmouth to Madam Gwyn, J.S.; Madam Gwins Answer to the Dutches of Portsmouths Letter, J. Johnson; A Dialogue between the D. of C. and the D. of P., J. Smith; A Pleasant Dialogue betwixt Two Wanton Ladies of Pleasure, J. Deacon; and The Dutchess of Portsmouths Farewel, I. Clarke, W. Thackeray, and T. Passinger.
422 Two were four pages long – Pleasant Battle and Dialogue between the D. of C. and the C. of P.; three were one sheet double-sided (two pages) – Dialogue between The Dutchess of Portsmouth, and Madam Gwin, A Letter, and Madam Gwins Answer; two were one sheet single-sided (one page) – A Pleasant Dialogue and The Dutchess of Portsmouths Farewel.
423 Wynne 251
and are based upon the same popular tune and a similar visual layout which makes it possible that *Farewel* was basing itself on *A Pleasant Dialogue*. \(^{424}\) *Pleasant Battle* is the first in the ‘war’ and is the only one of the pamphlets not connected to the others by direct response or reaction to the same event, but fits within the larger war in how it uses royal mistresses and the themes it highlights about nationality and religion. All of the pamphlets have the mistresses in dialogue with each other – although most of the conversation in *Pleasant Battle* is between two dogs – with four in rhyming verse, one partly in rhyming verse and partly in prose, and two in letter form. All assumed the voices of Gwyn and Portsmouth with obvious and also more subtle intentions.

The political importance of placing Gwyn versus Portsmouth is readily apparent, if complicated by vicious libels against Gwyn herself, given the clear demarcations between English/French and Protestant/Catholic presumed by the Restoration authors. The rapacious (both in terms of money and influence) duchess is compared unfavorably to the generous former actress, but the emphasis placed upon the English/French difference also points to an integral facet of this war – the question of lineage and blood. The body of the court mistress and its ability to create royal bastards was a cause for concern during the Restoration. In looking at medical theories of pregnancy, lactation, and the fluids associated with them the modern reader discovers implicit early modern English gendered assumptions on female influence submerged within this 1680s pamphlet war.

\(^{424}\) The importance of broadside ballads using familiar melodies and repeating woodcuts was highlighted by Christopher Marsh in “Balladry as a Multi-Media Matrix: Best-Selling Songs and Their Significance in Seventeenth-Century England” (paper presented at the Performing the Book: Multi-Media Histories of Early Modern Britain conference, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University, February 11, 2011).
**Battle Lines Outlined**

The pamphlets, broadsides, and ballads chosen for the ‘pamphlet war’ of the early 1680s are important because of how the various court mistresses in them are portrayed, both individually and in their interactions with each other. Although mostly between Gwyn and Portsmouth, Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland also makes an appearance in one pamphlet, as does the ghost of another royal mistress, Jane Shore. While these three were certainly not the only mistresses Charles II had, nor were these the only libels or pamphlets written about them, the small collection detailed in this chapter are interesting for their similar themes as well as their varied forms and content.\(^{425}\)

_A Pleasant Battle between Two Lap Dogs of the Utopian Court_ (1681) describes an impending fight between two talking dogs. The reason the author chose to have the animals speak is made clear from its first line:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Wise Æsop thought it no Mistake} \\
\text{To make brute Beasts, as well as men to speak:} \\
\text{Why may not I, like him, in harmeless Rhymes,} \\
\text{Bring Brutes to speak against the brutish times?}^{426}
\end{align*}
\]

The anonymous author’s opinion is made clear, and although he claims in the continuing title of the piece that he was drowsy at the time of the incident and later states that it was a dream, which accounts for the talking dogs, in reality the plainness of his argument is made from the start – it is not odd to make a beast speak in such bestial days. The two

\(^{425}\) There are manuscript poems which also take the form of dialogue between court mistresses, such as “Dialogue L:R” which has Gwyn, Portsmouth, Charles, and the English people all given a verse, and “Song” which has Cleveland in conversation with ‘Counsellor Knight [Mary Knight]’ but this chapter is interested in focusing on the published dialogues since they reached a wider audience. _Rochester, Love_, 90-91. Love places these poems in the section marked ‘Poems Probably by Rochester.’

\(^{426}\) _A Pleasant Battle between Two Lap Dogs of the Utopian Court_ (London, 1681), 1. For more on the use of Aesop’s tales in English political writing, see Annabel Patterson’s _Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History_ (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999) and Mark Kishlansky’s “Turning frogs into princes: Aesop’s _Fables_ and the political culture of early modern England,” in _Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern Europe: Essays Presented to David Underdown_, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995). Kishlansky examines the political contexts and uses of Aesop’s ‘The Frogs and Jupiter’ or ‘The Frogs Desiring a King.’
dogs that are preparing to fight are not just any dogs, but champions for Nell Gwyn and the Duchess of Portsmouth themselves. Tutty fights for Gwyn and Snap-short for Portsmouth. Before the physical fight begins, the two dogs taunt each other’s mistresses, with Snap-short denigrating Gwyn’s low birth and her presumption in even having her dog fight against one of Portsmouth’s because the duchess was by far her superior. Tutty, on the other hand, berates Snap-short’s mistress for hoarding and transporting gold to France and bringing destruction to England: “Yours cares not if she be ruin’d to buoy her up amongst those troublesome Seas of Distruction which are raised to involve us in ruin: and indeed Ruine and she are so near akin, that she is out of her Element unless she be there.”

The dogs continue exchanging insults, making plain their English/Protestant and French/Catholic tendencies, Tutty even claiming that Gwyn will be saved by her Protestant religion while Snap-short’s ‘French Romish Bitch shall be pull’d Limb from Limb.’ Snap-short replies that Portsmouth could easily become Protestant to further her own ends, leading to the revelation of Portsmouth’s true intentions: “you mistake the Case, if you imagine she came out barely to be a Whore; in short, she came for a Spy to betray both Kingdoms Interest.” Not loyal to anyone’s cause but her own (although she has papal dispensation for any ‘Villanies’) Portsmouth’s own dog/champion believes her capable of betrayal of both kingdoms and using religion to further her own ends.

The end of A Pleasant Battle is as one expects - the English dog wins. After all of the dialogue between the dogs, however, Portsmouth and Gwyn themselves are given words to say. Portsmouth complains briefly about the fairness of the match, while Gwyn is given a far longer speech in which she admonishes the duchess for not only trying to

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427 Ibid 2
428 Ibid 3
429 Ibid
bring in ‘French dog play,’ but also for standing too close to the fighting and risking being hurt.\(^{430}\) Unsurprisingly, Gwyn also bets on her dog Tutty, and in the final lines the reader learns that Tutty beat Snap-short. Tutty’s victory over Snap-short was inevitable not only because of who their owners were, but was also implied in the dogs’ names: ‘to snap-short’ means ‘to fail to get or obtain,’ while ‘tutty’ was far more favorable as it could refer to ‘a nosegay, or posy’ or ‘snub-nose.’\(^{431}\) Tutty’s victory was a foregone conclusion, and so it was the words of the dogs that take center stage, rather than the actual fight itself. The argument between the dogs is particularly noteworthy because the author bluntly says at the beginning that it was only fitting to have dogs speak given the circumstances of the time, and that the actual court mistresses themselves are only given words after the animals exchange insults, often using the bestial slur ‘bitch’ to denote their rival’s mistress.\(^{432}\)

The next pamphlet, a rhyming exchange entitled *A Dialogue between The Dutchess of Portsmouth, and Madam Gwin, at parting* (1682) marked the beginning of a series of pamphlets which followed Portsmouth’s departure on a visit to France. Leaving in early March 1682, Portsmouth was not gone from England long before pamphlets about her departure began circulating. *A Dialogue*, according to a handwritten note on the first page, was from 8 March \(1682\frac{2}{1}\), only a few days after she left.\(^{433}\) As the title indicates, rather than having fighting dogs do battle for them, in this pamphlet Gwyn and Portsmouth themselves debate, ostensibly while Gwyn is seeing Portsmouth on her way to leaving England. Gwyn is given the opening words by saying she is glad to escort

\[^{430}\text{Ibid 4}\]
\[^{431}\text{OED}\]
\[^{432}\text{Turner 256-257 and Gowing 67}\]
\[^{433}\text{EEBO copy of the original at the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery.}\]
Portsmouth on her way, while Portsmouth replies that any favor Gwyn manages to attain as the only ‘Empress on the Throne of Love’ will be lost when Portsmouth returns. Gwyn doubts that Portsmouth will come back because she claims that Portsmouth has already bled England dry so she had no reason to return. Portsmouth actually returned to England after about four months in France, so while Gwyn’s comment here may show the author’s suspicion or hope, it was not one that became reality. The bickering continues, with Gwyn claiming it is her ‘Birth-right now to Reign at home’ while Portsmouth accuses her of promiscuity before becoming the king’s mistress and, like Snap-short, pokes fun at Gwyn’s background.434 The last exchange involves Portsmouth cursing Gwyn, predicting that the people’s anger and hatred would turn on the English mistress, and ‘in my Absence will Revenge on thee / The Punishments their Rage design’d for me.’435 Gwyn loses no time in disputing Portsmouth’s assumption by stating that she is not worried about the people turning on her because, ‘I do them Justice with less Sums a Year. / I neither run in Court nor Citys Score, / I pay my Debts, Distribute to the Poor.’436 The less expensive, more generous model of a court mistress, Gwyn does not fear the anger of the people normally directed against Portsmouth, whom Gwyn terms ‘the Grievance of the Nation.’ A Dialogue, then, is a more direct pamphlet with a fictional exchange of words between the women, rather than the more fanciful dog fight with talking animals. Gwyn

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434 *A Dialogue between the Dutchess of Portsmouth, and Madam Gwin, at parting* (London, 1682), 1 [unmarked].
435 Ibid
436 Ibid. Gwyn’s claim to do the English people ‘Justice with less Sums a Year’ seems borne out by a curious document comparing the amount of money given to Gwyn and Portsmouth between 27 March 1676 and 14 March 1678/9, giving specific dates and how much each woman was given down to the pence. It is difficult to know if this tally is accurate, but it is placed in the British Library’s Additional 28094, a collection of royal warrants, petitions, and miscellaneous political and other papers; 1629-1829 and according to the British Library, ‘Many are addressed to, endorsed by, or otherwise connected with Thomas Osbourne, 1st Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds, Lord High Treasurer.’ If this tally is indeed accurate, then during this period Portsmouth received 55198:07:11 [£ S D] and Gwyn 16041:15:06 [£ S D], a significant difference indeed. 28094/54.
and Portsmouth exchange barbed insults about their lineages, their morals, their
intentions, and ultimately their legacies with the people of England.

The theme of Portsmouth’s departure from England is continued in *A Letter from
the Dutch. Of Portsmouth to Madam Gwyn, on Her Landing in France* (1682). Possibly a
continuation of the conversation from when Gwyn and Portsmouth parted in *A Dialogue*,
now Portsmouth is writing to Gwyn about her safe journey to France, as well as
imparting advice to her erstwhile rival.\(^{437}\) From the beginning Portsmouth acknowledges
that her rival Gwyn did not care about the duchess’s safety: “To tell you I arriv’d safe at
*Callis* wou’d be too much trouble to you, that I had an ill Passage, or was Shipwrack’d by
the way, wou’d give you occasion of too much Joy.”\(^{438}\) Portsmouth goes on to describe
her journey, one in which the sailors saw her as ‘the Star by which they w
ere guided’ and
even boasted of the ‘Influence’ she held over Neptune himself, whom she described as
‘*Charle’s* [sic] Vice-Admiral.’\(^{439}\) She claims that Neptune offered her many jewels and
begged her to bare his children ‘for the better Peopleing of his Dominions.’\(^{440}\) Portsmouth
says she turned down the offer because she already has a prince, but she recommended
Gwyn to Neptune because she was of a lowlier background and more fit for Neptune’s
lower status: “And therefore I did you the Justice, to recommend him to your Ladyship,
to whom, for your Extraction, he might have a juster Title […].”\(^{441}\) The duchess more
graphically denigrates Gwyn’s background by alluding to the actual drowning death of
her mother in 1679. Although the circumstances are unclear, Gwyn’s mother Helena, a

\(^{437}\) Both *A Dialogue* and *A Letter* were printed for a J.S., so the publisher was obviously interested in
capitalizing on Portsmouth leaving England.
\(^{438}\) *A Letter from the Dutch. Of Portsmouth to Madam Gwyn, On Her Landing in FRANCE* (London, 1682),
1 [unmarked].
\(^{439}\) Ibid
\(^{440}\) Ibid
\(^{441}\) Ibid
notorious bawd and drunk, was rumored to have died drunk in a ditch, and it is a particularly cruel joke to recommend the Roman god of the sea to Gwyn as a reminder of the death of her mother. Portsmouth also predicts that Gwyn herself will share her mother’s fate – to be born and die in a ditch. The duchess not only recommended Gwyn to Neptune, however, but to many others, including ‘a Deputation of a Dutch Cargo,’ whose crew was soaked in ‘Brandy and Sippets,’ which Portsmouth saw as fitting company for the lowborn Gwyn.

The French mistress goes on to claim that all ‘Ladies of England’ are equally lascivious, having sex with a cook, butler or coachman to quench their insatiable appetites.

The description of the Ladies of England and their husbands leads to the last, and perhaps most interesting, part of A Letter. Although poking fun at the English women and their sexual appetites, Portsmouth also comments on how married women were able to escape criticism through matrimony:

But these are safe under the Cloak of a Husband, whilst you and I lie under the Censure of every Cobler and Tinker, that will take upon him to Order and Regulate affairs of State, even to the Bed-Chamber […] whilst Matrimonial Concupiscence passes invisible under that Vizard.

Finding common ground between herself and Gwyn, Portsmouth complains that the same behavior found in herself and Gwyn is more heavily censured than that of married women who cuckold their husbands. Part of this shielding, Portsmouth notes, came from a husband defending his wife’s honor simply ‘to save his own Reputation,’ and recommends that Gwyn herself find a husband. Not to be seen to have genuine concern for Gwyn’s well-being, the duchess quickly goes on to say that Gwyn will need a

442 Ibid
443 Ibid
444 Ibid 2 [unmarked]
445 Ibid
husband ‘before you be cast off’ since after Portsmouth returns all of the attention given
to Gwyn will be gone. By marrying, Gwyn will be able to continue to indulge her
appetites for sex, and by taking up with a ‘Tapster, or strong-water-man,’ slake her
inherited thirst for alcohol. The advice is to be followed quickly because, according to
Portsmouth, Gwyn is fast losing her looks, and risks being thrown out to become ‘a Fee
to the Grooms of the Stable.’ She closes by saying this is her ‘last and best Advice’ to
Gwyn, and signs it ‘Your Friend.’ The discussion of marriage is interesting because it
allows for a criticism of English court women in general, both single and married, while
also continuing the comedic aspects of A Letter. Portsmouth did not believe she herself
needed to marry, presumably because she could never possibly lose her influence over
the king, an influence which placed her above the god Neptune himself.

The irrepressible Gwyn’s ‘response’ was published soon after in Madam Gwins
Answer to the Dutches of Portsmouths Letter (1682). Playing upon A Letter, Gwins
Answer begins by wondering how Portsmouth made it safely to France if the sailors did
indeed see her as the guiding star. Rather than a reliable guiding light, Gwyn instead
compares Portsmouth to ‘an Ignis Fatuus or a Willy with wisp’ that would more likely
lead to shipwreck than safe port. She also replies to Portsmouth’s earlier comments
about her background by calling into question the duchess’s own: “if I came from a
Drunken family, you sprung from a swinish race, and pray what’s the difference when

446 Ibid
447 No publication date is printed on the actual pamphlet, but since it is most definitely in response to A
Letter, it is highly likely that the date given by Wing of 1682 is correct.
448 Madam Gwins Answer to the Dutches of Portsmouths Letter (London, 1682), 1 [unmarked]. Ignis
Fatuus ['foolish fire’ in medieval or modern Latin] was ‘A phosphorescent light seen hovering or flitting
over marshy ground, and supposed to be due to the spontaneous combustion of an inflammable gas
(phosphuretted hydrogen) derived from decayed organic matter; popularly called Will-o’-the-wisp, Jack-a-
lantern, etc,’ OED.
our Pedigree is summed up?" Since A Letter made allusions to Gwyn’s drunken mother who died in a ditch, Gwyn’s assertions that the two shared common inheritances from their mothers was a terrible slight to the pretentious duchess. Gwyn further slights Portsmouth by doubting her claims that she turned down Neptune’s advances, particularly after hearing about the god’s offer of jewels to the duchess: “You that will drudge like an Apple-wench for Gold; would drudge like an Oyster-woman for Pearl. Therefore leave off your Vainglorious boasting for we know you too well to believe you.” Whether Gwyn is insinuating that Neptune did not really offer such riches or that Portsmouth lied when she said she did not sleep with him, Gwyn is calling the duchess a vainglorious liar enthralled to gold. Further, Gwyn not only drew comparisons between their lineages, but also goes on to say that although her mother was a drunkard, Portsmouth came ‘from a swinish race’ because her father had lived in a pigsty, and so the differences between Gwyn and Portsmouth were very small indeed.

Gwyn wonders if Portsmouth’s criticisms of English ladies were not merely a reflection of her own gargantuan appetites, and takes up the last part of her response to rebuff the duchess’s advice to marry. Gwyn rails against the advice to get married, and instead glories in the many freedoms she had as a single woman. Although still a royal mistress, Gwyn enjoys ‘the society of one or two good likely footmen,’ as well as the ability to go where she liked when she liked. With no one to answer to, Gwyn did not need to worry about a jealous or abusive husband becoming upset over the slightest dalliance: “If I cast but an affectionate eye, on an old acquaintance, he would cry I itch’d

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449 Ibid 2 [marked as 4]
450 Ibid
451 Ibid
for his imbraces, and it may be give me the strapado to put him out, of my thoughts." Just as Portsmouth’s comments highlighted how marriage could allow women bad behavior, Gwyn shows the darker side of marriage, one which bound the woman to the will of the husband, even making her subject to his violence. Rather than marry, Gwyn would rather take on many lovers until she is very old and blind, then perhaps marry a man who could ‘lead me into what Company he likes.’ While able-bodied, however, Gwyn wished to remain free, and closes with a rhyming triplet: “Whilst any thing is stirring for the Belly, / The best It’h Land will give a piece to Nelly, / And comfort her old age with Royal jelly.” Seemingly about royal sperm, these lines give a suitably bawdy end for the former actress, demonstrating how Gwyn will remain free and continue to do as she pleased. Taking the themes from Portsmouth’s Letter, Gwyn turns them against the duchess as she calls into question the French woman’s lineage and veracity, pulling her down to the lowly plane Gwyn inhabited. Further, Madam Gwins Answer insinuates that while both women are whores and Gwyn’s strict fidelity to the king is laughingly called into question, Gwyn’s whorishness was from a desire for freedom and an enjoyment of sex, while Portsmouth was only interested in gold and pearls.

Another published exchange, this time between the Duchess of Portsmouth and Duchess of Cleveland, was entitled A Dialogue between the D. of C. and the D. of P. at their meeting in Paris (1682). Although periodically returning to England and the court, Cleveland spent much of her time in France after the mid-1670s, returning more
permanently to England in 1682. This *Dialogue in Paris* allows for an exchange between two of Charles’ notorious Catholic mistresses, and brings a different tone than the confrontations between Gwyn and Portsmouth. From the beginning, the women attack each other, Cleveland noting how Portsmouth, her ‘sister Concubine,’ has returned to France, and wonders at her ‘Cunning Arts’ which stole the king away when he ‘so meanly stoop[ed] to you.’ They bicker over who is the better ‘Wit and Beauty,’ and, like Gwyn, Cleveland questions Portsmouth’s pretensions to ‘Genteel Blood’ and says that the ladies of France will laugh at the presumptuous duchess. Portsmouth claims that the French ladies will be good to her because of all the services she has performed for Louis XIV, to which Cleveland cautions that French kings are more likely to put ‘Their Whores’ in a convent than ‘to noble Titles to advance.’ In a continuing attack on Portsmouth’s greed, she states that she hopes to gain more bounty from England, while Cleveland condemns her as a ‘French She=Horse leech of the English state,’ a rather hypocritical statement given Cleveland’s own notorious acquiring of state funds, as shown in the pamphlets surrounding the 1668 bawdy house riots. Portsmouth picks up on this hypocrisy, but notes how Cleveland is merely jealous that she can no longer command as many ‘gleanings of the field,’ and that in fact Cleveland’s age now required her to pay for sexual favors. Cleveland in turn mocks Portsmouth’s looks, which she deems ugly and foreign:

That babys Face of thine and those black eyes,  
Me thinks should ne’r an Heroes Love surprise.  
None that are had eyes e’re saw in that French face

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455 A Dialogue between the D. of C. and the D. of P. at their meeting in Paris (London, 1682), 1.  
456 Ibid  
457 Ibid 2  
458 Ibid
O’re much of Beauty form or Comly grace.\footnote{Ibid}

To prove her point, Cleveland later claims that Portsmouth used magic to gain the king’s favor, stealing him away from Cleveland’s superior looks. Portsmouth counters that she ‘subdu’d your mighty Conquerour’ through beauty and wit, and that she was far more intelligent in the use of her influence:

I’ave rul’d as well as you and my \textit{French} pate,  
Have div’d into the great intreauges of State.  
In Balls and Masques you revel’d out your nights,  
But Madam \textit{I} did relish state delights,  
My politiques and Arts were deeper Bred,  
Than ever came into your shallow Head.\footnote{Ibid}

Portsmouth then berates Cleveland’s stupidity and says she will continue her influence when she returns to England, to which Cleveland wishes upon Portsmouth the scorn and violence of the crowd.\footnote{Ibid}

Once Portsmouth admits her love of politics and Cleveland wishes English condemnation upon her, a third woman appears, the ghost of Jane Shore. Elizabeth (Jane) Shore was a mistress to Edward IV, and her life is mostly known through later accounts. Her name was changed to Jane in 1599 by Thomas Heywood, and according to tradition, she was famed for performing public penance after the death of another possible lover William Hastings, 1\textsuperscript{st} Baron Hastings, and died in penury.\footnote{Ibid} Having the ghost of a fellow royal mistress appear before them, the rest of \textit{A Dialogue in Paris} sees Portsmouth and Cleveland listening to words of warning from a long dead compatriot. The ghost tells of

\footnote{See Rosemary Horrox’s “Shore, Elizabeth [Jane] (d.1526/7?), \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography}, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/25451, accessed 27 July 2012]. Shore is a figure in many pamphlets, plays, histories, and ballads during the Restoration. Sometimes merely mentioned, other times the subject of a history or ballad, Shore was a well-known character within Restoration culture and publications.}
the ‘splendor’ and ‘delights’ which she enjoyed while mistress of the king, but how she lost everything when the king died: “My honour stain’d and black was all my fame, / Scorn of the People to my self a shame.”463 Her misery was so strong, in fact, that Shore contends that she wished she had never been born at all. Death did not bring respite, however, as the royal mistress found herself “Tormented in the flames of Hell below.”464 For Shore, being a whore was enough to be condemned, no matter that she was mistress to the king himself. It is interesting that this particular pamphlet takes this gloomy tack at the end, and that the two living mistresses depicted in it are Catholic. While they sling many of the same insults at each other as Gwyn and Portsmouth do in the earlier pamphlets, in this one the famous penitent figure of Jane Shore is used to demonstrate the fate of royal (Catholic) mistresses.465

The last two publications examined in this chapter are ballads produced shortly after the death of Charles II in early February 1685, entitled A Pleasant Dialogue betwixt Two Wanton Ladies of Pleasure and The Dutchess of Portsmouts Farewel. Both are set to the tune of ‘Tan tarra rara, tan rivee (or tivee)’ and were published within weeks of the king’s death, showing the relaxing of the suppression of political opposition discussed by Sonya Wynne.466 Interestingly, the tune ‘Tan tarra rara’ was also known as ‘The Crost

463 A Dialogue in Paris 4
464 Ibid
465 ‘Jane’ Shore and her representations will be examined more in Chapter 4 when discussing the uses of the Restoration mistress after the death of Charles II in 1685 and further after the deaths of the court mistresses themselves.
466 Charles died February 6th. A Pleasant Dialogue was published 17 February 1685 and The Dutchess of Portsmouts Farewel on 20 February 1685 [sic], both dates according to handwritten notes on the pages [EEBO copies of British Library originals]. Both were also printed for different publishers. In The Roxburgh Ballads, however, an argument is made that possibly at least one of these ballads was actually printed in 1682, when Portsmouth left for her brief visit to France, rather than the label of February 1685. The lamenting of Portsmouth seem to me to indicate that the ballads are correctly dated in 1685, but even if one or both were from 1682 they still fit within the parameters of my self-defined ‘pamphlet war.’ See The
Couple,’ and ‘tells of the country squire being deceived by a fine painted madam, whose false tresses, teeth, etc., he discovers in time to escape from her clutches,’ so the tune itself showed a connection to wanton women. The broadsides also have two woodcuts each, all four depicting women, with one of the woodcuts being shared between the two. 

*A Pleasant Dialogue* begins with a narrator claiming that he heard the following conversation at Pell-mell ‘Between two fair Ladys of the wanton strain,’ and starts with the complaint of Portsmouth that she wishes she were back in France, underscoring the further title of the ballad, ‘Or, *The Dutchess of Portmouths [sic] woful Farwel to her former Felicity.*’ Gwyn replied that she would rather Portsmouth gone as well, even if only to keep trouble away: “Forsooth you must needs leave your country dear / To utter your fine french Commodity here, / But sorrow and trouble will bring up the rear.”

With the term ‘commodity’ Gwyn emphasized that both she and Portsmouth participated in trade, in their case of their bodies. In response, Portsmouth claims that she is ‘in a most pitiful case’ because of shame, to which witty Gwyn replied that Portsmouth had sent away much gold to France. Portsmouth took great offense and stated that Gwyn

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\text{had treasure as often as I […]} \\
\text{And yet must I onely indeed be run down,} \\
\text{By you that I value the least in the town,} \\
\text{If I come in favour upon thee I’le frown.} 
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*Roxburghie Ballads: Illustrating the last Years of the Stuarts*, Volume IV, ed. J. Woodfall Ebsworth (Hertford: Stephen Austin and Sons, 1883), 277.

*The Bagford Ballads: Illustrating The Last Years of the Stuarts*, Second Division, ed. Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth (Hertford: Stephen Austin and Sons, 1878), 598.

*A Pleasant Dialogue betwixt Two Wanton ladies of Pleasure* (London, 1685). Place of publication is not printed, but Wing’s suggestion of London seems highly plausible.

Ibid

A further extension of the ballad’s title is ‘One Lady she Couragiously stands in her own defence; The other now doth seem to bow, her Colours are display’d, Assuredly none can deny, the Words she speaks is sence: She is content, her mind is bent, still to maintain her Trade.’

Ibid
Portsmouth’s taunt raises anger in Gwyn who says that she did indeed ‘hold you in scorn’ and ‘I’d have you to know I am this Nation born […] / Your coming to England I heartily rue,’ here perhaps speaking for many of the audience for the ballad. Portsmouth continued to lament about her fall from favor into ‘a most pitiful plight,’ trying to garner a sympathy that Gwyn refused to give. Yet, Portsmouth ended the ballad on a more positive note, claiming that she would continue in her chosen profession: “I’le set a good face and will follow my trade, […] / I shall have some trading I do make no doubt.” In other words, Portsmouth will continue as either a whore herself, or a bawd.

*The Dutchess of Portsmouths Farewel*, published a few days after *A Pleasant Dialogue*, continues the theme of Portsmouth’s sorrow over her present state. Gwyn begins the ballad in seeming sympathy for Portsmouth’s predicament, saying ‘It is not long since thy fame it was great, / But now ‘tis eclips’d by unkindness of fate.’ Portsmouth agrees that she deserves pity, but when Gwyn tells her to ‘amend’ her life, Portsmouth quails and retorts that Gwyn ‘may’st be the next.’ The women continue to bicker, until Gwyn concedes that she too may fall from grace, but advises Portsmouth to be generous and ‘unstring your purse, and be kind to the poor,’ a statement in keeping with perceptions of Gwyn as a generous woman. Portsmouth answers only with further complaints about how much she has lost, to which Gwyn says that Portsmouth has transported much money from England into France, while Gwyn spent what she was given ‘freely in England,’ rather than sending it to a foreign land. The last stanza of the ballad has Portsmouth comparing herself to Jane Shore in her sadness, and ends rather

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472 Ibid
473 Ibid
475 Ibid
poignantly, although perhaps with much cynicism by the author, that ‘I have lost my best friend that I loved so dear.’ Here Portsmouth could be speaking of Charles II and her love for him, but it is equally possible that she is meant to be understood as saying she will miss the money and influence he gave her as those were her true loves. When Farewel was published in February 1685 Portsmouth was still in England, but she went to France by the end of the year, and although she periodically returned to England, she did indeed say farewell to England after the king’s death.

All of these publications – pamphlets, ballads and broadsides – share important similarities which help to uncover social and political anxieties prevalent in the early 1680s. Firstly, and most obviously, they center upon the actions of (or for in the case of A Pleasant Battle) court mistresses, particularly the Duchess of Portsmouth, Nell Gwyn, and the Duchess of Cleveland. The insults they throw at each other, through the intermediary of an anonymous (male) writer, show public perceptions and construct public representations of the royal mistresses and their actions. Certain themes recurred throughout, particularly the denigrating of Portsmouth’s Frenchess/foreigness, her rapacity, pretentiousness, and her meddling in politics. Gwyn is depicted with some criticism, after all she is still a whore, but often with a wittier and softer approach, laughing at herself and often claiming that she is the equal of the duchess, even if she was the daughter of a drunkard who died in a ditch. Cleveland’s character is less fully fleshed out, but her debate with Portsmouth while in Paris was a pointed criticism of Portsmouth’s pursuit of power and influence, while both women were condemned by Jane Shore to share her fate of sorrow and the fires of hell. That Portsmouth later compares herself to

\[476 \text{Ibid}\]
Shore shows not only her overdramatic nature in *Farewel*, but also the continuing legacy of the court mistress in the ghostly figure of Shore herself.

Having gone over the broad outlines of each publication, other themes can now be examined. The central theme of court mistress as foreign influence is prominent, connecting these texts to those that highlighted the diseased court woman insinuating herself into the body politic. To further push the image of the body, however, this chapter will also focus upon the less obvious but no less important themes of blood and maternity. By Portsmouth making fun of Gwyn’s lowly background, and Gwyn disputing Portsmouth’s, the question of simple lineage is shown, but so too is the underlying question of what creates a human being and how their worth can be tied to their families, their blood. Linking blood to maternity, both literally and figuratively, this chapter will bring the argument back to the seeming dichotomy of the English/Protestant versus the French/Catholic, as debates over the nature of maternity and procreation itself reflected not only on the production of children, but also on the role of women in creating and shaping them. By turning first to the issue of maternity, the assumptions beneath the language used in the ‘pamphlet war’ will become clearer as the pregnant and mothering female body comes into view.

Considering the ‘pamphlet war’ within the context of blood and maternity is not to state that such themes are the only way to interpret these publications, nor that they are even their primary meanings. Instead, this chapter seeks to find a hidden meaning in these publications, one which rested on medical assumptions about the role of women within politics and the creation of children. In looking at the medical, social, and political implications of court mistresses as royal mothers, this chapter examines how gendered
perspectives on the female body inflected late Restoration political discourse. By reading these pamphlets within the context of medical theory on pregnancy and female blood, it will become clear how the pamphlet war was built in part upon ideas surrounding the female body, ideas that shaped anxious perceptions about the specific bodies of the court mistresses who were also the mothers of Charles II’s children.

The Fluid Business of Childbearing

The importance of the family as a ‘microcosm’ of the greater society is neither new nor surprising. Scholars such as Lawrence Stone and Cynthia Herrup have, through different projects, examined how the study of the early modern family provides insights not only into the intimate world of the domestic, but also into the political and cultural realm. Stone begins his work on the premise that the family could be used to look at cultural change, while Herrup’s study of the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven and his trial and execution in the early 1630s demonstrates how the ‘gross disorder’ of one aristocratic family held larger ramifications reaching to Charles I himself. 477 Early modern women’s bodies play an obvious role within the creation of the family, and the ways in which that role was depicted have come under the scrutiny of Mary E. Fissell, Sara Mendelson, and Patricia Crawford. 478 As Mendelson and Crawford note, the experience of maternity was different for women based on status and personal circumstance, but for all women ‘motherhood

was socially and historically constructed.\textsuperscript{479} By using medical guides and poetry, this section will more closely interrogate these constructions and the assumptions surrounding the pregnant and nursing female body and tie them into analysis of representations of the royal mistress.

The importance of motherhood in the court of Charles II went beyond the usual political and social significance because of the lack of children as royal heirs.\textsuperscript{480} Charles II fathered many illegitimate children with multiple women,\textsuperscript{481} but with his Portuguese wife Catherine of Braganza, whom he married in 1662, he had no living children. In the early years of their marriage, every time the queen was indisposed or felt unwell the hopes of courtiers were raised that she might be pregnant, as a piece of news in a news-letter to Sir Richard Bulstrode dated 1 May 1668 demonstrates: “Her Ma’ie has been these last dayes somewhat indisposed, and mostly kept her bed, and wee hope it may have been upon some good occasion.”\textsuperscript{482} The queen’s indisposition turned out not to be for the desired reason, but on 12 May the news-letter writer remained hopeful when he wrote an entry in the 1 May news-letter, ‘God granting better fruits of her next retirement of that kind.’\textsuperscript{483} The hopes raised and dashed within the same news-letter show the intense interest placed upon the pregnant (or not) body of the queen. An entry in a 14 May 1669 news-letter, dated 10 May, confirms that the queen was in fact pregnant, and continues to

\textsuperscript{479} Mendelson and Crawford 148
\textsuperscript{480} The importance of royal births is noted in Laura Gowing’s work on female friendships, particularly relating to Mary Stuart (later Mary II) and her relationship with Frances Apsley. “The Politics of Women’s Friendship in Early Modern England,” in \textit{Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300-1800}, ed. Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter, and Miri Rubin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 145.
\textsuperscript{481} For biographies of each of these children, as well as a discussion of the meaning of the label ‘bastard,’ see Peter Beauclerk-Dewar and Roger S. Powell’s \textit{Right Royal Bastards: The Fruits of Passion} (Wilmington: Burke’s Peerage and Gentry, 2006).
\textsuperscript{482} \textit{The Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed by Alfred Morrison: The Bulstrode Papers Volume I (1667-1675)} (Private Circulation, 1897), 37.
\textsuperscript{483} Ibid 39
detail in the coming days that the queen was still doing well and that she ‘continues her
great belly.’\textsuperscript{484} As with all of the others, however, this much heralded pregnancy of
Catherine’s ended in miscarriage about a month later. The fear of miscarriage and
pregnancy itself was very real and visceral, with many medical recipe books containing
multiple remedies to help not only with labor, but also prevent miscarriage and
complications.\textsuperscript{485} The hopes for the queen producing a child were fading by the 1670s,
and early triumphal publications\textsuperscript{486} were replaced by cruel manuscript jibes that labeled
her the ‘Barren Queen’ fit only to preside over an illegitimate family: “Ram all thy maids
of honour whilst thour’t able / And make thy barren Queen keep up their Table.”\textsuperscript{487} Not
only is the queen unable to have children, but she is also forced through lack of status as
a mother to ‘keep up the table’ of the many mistresses of the king, and presumably the
myriad of children that would also be found at the table. In John Ayloffe’s “Britannia and
Raleigh,” a manuscript libel from 1674-5, the uncertainty of the queen’s fecundity is laid
to rest, as he places it amidst a list of things that will not change in a politically charged
criticism in which Britannia states she will not return to England until various conditions
are met: “Till Kate a happy mother shall become, / Till Charles loves Parliaments, till

\textsuperscript{484} Ibid 98-100
\textsuperscript{485} See examples Wellcome Archive MS.7391 and MS.4338. MS.7391 is an untitled English recipe book
from the seventeenth century, with a haphazard catalogue of various medical recipes ranging from illnesses
to pregnancy. MS.4338 is a slightly more organized recipe book (although it later becomes more random)
that also gives recipes to handle various illnesses, pregnancy, and the preparation of chocolate, and is
marked as \emph{Johanna S John Her Booke} (the Wellcome Archive dates it at 1680), and the book contains
multiple hands and recipes taken from various sources such as doctors and duchesses.
\textsuperscript{486} See examples \emph{To the Queens Majesty on her Happy Arrival} (London, 1662) and \emph{To the Queen On her
Birth-Day} (London, 1663). London as publication for second attributed on Wing.
\textsuperscript{487} “The Angler,” \emph{ECS}, Avon, 388 and “An Essay of Scandal,” \emph{ECS}, Avon, 406. Although the collection is
undated, another version of “The Angler” entitled “Flatfoot the Gudgeon Taker” is dated to 1680 in \emph{POAS},
Vol 2, 190-191. Some have attributed the poem to Rochester, 189. “An Essay of Scandal” is also printed in
\emph{CSR} which dates it to 1681, 63-65.
James hates Rome.”\footnote{See John Ayloffe’s “Britannia and Raleigh,” \textit{POAS}, Vol 1, 229-230 ll 21-22. The volume gives authorship to Ayloffe, but notes that Andrew Marvell may have collaborated with him, 228. Ayloffe’s sentiment is echoed by Thomas Thompson in “Midsummer Moon” (1682) when he states ‘But hold! what makes the gaping many run? / Is France defeated? or is Rome undone? / Is Portsmouth nun, or Kate a mother grown?,’ showing how Catherine as mother would be good for England but highly unlikely, \textit{POAS}, Vol 3, 253 ll 225-227.} Placing Catherine’s inability to have children within a blatant political protest about the Stuart court emphasizes once again the importance of her ‘barreness,’ and how the question of her ever becoming a mother was beginning to be answered in a profoundly negative way.

Although it is impossible to know how differently Restoration England and the Stuart dynasty itself would have turned out if Charles and Catherine had produced children of their own, the later attempts to have Charles divorce Catherine, or the claims that Charles had in fact married Lucy Walter during his exile making their son James Scott, Duke of Monmouth the real heir to the throne, show the desperate paths taken to replace the queen with a fertile woman. Or, more importantly, to bypass the Catholic James, Duke of York at any cost. At the center of the court was a woman unable to bring a child to full term, while around her, as “An Essay of Scandal” points out, were various mistresses of the king producing multiple children. The image of the fecund mistress is one which will be discussed later in the chapter, but after seeking the political ramifications of the ‘barren queen,’ this section will now delve into the medical theory and popular conceptions of maternity itself.

The female body during the early modern period was a matter of mystery, and the pregnant body was often seen with a mixture of awe and suspicion. If during the eighteenth century, as Thomas Laqueur grandly states, ‘sex as we know it was invented,’
then the seventeenth century was a time on the cusp of transition.\footnote{Thomas Laqueur, \textit{Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 149. See also Will Pritchard’s \textit{Outward Appearances: The Female Exterior in Restoration London} (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008) for a discussion about the importance of ‘reading’ the female body in the seventeenth century, which could provide insight into the woman’s ‘interior’ since ‘behavior could be feigned,’ 52.} Rather than a system of differences, as was created in the eighteenth century, the seventeenth century still was a time when men and women were seen (physiologically) as the same, with reproductive organs as ‘paradigmatic sites for displaying hierarchy.’\footnote{Ibid} Although anatomists such as Andreas Vesalius had demonstrated certain mistakes of Galen’s theories about the female body, like the famous fallacy of human uterine horns, in many respects the one sex model survived. As Mary E. Fissell notes, famed physician Nicholas Culpeper, who published \textit{A Directory for Midwives} in 1651 – although it would go through many subsequent editions – described female anatomy as inferior to male because the male was the standard. Even though writing about midwifery, the only important things to discuss about women’s bodies was in what ways they were different from men’s.\footnote{Fissell 143-144. For a more thorough discussion of Culpeper and his impact, see Fissell’s Chapter 5 “Culpeper’s Radical Book.”} And if the deviance from the male standard is truly all that is worth speaking about in terms of the female body, then what could be more of a dividing line than pregnancy and nursing, when ‘a woman’s body was at its most different from that of a man.’\footnote{Mendelson and Crawford 148} Yet the actual role of the female in producing a child, beyond the obvious of carrying the baby and giving birth, was still mysterious and much debated.

The question for people in the early modern period was not simply the timeless question of where babies came from, but rather what contributions the male and female provided. If the female carried the child, then the role of the male becomes questioned. In
the model espoused by people such as Galen and Culpeper, however, the inferior body of
the female was for gestating humans, so another theory about the contributions of both
parents was posed. For those who followed Galen, women ‘provided the raw material
causes,’ while the men ‘contributed the blueprints,’ essentially making the women merely
carriers of a process that was ultimately male. All women were surrogates for men,
whose seed was the giver of life.

The debate over the functions of the man and woman in reproduction continued,
with various ideas about male and female seeds, and the process of gathering them into
the womb. The midwife Jane Sharp in The Midwives Book (1671) writes that the first of
three items ‘requisite to form a child’ was ‘Fruitful seed from both sexes wherein the
Soul rests with its forming faculty.’ John Shirley’s A Short Compendium of Chirurgery
(1678) also claims that conception comes from ‘the Seed of both Sexes,’ yet he also
considers the female body in terms of the male:

There are almost the same Spermatick parts in Women, except their situation, and the
Womb, the Receptacle of the Seed and Domicil of the Foster; Yet [Regnier] De Graaff
proveth that their Testicles are as an Ovarium containing perfect Eggs. Thus new
Wonders are daily found in the Microcosm.

493 Suzanne Penuel, “Male Mothering and The Tempest,” in Performing Maternity in Early Modern
Laqueur’s Making Sex and Fissell’s Vernacular Bodies, in which she discusses the change in ideas on
motherhood before and after the Reformation, and the changing views of the Virgin Mary’s role in the
conception and carrying of Christ.
494 Jane Sharp, The Midwives Book Or the whole Art of Midwifry Discovered. Directing Childbearing
Women how to behave themselves In their Conception, Breeding, Bearing, and Nursing of Children
anecdotes found in Culpeper. Sharp also follows Galen’s one-sex model: “Galen saith that women have all
the parts of Generation that Men have, but Men are outwardly, womens inwardly,” 40. She goes on to say,
however, that men need women for procreation, even if ‘some idle Coxcombs’ try to say that women are
not necessary for reproduction,’ 41.
495 J.S.[attributed to John Shirley], A Short Compendium of Chirurgy: Containing Its Grounds &
Principles. More particularly Treating of Impothumes, Wounds, Ulcers, Fractures & Dislocations. Also A
Discourse of the Generation and Birth of Man, very necessary to be understood by all Midwives and Child-
bearing Women. With the Several Methods of Curing the French Pox: The Cure of Baldness, Inflammation
of the Eyes, and Toothach [sic]: And an Account of Blood-letting, Cup-setting, and Blooding [sic] with
Leeches (London, 1678), 98-99. Although the title page lists the author as J.S., the inside leaf of the
Wellcome Archive copy [48087/A] has ‘By John Shirley’ written in pencil. Not much is known about this
Sharp and Shirley demonstrate that both sexes were believed to produce seed in the 1670s, and both show the language of the one-sex model continuing into the Restoration. A further example is given in the infamous *Aristotle’s Masterpiece* (originally published in 1684), which went through many printings, and states that there is a male seed and a female egg, but that they did not share an equal role in conception. *Aristotle’s Masterpiece* contended that the male seed was active while the female egg was passive, with the seed impregnating the egg, showing the central role the male played in the making of a child.496 The question of conception and the debate surrounding who ultimately was responsible for the creation of life did not negate the importance of sexuality as pleasure and orgasm were seen as central to reproduction, since it insured ‘the emission of seed.’497 While the advantages of emphasis on female pleasure and orgasm are apparent, the darker side of the orgasm model for women is made clear in the legal definition of rape: “But if the woman conceive that is no rape, for she cannot conceive unless she consent.”498 The use of sexuality in conception was a double-edged sword which could allow her sexual pleasure, but also stand against her if she were violated. Enjoyment of sex itself was problematic as women were seen as lascivious creatures who were thought to use their sexuality to control men, even hold authority


498 Thomas Blount, *Nomo-lexikon, a law-dictionary interpreting such difficult and obscure words and terms the several statutes, records, registers, law-books, charters, ancient deeds, and manuscripts, wherein the words are used: and etymologies, where they properly occur* (1670). Pages are unmarked, but EEBO lists the document image as 112.
over them. But according to Joy Wiltenburg, the pregnant female body was seen as ‘an aspect of their subjection,’ so the very act which gave them control over men also led to their subjugation.\footnote{Joy Wiltenburg, \textit{Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany} (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 142-143.}

The view of female sexuality giving a subversive power while pregnancy shows subjugation, as claimed by Wiltenburg, is challenged by a recent study of the performative nature of maternity. Although taking its materials often from the literal, theatrical performance of pregnancy on the early modern stage, \textit{Performing Maternity in Early Modern England} also discusses the actual pregnant body as well as the meaning it held within early modern society, including its ‘functions as a potent space for cultural conflict, a site of imagination and contest.’\footnote{Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson, “Embodied and Enacted: Performances of Maternity in Early Modern England,” in \textit{Performing Maternity in Early Modern England}, ed. Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 1.} The very mysteriousness of the female body, particularly during pregnancy, allowed it to be used as an imagined space upon which many ideas could be projected. Yet, the pregnant body is not only a theoretical or abstract concept, but also a real thing which could be seen walking through the streets, or even in one’s own home. The expectant mother’s body might go beyond the subjugation noted by Wiltenburg and in fact attain her own authority through the very act of pregnancy and motherhood, as Sid Ray states in his study of \textit{The Duchess of Malfi}, in which the duchess claims political authority through her status as mother.\footnote{Sid Ray, “‘So troubled with the mother’: The Politics of Pregnancy in \textit{The Duchess of Malfi},” in \textit{Performing Maternity in Early Modern England}, ed. Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 17-19.} This authority as mother in a Jacobean play demonstrates that while the question about conception of a child may be contested, pregnancy and childbearing brought about its
own power. Indeed, it would seem that the pregnant body may be able to overcome the seemingly passive nature of conception and retain some authority.

The authority of the pregnant woman reached into her ability to carry and nurture her baby, even shape the child itself. *Aristotle’s Masterpiece* discusses at length ‘monstrous births,’ and how a mother’s imagination could sometimes be the cause of such deformed babies. 502 Jane Sharp also lists the mother’s imagination as one of the main causes of ‘Monstrous Conceptions.’ 503 The mother’s imagination could not only cause deformity, but change other aspects of a child’s appearance simply by looking at paintings: “Galen taught an Æthiopian to get a white child, setting a picture before him for his wife to look on.” 504 As Sharp notes, skin color itself could be changed by merely looking at an image, and women’s imagination could also bring back dormant features of familial seed. 505 Indeed, the question of how a child looks like its parents was important enough for Sharp to write a little chapter on it in her midwifery book, where she also discusses how resemblance to the mother often comes because ‘the female usually brings more matter than the male […]’. 506 Another theory on the creation of monsters points further to the central role that the female body itself played within the molding of children. A woman’s imagination could turn a child into a monster, but so too could the manner of sex which conceived a child:

503 Sharp 116-120
504 Ibid 122
505 Ibid 123. In this case, Sharp once again uses the example of skin color: “for *H lin* had a white daughter by a Black, but that daughter had a black son born of her, the forming faculty still continuing in the seed when it hath been stirred up by new imagination.” These examples echo similar ones found in Culpeper.
506 Ibid 120
But the greatest cause of womans bringing forth Children imperfect, or mutilated, or crook-backt, or with Issues or Leprosie, &c. I take to be, because the act of Copulation was done at that time when the woman had her Menstruis upon her. It was not for nothing God Himself forbad a man to touch a woman at such a time […].

Sex during menstruation was a taboo which could be the cause of monstrous or diseased births, but Culpeper also mentions that menstrual blood is by ‘its nature […] not ill, but only superfluous, till they conceive,’ meaning that the blood itself was not the evil but the act of sex during menstruation which could cause monstrosity. Culpeper insinuates that sex during menstruation was a direct violation of God’s will, and that such sexual activity could negatively impact a child. Not only a mother’s imagination could shape a child, but also her body because it is the female body which carries the child, and her menstrual blood could create a monstrous birth.

The strength of the female body was also apparent in Culpeper’s work when he briefly discusses the vital question of how a child’s sex was determined. He follows the belief of both sexes emitting seed, but it is the strength of that seed which is important:

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507 Nicholas Culpeper, *A Directory for Midwives or, A Guide for Women, In Their Conception, Bearing, and Suckling Their Children* (London, 1651), 140-141. A later edition of *A Directory for Midwives* (1684) includes extra books entitled *The Fourth Book of Practical Physick. Of Womens Diseases* under The Fourth Book. The Fourth Section. Of the Symptoms which are in Conception. Chap. 10 Of Monsters, in which Culpeper states that monsters could be from ‘the seed of a beast,’ and sex during menstruation, but also states ‘Therefore imagination is the cause of Monsters,’ 152-153 [this book is separately numbered from *A Directory for Midwives*]. Culpeper died in 1654, and the edition from 1684 contains a testimony from his widow Alice Culpeper [written in 1655] that this was an authorized addition to Culpeper’s earlier work. See *A Directory for Midwives* (1684) which said ‘To Cure all Diseases in Women, Read the Second Part of this Book’ and ‘Newly Corrected from many gross Errors,’ which is also from earlier printings such as 1675. Sharp also mentions how sex during menstruation could cause a child to be ‘Leprous, and troubled with an incurable Itch and Scabs as long as they live,’ 51.


509 Culpeper also notes that women ‘begin to be lecherous’ when they begin their ‘terms,’ which according to Culpeper ‘commonly begin at fourteen.’ For more on ideas of menstrual blood as causing monstrosity and connections to stricter sexual mores, see Ottavia Niccoli’s “Menstruum Quasi Monstruum: Monstrous Births and Menstrual Taboo in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, trans. Margaret A. Gallucci, Mary M. Gallucci, and Carole C. Gallucci (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). For more general ideas about menstruation, as well as the problems of sex while women were menstruating, see Patricia Crawford’s “Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Past & Present* 91 (May, 1981).
“The reason why sometimes a Male is conceived, sometimes a Female, is, The strength of the Seed; for if the Mans Seed be strongest, a Male is conceived; if the Womans, a Female […]”\textsuperscript{510} The dominance of one seed over another, according to Culpeper, determines the sex of the child. As Fissell points out, however, Culpeper drew much upon the writings of ancients such as Aristotle who wrote about the ‘perfection’ of the male, while the female was ‘a kind of mistake in the womb,’ so the contest between seeds, and its ultimate victor discovered when the child was born and the sex determined, held high stakes.\textsuperscript{511} If the birth of a male child was to be lauded, and the creation of another ‘perfect’ human assured, then the birth of a female child showed an imperfection, a necessary evil which only allowed for more attempts at perfection later when she went on to become a mother. Into this fraught situation Culpeper inserts a further tension within the determination of a child’s sex. If the ‘winner’ of the contest between male and female seed in conception meant a female or male child, then the strength of the parents themselves could be called into question, as seen when the quotation above is continued: “The greater light obscures the lesser by the same rule; and that’s the reason weakly men get most Girls, if they get any.”\textsuperscript{512} Weakly men could only really expect female children, since Culpeper concedes that girls are better than no children at all, showing how the domination of the female seed in creating females could not only create an imperfect human but also reveal the innate weaknesses of the father. After all, if he could only create girls, his seed and indeed his whole body were shown to be weak and perhaps enthralled to his partner. The birth of a son underlined the strength of the father, while that of a daughter showed the dominance, at least within the womb, of the mother over

\textsuperscript{510} Culpeper, 1651, 56-57
\textsuperscript{511} Fissell 144
\textsuperscript{512} Culpeper, 1651, 57
the father. In Culpeper’s theory, it is through the weakness of the father that the mother is able to exert a certain amount of control over her child, but it demonstrates again the authority the female body could potentially have over the creation of a child. The centrality of the question reached beyond the 1650s when Culpeper published *A Directory for Midwives*, as medical texts during the Restoration continued the debate over how much the mother and father contributed to the child by focusing upon ‘the nature of women’s seed.’ The female body and its role in conception and gestation remained important concerns in Restoration England, demonstrating not only concerns about the creation of children, but also the question of what were the roles of the sexes within a process so common yet alarmingly unknown as pregnancy and childbirth.

The importance of the physical body of the mother becomes more palpable when discussing the other fluids associated with maternity, particularly blood and milk. As Culpeper notes, seed both male and female is created by the mixing of blood and ‘vital Spirit.’ The idea of blood being involved in seed production was an old one, and one which extended the debate over female seed, particularly in relation to menstrual blood. An old theory held that female seed was less ‘digested’ than that of male seed, meaning that male seed was, because of the male body’s inherent (and superior) heat, more distilled from its original sources of food and blood, while the incomplete female process left it many steps closer to its origins in food and blood. The relationship between blood and the female role in reproduction was maintained into the seventeenth century, as some continued to argue that female seed was simply menstrual blood and nothing more,

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513 Fissell 199
514 Culpeper, 1651, 9 and 37. In discussing the male and female genitals, Culpeper detailed his ideas on their respective bodies and stated that the only reason why he describes the female (after he talks about the male body first) is because of its differences: “Yet there is some difference between the Preparing Vessels in Men and those in Women; else I need not have troubled my self about them,” 37.
515 Laqueur 40-41. Here Laqueur is detailing Avicenna’s writings on Galen.
while others such as Culpeper claimed that both men and women created seed, but that blood was important in the nourishment of babies.\textsuperscript{516} However female seed was created, the centrality of the woman’s blood as ‘material cause of generation’ is readily apparent.\textsuperscript{517}

Women’s blood was not only important while still pregnant, but also in the early nourishment of children, and the basis of breast milk was blood. Although anatomists knew that there was not a direct connection between the womb and breasts, popular belief and some medical writers into the seventeenth century held that breast milk was made directly from blood in the womb, some even that it is one of three ‘pathways’ that blood took during pregnancy.\textsuperscript{518} The importance of blood during lactation and early feeding is noted in many of the midwifery and medical guides, with the main emphasis placed on ‘good blood’ and diet. Philip Barrough’s \textit{The Method of Physick} (1583), a medical book which went into multiple editions by the 1650s, details many medical conditions, including problems with lactation. For a ‘lack of Milk,’ Barrough suggests a few possible causes, but gives the cure for one in particular, that of the ‘little quantity of good bloud.’\textsuperscript{519} He gives reasons for why there may be such a small quantity, such as there was

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{516} See Fissell’s discussion of this debate in Chapter 7 “The Restoration Crisis in Paternity,” particularly 200-201.
\item \textsuperscript{517} Ibid 201
\item \textsuperscript{518} Laqueur 104-105. Jane Sharp also wrote about menstrual blood being the source of milk using the theories of Hippocrates, 359-360.
\item \textsuperscript{519} Philip Barrough [or Barrow], \textit{The Method of Physick, Containing The Causes, Signes, and Cures of inward Diseases in Mans Body, from the Head to the Foot. Whereunto is added, The Form and Rule of making Remedies and Medicines, which our Physicians commonly use at this day; with the proportion, quantity, and names of each Medicine. By Philip Barrough. London, Printed by Abraham Miller, and are to be sold by John Blague and Samuel Howes at the Golden Ball in Cornhill near the Poultry} (London, 1652), 97. According to K.A. James, 1652 was the last of seven editions printed of \textit{The Method of Physick}. See K.A. James’s “Barrow, Philip (d. 1600),” \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National biography}, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/1545, accessed 27 July 2012].
\end{itemize}
less blood than there should be, or it’s not as good as it should be. Both cures he proposes center around balancing the humors of the blood, including bleedings but also specific foods to make the blood more plentiful and/or good. Diet was also part of a bleeding regimen if the opposite problem took place and there was too much good blood, leading to an ‘abundance of Milk.’ In order for proper milk production, a woman’s body needed to be properly nourished, and often bled, to balance her humors and create the essential good blood.

The emphasis placed upon lactation, breastfeeding, and good blood created a further debate centering upon the mother’s responsibility to breastfeed her own child. Culpeper mocked those who claimed that mothers should suckle their children, sarcastically listing the biblical and historic reasons cited by others, and going on to give advice as to how to choose a nurse. Sharp is more practical, with a section that again looks rather similar to Culpeper in many ways, acknowledging that it might be better for women to suckle their own children, but also giving suggestions on how to best choose a nurse. Other books, such as Henry Newcome’s *The Compleat Mother* (1695), made a passionate argument for mothers to breastfeed their own children, particularly those of ‘Rank and Quality.’ Newcome, himself a Church of England clergyman, claimed that breastfeeding was important not only to create bonds between mother and child, but also for the child’s mental wellbeing. Fearing for upper status children, Newcome claims,

First, *The Nourishment received from the Breasts of a Mercenary Nurse, may debase the Spirit, and diminish the Parts of a Child.* [...] But Secondly, *It ought further to be considered, Whether the Suck of a Mercenary Nurse may not corrupt the Dispositions of the Infants Soul, and deprave its Manners.*

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520 Ibid
521 Ibid 98
522 Henry Newcome, *The Compleat Mother. Or An Earnest Perswasive to all mothers (especially those of Rank and Quality) to Nurse their own Children.* By Henry Newcome, A.M. and Rector of Tatten-hall in the
Not only did a mother of quality have to fear for the physical safety of her child out to nurse, but also for the health of the child’s very soul under attack by the mercenary nurse and her suspect milk. Amidst biblical and classical references, Newcome makes the case that breastfeeding is not only important in creating a maternal and familial bond, but also to save the child from outside influences and polluted blood.

Even those works that accepted mothers placing children out to nurse had particular characteristics to look for in a nurse. Many of Culpeper’s suggestions centered upon practical physical issues such as age, diet, and general good health. He also wrote that the nurse should live in a place with clean air, and that she herself should not be pregnant. Additionally, Culpeper emphasized diet and the importance of moderation, both for would-be mothers and nurses, which he notes are especially important because parents need to keep their ‘Blood pure’ since diseases came from the seed of a parent. Culpeper also touches upon aspects of character, however, which highlight the same concerns that Newcome had on the opposite side of the argument. Giving a description of the appearance of the nurse, Culpeper then goes on to describe a temperament well-suited to taking care of children, but also the conditions of the nurse herself: “For CAUTIONS, Take these: 1. Let her not be too poor, for if she want, so must the Child. […] 3. Let her be well bred; for ill Nurses corrupt good Nature.”

While the caution against having an extremely poor nurse may be based upon fears of the child being exposed to malnutrition, illness, or other physical harm, the warning about ill breeding shows that through the very

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523 Culpeper, 1651, 206-212
524 Culpeper, 1684, 32-33. Culpeper then goes on to write about the importance of ‘temperancy in diet.’ Aristotle’s Masterpiece also discusses the importance of moderation, 173-174.
525 Culpeper, 1651, 208
act of nursing a child could be corrupted. For Culpeper, being poor was not necessarily a bad thing in the creation of children since ‘poor men and women that labour hard, have many Children usually, and they are strong and lusty’ in comparison to ‘City-Dames’ who ‘live idly’ and ‘have so few Children,’ and those they do have ‘seldome live’ or are ‘spoiled by apish Education.’ The poor had the advantage of exercise which made their children stronger, so Culpeper was not interested so much in the economic attributes of a nurse, but in her breeding, perhaps meaning morals. Breastfeeding was not only an act of nourishment for Newcome and Culpeper but also a site of influence between the nursing woman and the suckling child. Sharp also comments upon the importance of the attributes of the nurse, saying that ‘if she be not well bred, she will ne...[...].’ Possessing the aptitude and willingness to care for a child was not enough in a nurse since she also needed breeding, because the lack of it seriously jeopardized the child’s mental wellbeing, and even its soul according to Newcome. Disease led to another concern about polluted blood as demonstrated by theories surrounding the pox, in which some guides surmised that infants could become infected by their ‘wicked and filthy Nurses.’ The breast was not only capable of nourishing, but also of infection. The

526 Culpeper, 1684, 91
527 Sharp 364. Sharp also instructs those children suckled by nurses to be thankful to them for all their ‘great care and pains, having them in little less esteem than their own Mothers that bore them,’ 365.
528 William Clowes, A Briefe and necessarie Treatise, touching the cure of the disease called Morbus Gallicus, or Lues Venerea, by Vnctions and other approoued waies of curing. Newlie corrected and augmented by WILLIAM CLOWES of London, Master in Chirurgerie At London, Printed for Thomas Cadman, dwelling in Paules Churchyard, at the signe of the Bible (London, 1585), sig.3r. Clowes also claims that infected children can pass the disease to their nurses, sig.3v. John Archer, Secrets Disclosed, of CONSUMPTIONS Shewing, How to distinguish between Scurvy and Venereal Disease ALSO How to prevent and Cure the Fistula by Chymical Drops, without Cutting; Also Piles, Hammorhoids, and other DISEASES. By JOHN ARCHER, Author of the Book called, Every Man his own Doctor; to be Sold by the Booksellers, and also to be had from the Authors House at Knightsbridge, or at the Sadlers against the Mews by Charingcross. LONDON, Printed for the Author, 1684. (London, 1684) also claims that a child could be infected by his/her ‘unsound Nurse,’ but also that ‘an unsound Child may infect a sound Nurse,’ 32. See also Johannes Fabricius’s discussion on “The Dangers of Breast Feeding” in Syphilis in Shakespeare’s England (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1994), 22-23.
blood that went into the creation of milk had an important role to play in nourishing a child’s body and also its mind and future prospects in life, with the breast as a porous area of exchange between nurse and child.

Scholars have linked the importance of blood with issues of paternity and lineage, seeing blood as a connection between father and child. Patricia Crawford made this connection plain when she discussed not only beliefs in the literal creation of sperm out of blood, but also the more figurative aspects of lineage and inheritance: “‘Blood’ was the key concept by which early modern people understood the relationship between a man, his children and his kin. […] Through his blood, a father transmitted qualities of character to his child.” The concept of blood, much like male seed, provided a tie between the father and child, and could also bring a child into a noble lineage in the social relational meaning of blood and kinship. Yet, the emphasis on the proper nursing woman for a child, be it the actual mother or a nurse, underlines the idea that the milk produced by females could have a definite impact on the child, be it positive or negative. Certain problems with lactation and breastfeeding could come down to diet, exercise, humors, and environment, but breeding was also important in nourishing a child. The importance of female blood and its creation milk is of central importance not only in the carrying of the child, but also after the birth and into the early nourishment of the baby. For those on opposite sides of the debate about wet nurses, like Culpeper and Newcome, the ‘quality’ of the milk provided by a woman was influenced by not only diet and environment – although these were major aspects – but also the personality and even breeding of the nurse.

529 Crawford, Blood, Bodies and Families, 114
530 Ibid
The many debates and questions surrounding conception, pregnancy, and nourishment of the baby after birth reveal the role of, and anxieties surrounding, the female body. While many considered the woman’s contribution to the conception of the child to be minimal, her ability to influence the child through her imagination, body, and milk was still apparent and alarming. The struggle documented by Culpeper between the male and female seed to produce either a male or female child showed the power struggle between the man and woman within the womb, a fight in which the victor could not be determined until the birth of the child. The relatively passive role often assigned to the woman in conception is belied by the incredible influence she held with her imagination, and in her very body and blood in nourishing and shaping the child both within her and at her breast. With these images and debates in mind, we can return to Gwyn and Portsmouth’s pamphlet war, where anxieties around the mistress’s body and the mistress as mother formed one crucial, but hitherto neglected, axis of meaning.

The Mothers’ Pamphlet War

‘When Nature prompted, and no law deny’d
Promiscuous use of Concubine and Bride;
Then, Israel’s Monarch, after Heaven’s own heart,
His vigorous warmth did, variously, impart
To Wives and Slaves: And, wide as his Command,
Scatter’d his Maker’s Image through the Land.’

John Dryden’s Absalom and Achitophel (1681), his famous poem about court intrigue and party politics, makes an early reference to the king of Israel’s fecundity, an obvious stand-in for Charles II himself. Couching the story of Charles and his court within the

531 John Dryden, Absalom and Achitophel A Poem London, Printed for J.T. and are to be Sold by W. Davis in Amen-Corner (London, 1681), 1.
biblical story of Absalom’s unsuccessful rebellion against his father King David, Dryden paints a kindly picture of Charles, particularly given the date of the poem in the early 1680s and the foment still apparent after the Exclusion Crisis and Popish Plot. Like King David, Charles II was faced with a rebellious son – James, Duke of Monmouth – believed to be receiving counsel from a court member - Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, a Member of Parliament strongly pro-exclusion of the Duke of York. Many who feared a Catholic successor to Charles II looked to the Protestant Monmouth as successor, and rumors began to circulate that Monmouth was legitimate because of a secret marriage between Lucy Walter and Charles while he was in exile. The popularity of Monmouth and the divisions it caused with his uncle York were serious problems for Charles in a time already troubled by the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis, emphasizing the importance of reproduction in the royal family, but also raises questions about the mothers of the king’s illegitimate children. Certainly the importance of Charles II as a father, both literally and figuratively, is important to note and many scholars have discussed the problems of the king and his fecund body. Paul Hammond writes about the post-Civil War fissuring of the traditional view of the king and his two bodies and the emergence of an image of the king’s sexualized body that figured the monarch as more fleshly than divine. Additionally, there was a reemphasis on patriarchy as highlighted by the publication of Robert Filmer’s *Patriarcha* in 1680 which blatantly stated the correlation between the duties of a father and those of a king.\(^{533}\) In not carrying out his

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\(^{533}\) Paul Hammond, “The King’s two bodies: representations of Charles II,” in *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain, 1668-1800*, ed. Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) and Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). The publication of *Patriarcha* in 1680 is particularly important because Filmer himself died in 1653, and in the *ODNB* article on Filmer by Glenn Burgess, Burgess claims that there is evidence that a version of *Patriarcha* may have been written before 1631, so the writing had been around in some form or another for about 50 years before it was finally published. See Glenn
duty in producing a legitimate son, Charles was not the ideal king or patriarch described by Filmer, but instead the king displayed his potency in producing many royal bastards, fueling political crisis during the Restoration. The date of 1681 marks *Absalom and Achitophel* as a contemporary of the pamphlet war between Gwyn and Portsmouth, but the pamphlets add the figure of the court mistress. Whereas the king’s ability to ‘scatter his Maker’s Image through the Land’ is highlighted by Dryden, the actual concubines and brides by whom he does so are relatively absent from the poem, but the pamphlets bring in the court mistress and her ‘voice’ in order to grapple with anxieties surrounding the court mistress as mother. The role of the women surrounding these children needs to be included within this picture of the king and his court, and the pamphlet war between Gwyn and Portsmouth in the tumultuous 1680s shows just how important these women were considered to be.

The figure of the mother plays a somewhat hidden role within this pamphlet war but one of great significance when placed in the context of views of the king’s body and the publication of *Patriarcha*. The supposed interactions between Gwyn and Portsmouth, with Cleveland making an appearance as well, speak obviously and obscurely about motherhood and descent, and that the mistresses were at the center further emphasizes the stakes placed upon the outcome of the confrontations. It must first be noted that by the beginning of this pamphlet war in 1681, all three of these mistresses had born Charles II children. By 1681, Cleveland had borne five children by the king (three sons and two

daughters), Gwyn two sons, and Portsmouth one son. In their position as acknowledged mothers of royal children, even if bastards, these women exerted an influence over the king and the court not merely as mistresses but also as mothers, a position that Queen Catherine could not fill. The ‘barren’ queen, who did not make even an appearance in the ‘pamphlet war’ publications, did not entirely lack some measure of influence as she learned to use patronage after her many miscarriages made it apparent that she could never assume the authority of the mother of the royal heir. That these three mistresses also provided the king with sons also highlighted the issue of succession as the author of “The King’s Vows” (1670) made plain: “I will have a fine son (in making though marr’d) / If not o’er a kingdom, to reign o’er my Guard, / And successor, if not to me, to Gerrard [Charles Gerard, 1st Earl of Macclesfield].”

Although about the Duke of Monmouth, the point about the king’s fatherhood and his lack of an heir to succeed him at anything more than commanding the King’s Lifeguards is made painfully apparent. The underlining circumstance of the lack of an heir makes the pamphlet war between the mothers of royal children all the more interesting for they point to political, religious, and social concerns which beset much of the reign of Charles II.

534 A full list of Charles’s acknowledged illegitimate children by mother: Lucy Walter – Sir James FitzRoy/Crofts later Scott, Duke of Monmouth and 1st Duke of Buccleuch; Elizabeth Killigrew – Charlotte Jemima Henrietta Maria Howard, later Countess of Yarmouth; Catherine Pegge – Charles FitzCharles, Earl of Plymouth, and Catherine FitzCharles; Barbara Palmer – Anne, Countess of Sussex, Sir Charles FitzRoy, 1st Duke of Southampton and 2nd Duke of Cleveland, Sir Henry FitzRoy, 1st Duke of Grafton, Lady Charlotte FitzRoy, Countess of Lichfield, Sir George FitzRoy, 1st Duke of Northumberland, and two other daughters from her that were informally acknowledged by Charles though it is doubtful that they were his children – Dame Cecilia FitzRoy and Lady Barbara (Benedicta) FitzRoy; Nell Gwyn – Sir Charles Beauclerk, 1st Duke of St. Albans and James, Lord Beauclerk; Portsmouth – Sir Charles Lennox, 1st Duke of Richmon and 1st Duke of Lennox; Moll Davies – Lady Mary Tudor, Countess of Derwentwater. See Beaucler-Dewar and Powell’s Right Royal Bastards.


536 “The King’s Vows,” POAS, Vol I, 160 ll 25-27. Lord Gerrard was commander of the King’s Lifeguards, whose position Monmouth assumed in 1668, 160 n 25-27.
The most obvious way in which the pamphlet war addressed the issue of motherhood was through the nationality and lineage of Gwyn and Portsmouth. Clear binaries are constructed between the English/Protestant Gwyn and the French/Catholic Portsmouth, a national/religious binary which, as Linda Colley claims, was crucial to the emergence of a British national identity in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{537} The rivalry between the English and the French was a long and fraught one, as was the legendary fear and loathing of the Protestant English for Catholics.\textsuperscript{538} In trying to understand the fear of Catholics in particular, scholars have attempted to place what many people today might consider an ‘irrational’ feeling within its historical context to understand why the Protestant English felt so vehemently afraid of ‘popery.’ Placing Catholics as an internal Other which helped define the Protestant (as Peter Lake does), or within terms of an actual Catholic resurgence that could possibly be seen as a real threat to Protestant England as in Gary DeKrey and Jonathan Scott’s work, these scholars examine the ways in which the fear and hatred of Catholics seen in pope burnings and the Popish Plot fulfilled a need within the Protestant populace, even if that need was based on a distorted outlook.\textsuperscript{539} That the figure of the Catholic often took the form of a woman adds a gendered dimension to religious contention, as the Catholic was not only a religious

\textsuperscript{537} Linda Colley, \emph{Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
\textsuperscript{538} Steven C.A. Pincus complicates this idea, however, by looking into English foreign policy and questioning why such an ardently Protestant nation would go to war with the Dutch, another Protestant people, three times in the space of twenty years if all decisions were to be made solely upon religion. \emph{Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the making of English foreign policy, 1650-1668} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
deviant, but also a woman with all of the negative connotations associated with the female sex in the early modern period.  

The figure of Portsmouth as the French and Catholic mistress pitted against the homegrown Gwyn is one that is meant to lose the battle from the beginning. Interestingly, apart from A Pleasant Battle, little mention is made of Portsmouth’s Catholicism, but rather the emphasis upon her Frenchness seems to mean a conflation of the two - Portsmouth is French, so Catholic. All of the publications highlight her foreignness, with either Gwyn or Cleveland making at least one remark about her being French or foreign, and even A Letter, which is supposedly written from the duchess’s point of view, underlines her foreignness when she pokes fun at the ladies of England who cuckold their husbands. Mostly, however, there is a clear invective call for Portsmouth to go back where she came from and leave England to the English:

You drab of a Miss, I do hold you in scorn with a fa la, &c.  
I’d have you to know I am this Nation born, with a fa la, &c.  
Your coming to England I heartily rue.  
Of many good bout I’ve been cheated by you.  

Gwyn is made to say that while both she and Portsmouth are whores, Gwyn deserves whatever bounty England can give her because she is of ‘this Nation born.’ Gwyn’s religion and place of birth certainly made her more palatable a royal mistress than Portsmouth, but that did not mean that she was above scorn herself, as “A Panegyrick” (1681) demonstrates when it mocks her for her seeming presumptuousness:


541 A Pleasant Dialogue
She’s now the darling strumpet of the crowd,
Forgets her state, and talks to them aloud;
Lays by her greatness and descends to prate
With those ‘bove whom she’s rais’d by wond’rous fate.
True to th’Protestant interest and cause,
True to th’establish’d government and laws.\(^{542}\)

To the author of “A Panegyric,” Gwyn’s status amongst the crowd was assured, even if undeserved, particularly because of her loyalty to the Protestant cause, a sentiment echoed in “The Ladies March” (1681) which viciously attacked many of the court women while delivering Gwyn a relatively light rebuke:

\[
\text{Now view the lass with rivaled belly,}
\text{Some call her Nell, some Mrs. Nelly,}
\text{A saint to be admired the more}
\text{Because a Church of England’s whore.}^{543}\]

Although calling Gwyn a whore, the libel spares her many of the worst accusations thrown at various women of the court, but rather cheekily commends Gwyn for at least being a Church of England’s whore.

Gwyn was not immune from harsh censure, however, as many made fun of her family and her past as an orange seller – and by association, prostitute – as well as an actress. Many of these same characteristics are mocked by Portsmouth in the pamphlet war, showing that they were the common defamations used against Gwyn. The early 1670s saw outrage with Gwyn, however, as some believed that after he denigrated her in the House of Commons, she instigated an assault on Sir John Coventry during which his nose was slit. The backlash against Gwyn was voiced in libels such as “A Ballad Called the Haymarket Hectors” (1671) which not only showed anger against Gwyn but also at the king for allowing her the authority to cause such a fiasco:

\(^{542}\) “A Panegyric,” \textit{POAS}, Vol 2, 243-244 ll 40-45.
\(^{543}\) “The Ladies’ March,” \textit{CSR}, 58 ll 61-64.
Not only had Charles taken an orange girl to his bed, moving from the bed of his infertile wife, showing again how less than ten years after their marriage it was seen as hopeless that Catherine would ever produce a living child, to the bed of an actress that had already born him a son, but he had also allowed her to make political moves like her supposed involvement in the attack on Coventry. That Charles is accused of being ‘too flippant’ with moisture also derides him for spending his royal sperm with women such as Gwyn, but perhaps too shows anxiety that the king – who as a man should be hot and dry according to medical theory – was allowing his sex drive to make him too moist, perhaps too feminine. “On the Prorogation,” also from 1671, showed feelings of disgruntlement toward the king’s mistresses because of the financial strain they posed: “But see all spent upon a dunghill wench? / Were we content the kingdom to undo / T’enrich an overridden whore or two, / and all for this?” Terming Gwyn ‘a dunghill wench,’ “On the Prorogation” censures the lowborn Gwyn for the money she costs the nation, a charge so often leveled against Portsmouth by Gwyn within the pamphlet war. Gwyn as mother of a royal bastard is also denigrated in “An Essay of Scandal” (1681) in which the author claims that after being the mistress of Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, Gwyn

The mother of a royal bastard, Gwyn was still a ‘common, current bitch’ who only became a mother through her ‘wanton itch,’ whose son could only be ‘her son and heir’ because of the illegitimacy of his birth. Gwyn suffered at the hands of libels and as James Grantham Turner notes, she too was accused of ‘a shameful tyranny differing in degree but not in kind from that of the other ‘Jilts,’” and that she and Portsmouth constituted an ‘indispensable pair’ of Others: one a foreigner and the other from one of the lowest rungs of English society.

Positing Portsmouth and Gwyn together as an indispensable pair shows again the importance of examining the interactions attributed to them, and how their rivalry demonstrates contemporaries’ fears and anxieties. As noted before, the fact that Portsmouth was French was oft repeated and it was used as a cutting jibe, although A Pleasant Battle sees Snap-Short, Portsmouth’s canine champion, reveling in his lady’s Frenchness:

For, this I believe, My Ladie’s a Whore of the greater Magnitude: And, in spite of your Teeth, will carry a greater Luster than any English Lady whatsoever: Though in your own Court, if French Dogs, Ladies and Catholiques be not sufficient to put you all to a Non-plus: I will never bark in the praise of France more.

Gwyn’s dog Tutty responds with a violent anger and threatens to cut the throats of Catholics, and says that it will be Snap-Short’s ‘French Romish Bitch’ which will be

547 Cub could refer to a young fox, bear or other beast, but also had the meaning of ‘an undeveloped, uncouth, unpolished youth,’ OED.
548 Turner 256
549 A Pleasant Battle 3
‘pull’d Limb from Limb,’ rather than his mistress because she is a Protestant.\(^{550}\) After this, Snap-Short lets slip that his mistress could easily become a Protestant if she wished, and she had a dispensation from the Pope for all eventualities, including a plot to ‘betray both Kingdoms Interest.’\(^{551}\) The violence directed at Catholics by Tutty, along with Snap-Short’s detailing of a plot by the French Catholic mistress to follow her own interests even as far as betraying England and France, demonstrate a deep distrust of Catholics in general, but also of this particular woman at the heart of the English court.\(^{552}\) Tutty’s response is one of thanks for Snap-Short confirming what the English had supposed all along about the untrustworthy duchess, and promises to beat the best of any French contender: “for as sure as my Name is Tutty, and by the virtue of my Protestant Mistress, I am not only resolved to bark, but bite; and if my Tongue can do no feats, my Teeth shall; […] I would have you know I am not afraid to take the best French Bitch of you all by the Throat.”\(^{553}\) If words fail the little English dog, then he is unafraid to fight, and ultimately win, a battle with the best of French bitches. These overt and violent contests between Protestant and Catholic in *A Pleasant Battle* are replaced by critiques of the duchess’s Frenchness and pretentions that lead to an important and telling parallel that Gwyn draws between the duchess’s family and her own.\(^{554}\)

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\(^{550}\) Ibid

\(^{551}\) Ibid

\(^{552}\) The suspicion of Portsmouth remains alive to this day. In the biography of Sir Charles Lennox, 1st Duke of Richmond and 1st Duke of Lennox in *Right Royal Bastards*, his mother is described thusly: “Charles Lennox was the son of Charles II by the French spy Louise Renée de Penancoet de Keroualle […],” a clear indication of what the authors think of her, 52. It is worth noting, however, that one of the writers of this volume is Peter Beauclerk-Dewar, himself a descendant of Charles II and Gwyn through the St. Albans family. The rivalry continues.

\(^{553}\) Ibid 4

\(^{554}\) The general lack of Catholic references within this pamphlet war does not discount the fact that criticisms of Portsmouth were often connected to her Catholicism, as demonstrated in “Rochesters Farewell”: “But stay I Portsmouth almost had forgot / The roman Theme for every Rhimeing Sott,” sig.6v, Sloane MS 655, marked August 5\(^{th}\) 1680.
The emphasis placed on Portsmouth’s Frenchness is highlighted in *A Dialogue between the D. of C. and the D. of P.* since both Cleveland and Portsmouth were Catholic mistresses. Supposedly meeting in France where Portsmouth was visiting and Cleveland had lived for some time, the two women snipe at each other in the voices of rival women fighting over who was the better mistress and woman. Portsmouth claims that Cleveland was losing her famed beauty, while Cleveland accuses Portsmouth of being a leech on the English. In the end of the rhyming prose both Cleveland and Portsmouth are warned by Jane Shore that they could suffer burning in hell for their sins as royal whores if they do not reform. Just as *A Pleasant Battle* criticizes both Gwyn and Portsmouth for being part of a sinful court and time, *A Dialogue* claims that both Cleveland and Portsmouth face the fires of hell, so their insults to one another show important conceptions of the two women. Portsmouth says that Cleveland was losing her looks, her main claim to fame, while Cleveland speaks to Portsmouth’s Frenchness, and Portsmouth herself admits to her interest in state affairs, to which Cleveland remarks that the English people should scorn the French duchess. Interestingly, it is Cleveland’s insults about Portsmouth gaining the scorn of the English public which comes just before the appearance of Jane Shore with her dire warnings:

> If back to England thou shouldst e’re return,  
> May thou become the common Peoples scorn.  
> May against thee the London Prentise rise,  
> And may they pull out thy bewitching eyes.  

Beyond a possible reference to the Bawdy House riots in 1668, the expatriate Cleveland claims that the French Portsmouth deserves nothing more than the scorn and derision of the English public because of her meddling in affairs, taking of English gold, and the use

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555 Cleveland (at the time titled Countess of Castlemaine) converted to Catholicism in the early 1660s.  
556 *A Dialogue* 3
of her ‘French face,’ all arguments often made by Gwyn in the other exchanges.\textsuperscript{557} Most interestingly, however, Cleveland questions Portsmouth’s claims to gentility which will keep her from being accepted at the French court:

\begin{quote}
My envy! no thy meanness I dispise.
Thou art a Beggar still tho in disguise.
The noble Ladys of the Gallick Court,
Will mock at your fine gaudy Train and Port,
Thy Convers and thy Company they’l scorn,
Since thou of Genteel Blood was’t never born.\textsuperscript{558}
\end{quote}

Portsmouth is to be mocked not only for her Frenchness, but for her pretending to genteel blood when she was in fact a ‘begger’ and liar. Portsmouth’s reply to Cleveland’s accusations was not denial, however, but a claim that the French ladies will honor her for the services she had done for the French king, a telling indictment of Portsmouth’s ‘spying’ for Louis XIV and further underlining her dubious background. By having Portsmouth and Cleveland conversing with each other, the accusation of Catholicism became less important than the nationality of the respective mistresses, and the ways they used their supposed power within the court.

The question of blood and genteel pretensions is further underlined by the war of words between Gwyn and Portsmouth. As noted before, Gwyn was most often derided for her humble background, so when the supposed voice of Gwyn draws parallels between herself and Portsmouth, she brings the haughty French duchess down to her level. In \textit{Madam Gwins Answer to the Duchess}, which is in response to \textit{A Letter From the Dutch. of Portsmouth} in which Portsmouth offers Gwyn to Neptune and tells the former actress to find a husband before Gwyn loses royal favor, Gwyn merrily claims that in reality there is not much difference between the two women: “there’s little difference by

\textsuperscript{557} Ibid 2
\textsuperscript{558} Ibid 1
the Mother side, if we search the Kerhaells family in *France*, and mine in *England*.”

The pretentious French duchess was little better than the former orange seller. The reference to Portsmouth’s mother is further telling because of the famous death of Gwyn’s own mother Helena in 1679. A satirical eulogy for Gwyn’s mother wrote about the nature of her death and her life as a bawd, but also made references to Gwyn herself, binding her to the image of her drunken and debauched mother:

> as likewise to fine but a private Tincture for to sprucifie her Daughters decayed Phisiogmony […] ‘tis no reason but the Reader should contribute for his knowledge towards the Magnificent pomp of her intended Funeral) the which is shortly to be solemnized, by the Order of her virtuous Daughter, a Lady of great Fame and greater Repute […].

Not only was Gwyn’s mother a drunken bawd, but she was required to help Gwyn gain back her lost looks, and would be remembered in an inappropriate way by her ‘vertuous’ and reputable daughter. The connotation of *A True Account* was not only that Gwyn came from a lowly background, but that she was indeed the heiress to her drunken mother:

> So that is generally believed, that upon so Tragical occasion, the Pallace and the Fish-pond will be forfeited to her most vertuous Daughter, Madam Ellen Gwin, as Lady of the Soil, and chief of all the Bana-Robas that the Suburban Schools of Venus late have fitted for the Game.

By binding Gwyn to her mother, *A True Account* belittles not only her background, but also definitively ties Gwyn to her drunken, bawdy mother as her natural heiress. The stress placed upon Gwyn inheriting her mother’s drunken ways also points to the emphasis on moderation by medical writers such as Culpeper, who explicitly says that

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559 Madam Gwins Answer to the Dutches of Portsmouths Letter, 1 [unmarked]
560 A True Account Of the late most doleful, and lamentable of Old Maddam Gwinn, 2. Another poem entitled “Satyr Unmuzzled” from 1680 uses the image of Gwyn’s mother’s funeral to censure the mistress, saying at the end of the section about Gwyn, ‘So she best satisfied lustful amours / That is descended from your bawds and whores,’ *POAS*, Vol 2, 215 ll 118-119. For a description of the apparently deliberately overblown funeral for her mother, see Beauclerk’s biography of Gwyn which also contains references to libels describing the funeral, 294-296.
561 Ibid 4
nurses be ‘not lecherous, nor a drunkard,’ implying that such extremes in behavior will only have a detrimental impact on a child. Portsmouth picks up on this idea of a drunken breastfeeding woman in A Letter when she claims that Gwyn should marry a ‘Tapster, or strong-water-man’ because of her apparently inherited thirst for alcohol, which speaks to the role of the alcoholic nursing woman. By satirizing the death of Gwyn’s mother, the author of A True Account hopes not merely to poke fun at the death of Helena, but also to denigrate Gwyn for her relation to such a woman. The sins of the mother reflected upon the daughter who inherited not only her land, but also her blood. Much as a mother could corrupt her child through her imagination and menstrual blood, maternal drunkenness could also impede a child’s growth, linking criticisms of Gwyn’s mother – and by implication Gwyn herself – to medical theories on pregnancy and the role of the mother.

The point of A True Account was to poke fun at Gwyn, but when placed beside Madam Gwins Answer to the Dutches, it also highlights ideas of blood and motherhood. When Gwyn states that there is ‘little difference by the Mother side’ between her and the duchess, she equates the pretentious French mistress with her own bawdy, drunken mother. Portsmouth explicitly denied this connection in A Letter From the Dutch. of Portsmouth when she offered Gwyn to Neptune by saying, ‘Nor was I like a Frog or Vermine, Born in a Ditch, and Destin’d to Die there, as your Noble Predecessor [...]’. By specifically bringing up the death of Gwyn’s mother three years before, the author gives Portsmouth knowledge of the event, and shows how Gwyn’s counterattack that

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563 A Letter 2 [unmarked]
564 Ibid 1 [unmarked]
their backgrounds were similar was all the more insulting. Gwyn draws another parallel between the two women by highlighting the fact that both had children from the king. Although the fictional Portsmouth refused to have merfolk with Neptune, the real Portsmouth did in actuality have a child with Charles II, as did Gwyn. Gwyn comments about both women being mothers in *Madam Gwins Answer* in relation to their supposed rivalry with one another:

> that you are Bigbelly’d with hopes that your little Prince will Mount the *Sea-Horse* and ride Admiral of the narrow *Seas*, but hold I have a little Lord that crep out of my cranny that may for ought I know prick your Bladder and let out that ambitious wind, both sprung from one Branch and why should not he hope for something, as well as yours gape for all [...].

Not only Portsmouth’s son had a chance at greatness according to Gwyn. It is telling that after this statement Gwyn claims that Portsmouth is little different than her – that their sons had ‘little difference by the Mother side’ – showing that not only Portsmouth’s son deserved rank, and indeed Gwyn’s son did receive high titles as the son of the king. Portsmouth’s rank is also made fun of as Gwyn herself never received a title while Portsmouth became Duchess of Portsmouth in 1673, but the voice of Gwyn says that Portsmouth was no better than her own orange selling background.

As mothers of illegitimate royal children, both Gwyn and Portsmouth showed the virility of the king – especially since both bore him sons, which according to Culpeper

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565 *Madam Gwins Answer*, 1 [unmarked]
566 In 1682, Portsmouth’s son Sir Charles Lennox was already duke of Richmond and Lennox (he was made duke in 1675). Interestingly, the only illegitimate child Henry VIII acknowledged was his son with Elizabeth Blount, Henry Fitzroy (1519-1536), who was also given the title of Duke of Richmond [along with Duke of Somerset and earl of Nottingham] which led some to speculate at the time that Henry was going to name Fitzroy his successor, although there is no evidence that the king intended to do so, and Fitzroy’s early death made the point moot. See Beverley A. Murphy’s “Fitzroy, Henry, duke of Richmond and Somerset (1519-1536),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/9635, accessed 27 July 2012]. Gwyn’s son Sir Charles Beauclerk was Earl of Burford, which he received in 1676, so he was only an earl during the early part of the pamphlet war. Beauclerk became Duke of St. Albans in 1684. Gwyn’s other son James had died in 1680.
indicated that Charles’s seed was strong - but also emphasized that the king was only able to have children with his mistresses, not his wife.\footnote{Gwyn’s claims that Portsmouth was ambitious for power for her son (and indeed that Gwyn was too) was a cause for concern because as the only mothers of the king’s children, royal mistresses thought to have power within the court could be seen as schemers trying to put their own child on the throne. That Portsmouth was also French, Catholic, and a supposed spy for Louis XIV made matters triply worse from the perspective of the Protestant English. It is little wonder that the anonymous authors of the pamphlet war and other publications showed a vicious exuberance when Portsmouth left on her brief visit to France. Thinking she might not come back, they hailed her leaving as the passing of the plague: “[…] Long have we lookt for the Dutchesses departure, but she has stuck to us like Birdlime; she has been long a Mote in the Kingdoms Eye, and now the true Protestants cry out, blessed be God our Plague is removed.”\footnote{The author of \textit{The Dutchess of Portsmouts and Count Coningsmarks Farwel to England} (1682) goes on to claim that ‘skulking Papists’ pray for “The reason Isidore gives for why such illegitimate children, those who do not ‘take the name of the father’ and are called \textit{spurious}, is that they spring from the mother alone,” Laqueur 55-56. Ideas of illegitimacy are tackled in medical theory, but not with specific discussion of difference in how the blood within the child was different from a legitimate child, since none of the pamphlets insinuate that Gwyn or Portsmouth impregnated themselves.} 567 There is no mention I have found yet about a difference in blood between illegitimate and legitimate children. Aristotle’s \textit{Masterpiece}’s Chap. VI is entitled ‘A more peculiar and Exact Treatise of the happy Estate of Matrimony, as ‘tis appointed by God, and the true felicity that redounds to either Sex, and to what end it was ordained,’ which partly discusses the relationship between a youth and a harlot, stating ‘Nor in this case can they have Children, those sweat [sic] and indearing pledges of conjugal Love, or if they have, they will rather redound to their shame than comfort […]’ showing how children out of wedlock were only a source of shame, 55-58. Culpeper also discusses the formation of moles, defined as a ‘flesh and Mass without bones or bowels, gotten of an imperfect conception instead of a child,’ in which Culpeper says that ‘error of the forming faculty’ causes such a child to be born, but also says that there could be another cause: “Sometimes it is in Widows only from their own seed and blood.” For Culpeper, a widow could manage to impregnate herself, causing the formation of a mole. Culpeper, 1684, The Fourth book. The Fourth Section. Of the Symptoms which are in Conception. Chap. 9. \textit{Of a Mole}, 148. This sounds rather like the theory of Isidore of Seville from the sixth and seventh centuries who tried to grapple with the idea of illegitimacy: “The reason Isidore gives for why such illegitimate children, those who do not ‘take the name of the father’ and are called \textit{spurious}, is that they spring from the mother alone,” Laqueur 55-56. Ideas of illegitimacy are tackled in medical theory, but not with specific discussion of difference in how the blood within the child was different from a legitimate child, since none of the pamphlets insinuate that Gwyn or Portsmouth impregnated themselves.}
her quick return, but that he wishes her ship to sink or, if that did not happen, for the people to scold her.\(^{569}\) Once again, the charge of sending English gold to France is leveled against the duchess, this time with the author suggesting that she send over Protestants rather than French money to England, a source of derision within the war between the mistresses as well.\(^{570}\)

The two ballads printed after Charles II’s death in February 1685 underline this point, along with Gwyn’s insistence that Portsmouth leave England and return to France. *A Pleasant Dialogue betwixt Two Wanton Ladies of Pleasure* once again derides both women for being ‘wanton ladies of pleasure,’ but the rebuke is particularly stinging to the pretentious duchess, who is described as little better than a common prostitute or trader in flesh when Gwyn says: “Forsooth you must needs leave your country dear / To utter your fine French Commodity here, / But sorrow and trouble will bring up the rear.”\(^{571}\) Portsmouth is not only a common prostitute, but one that is selling her French stuffs to the English court and only able to bring trouble in her wake. Gwyn later insists that Portsmouth return the money she sent to France - ‘That you did send over while you were in fame’ - again painting Portsmouth as greedy and stealing from the good English Protestants. *The Dutchess of Portsmouths Farewel*, printed a few days after *A Pleasant Dialogue*, also has Gwyn censuring Portsmouth for sending her wealth away. For her part, Gwyn in both ballads underlines her superiority to Portsmouth by what she has done with her own money. Gwyn’s virtuousness is underscored in *The Dutchess of Portsmouths Farewel* when the famed generosity of the real Gwyn is alluded to in her advice to the avaricious duchess, ‘Now unstring your purse, and be kind to the poor.’

\(^{569}\) Ibid sig.Av  
\(^{570}\) Ibid  
\(^{571}\) *A Pleasant Dialogue*
while later on stating that her own ill-gotten gains have been spent for the betterment of England: “But what I myself have got by my game, / I freely in England expended the same, / But you hane [sic] transported yours to your shame.”\textsuperscript{572} The spending of her money within England made Gwyn a far more virtuous royal whore than Portsmouth, who not only was a foreigner, but also sent English money to another country, and a rival one at that. Ultimately, however, Gwyn pulls her trump card in \textit{A Pleasant Dialogue}, which echoes sentiments found in \textit{A Pleasant Battle} and other pieces of the earlier pamphlet war - her nationality. By claiming her English birth, all other arguments Portsmouth could offer seem to fall away. Portsmouth can only splutter about her ‘pitiful plight’ and her former glory days, to which Gwyn replies that although Portsmouth may never have thought it would happen, the former favorite was indeed fallen into decay, to which Portsmouth ends the ballad promising to ‘follow my trade.’\textsuperscript{573} The wishes Gwyn is made to voice in these ballads seem to speak for those critical of Portsmouth and her supposed authority at the court, and their desire for the French Catholic duchess to leave England and never return. The duchess would indeed leave England after Charles II’s death and return to France, but taking another treasure with her – her son Charles, Duke of Richmond and Lennox.\textsuperscript{574}

Portsmouth’s role as mother is discussed in obvious ways throughout the pamphlet war, but it is a statement by Gwyn which ultimately underscores the differences between the two royal whores/mothers. In \textit{The Dutchess of Portsmouths and Count Coningsmarks Farwel to England}, the author gives a decidedly anxious depiction of

\textsuperscript{572} \textit{The Dutchess of Portsmouths Farewel}  
\textsuperscript{573} \textit{A Pleasant Dialogue}  
\textsuperscript{574} Although Charles Lennox went to France with his mother, was professed a Catholic and later served in the French army, he later decided to return to England of his own accord, disavowing Catholicism and allying himself with King William. The author of \textit{The Dutchess of Portsmouths and Count Coningsmarks Farwel to England} would have been proud. See Beauclerk-Dewar and Powell, 53.
Portsmouth as mother, who was taking the young boy (he was about ten) with her to France on her visit in 1682. The author hopes that she will not poison the young boy and make him like her:

As for the pretty little kidd, the silly innocent Lamb, that followed the Ewe, may he go and return in safety; his tender years are not capable of those Villanous practices now on foot; he has not yet imbib’d his Mothers Tenets, nor Scuck’d [sic] in the Poyson of her perverse Principles; he’s unacquainted with Poysoning, stabbing, Shooting, and massacring; pray Heavens he be not gone over to learn their Trade […].

Alluding to the nefarious ‘trades’ of the French, including poisoning and massacres, the author makes clear the implications of maternal influence on a child. Culpeper states that ‘the Soul l[ies] in the seed,’ and that while the child is within the womb its soul relies upon the woman carrying it: “And though the child hath its soul, yet while it is in the womb, it depends upon the soul of the mother, […] therefore it is probable that whatsoever moves the faculties of the soul in the Mother, may move the same in the Child […].” The child’s soul was impacted by the mother, which could be problematic with relation to the French mistress and her ‘trades.’ Young Charles, according to the pamphlet author, has so far managed not to become like his scheming, treacherous, and violent mother, but he is questioning how long the boy will be able to stay unsullied. The terms ‘imbibed’ and ‘suck’d’ seem to be allusions to breastfeeding, pointing to seventeenth-century views on the molding abilities of mothers and breastfeeding women. The boy has managed to keep from becoming like his mother, according to this author, but may not be able to hold out once in France amidst all the plotting Catholics. Indeed, the author hopes the boy takes after his father, ‘[…] I pray God he may have the innocency of his Father, but not the Pollicy of his Mother,’ although the king’s innocence

575 The Dutchess of Portsmouths and Count Coningsmarks Farwel to England, 2 [unmarked]
576 Culpeper, 1684, The Fourth Book, 141 and 146
seems far less powerful than the mother’s ‘pollicy,’ belying the dominance of the male seed demonstrated by the birth of a son. It is made clear that it is the duchess who holds the authority within this illegitimate family. Although this author hopes that the king’s attributes will prove more influential than those of the duchess, another writer wonders how innocent the king truly is himself: “When French runs thro the Princes veines / And He by theirs not our Law Raignes / When French creeps into Royall bed.” According to this libel, the king himself had French in his veins, and the reasons appear to be twofold. One is because of the French influence in his bed which gives him veins full of the French Disease, but the other is the fact that his mother was herself a French princess, Henrietta Maria. French blood literally flowed in his veins through his mother, so his propensity for French law and women was not surprising because of his doubly tainted blood. The slightly more hopeful The Dutchess of Portsmouths and Count Coningsmarks Farwel to England, written a few years after “The Dissolution,” gives the possibility of Portsmouth’s boy being more like his innocent father rather than his vicious mother, although the passivity of the king’s attributes once again underscores the idea that Charles II was enthralled to his mistresses to the detriment not only of his nation but his children as well.

That Portsmouth’s son was able so far to avoid becoming like his mother may have been attributed to his possibly being nursed by an English, and thus superior, woman to the duchess, or that the king’s attributes were stronger, or that the child was simply lucky. A comment made by Gwyn in A Dialogue Between The Dutchess of Portsmouth and Madam Gwin, at parting from early March 1682 showed how important the role of mother was within this pamphlet war, even if she be a common whore. After

577 “The Dissolution,” ESC, BL Add, 93.
Portsmouth insults Gwyn for her humble background and past work as an orange seller, Gwyn makes the remarkable statement:

In my clear Veins best Britsh Blood does flow,  
Whilst thou like a French Tode-stool first did grow,  
And from a Birth as poor as thy Delight  
Sprung up a Mushrom-Dutchess in a Night,  
Nor did I ever with the Brats I bore,  
The Royal Standard Stein in Monstruous gore.  

Gwyn, the woman who came from humble beginnings, and supposedly sullied by her corrupted and drunken mother, was made to say that she exemplified the best of British blood, with all the connotations that conveyed. Although blood was not necessarily different by nationality, “The Dissolution” makes clear that national ideas or traits could be transferred through blood, as discussed in Chapter 2. Blood was not simply the literal bodily fluid, but also a figurative site of exchange, much like the nursing woman’s breast. The rest of the dialogue gives many of the same insults between the women, with Gwyn calling the duchess greedy and claiming that she will face public scorn, but it is this

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A Dialogue Between The Dutchess of Portsmouth, and Madam Gwin, at parting, 2 [unmarked]. Emphasis is from publication. Much like the question about illegitimacy, I have been unable to find any differences discussed in medical guides about blood based upon nationality. Certainly differences are noted, such as Culpeper stating how Indian women do not menstruate and how Egyptians were particularly fruitful, [(1684) 104-105 and The Fourth Book, 68] which can also be found in Jane Sharp. Sharp also mentions how swelling of the clitoris is found in other nations such as the Indies and Egypt [45] and Sharp also claims that a young girl of nine in France ‘that was very sickly until such time as she was let blood in the arm, and then she recovered immediately; but this is no president [sic] for others, especially in our climate, blood-letting being the ordinary remedy in those parts when the Patient is charged with fulness of blood, of what age almost soever they be,’ 101. Here Sharp demonstrates that climate may impact what was medically possible, and perhaps the characteristics of blood itself, but there is not a specific discussion of how each nation’s blood was particularly different. The importance of climate was important, according to scholars, in discussions of the pairing of love-sickness and ‘hot bloodedness,’ and bodies are also thought about in anxieties about racial miscegenation, as centered upon Mediterranean and/or Muslim bodies, as argued by Carol Thomas Neely, “Hot Blood: Estranging Mediterranean Bodies in Early Modern Medical and Dramatic Texts,” in Disease, Diagnosis, and Cure on the Early Modern Stage, ed. Stephanie Moss and Kaara L. Peterson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) in which she argues about the racializing of bodies, ‘national bodily difference,’ and how ‘English whiteness becomes increasingly validated during the seventeenth century.’ 56. A national body also echoes ideas found in Jane Hwang Degenhardt, who discusses anxieties over Christian conversion to Islam: “in positing a direct relationship between sexual intercourse and ‘turning Turk,’ the Renaissance stage reflected an awareness of how this type of conversion entailed a threat of reproductive contamination, or the process we now refer to as racial miscegenation.’ Jane Hwang Degenhardt, “Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger’s The Virgin Martyr and the Early Modern Threat of ‘Turning Turk,’” ELH 73.1 (Spring 2006): 84-85.
image of British blood which shows one of the underlying anxieties apparent throughout all of these exchanges – these women were mothers to royal, albeit illegitimate, children. The question of who was the better mother was obvious, as Gwyn was English and Protestant, but this royal mistress from common stock was made to say that in her ‘clear Veins best British Bloud does flow.’ After examining the profusion of disease-based libels and accusations during the Restoration in Chapter 2, and the repercussions they had upon ideas of royal mistresses, the king, and his court, the implications of Gwyn saying she had clear veins for the best of British blood becomes apparent. That she goes on to accuse Portsmouth of staining the ‘royal standard […] in monstrous gore’ further exemplifies Gwyn’s superiority because it insinuates that either Gwyn never diseased the king because of her clear blood, or that Gwyn never participated in the taboo of sex during menstruation. Sex during menstruation could cause monstrous births, perhaps implying that Portsmouth’s son was monstrous because of his mother’s sexual incontinence and blood. Gwyn with her pure British blood produces far better ‘brats’ than her rival and is a more suitable mother than the duchess because of the very background that is so often derided. Given that A Dialogue was written in 1682, and the circumstances of the death of Gwyn’s mother have already been discussed, it is interesting that the woman who was linked to her bawdy and drunken mother – who according to medical theory irreparably damaged Gwyn through her sullied body and mind - is now given a pure blood which outshone that of a French duchess. Perhaps the point is more that any Englishwoman is better than a French ‘tode-stool,’ a possible allusion once again to Portsmouth lying about her genteel blood, but also emphasizes the medical theories of blood and the role of mothers in molding their children.
The political implication of having a mother with British rather than French blood is underscored when Restoration politics are placed within the context of maternity. The most obvious way in which mistresses and their children impacted the reign of Charles II was in the political turmoil surrounding James, Duke of Monmouth. Born to Lucy Walter in 1649, Monmouth was the eldest of Charles’s acknowledged children. As a Protestant, Monmouth became a lightning rod for those opposed to the accession of the Catholic James, Duke of York. Rumors circulated that Charles had actually married Walter while in exile, which Charles vehemently denied, and these rumors often coincided with an effort to convince Charles to divorce Catherine of Braganza and remarry to produce a child, a suggestion Charles continually refused. After Charles’s death, Monmouth started a rebellion which failed, and he was executed in July 1685. Libels and pamphlets reveal those who supported Monmouth and those who saw him as an imposter, with some even calling him ‘Perkin,’ referencing Perkin Warbeck, who claimed to be Richard, Duke of York during the reign of Henry VII. Others saw Monmouth as providentially blessed, as shown in “A Hue and Cry after Blood and Murder,” which is about the murder of Thomas Thynne in February 1682. Thynne, a landowner and friend of Monmouth, was killed after marrying the wealthy widow Elizabeth, Countess of Ogle who was also being pursued by Count Karl Johann Königsmark [or Coningsmark], who conspired with others to murder Thynne while he was alone in his coach. Monmouth was in the coach shortly before Thynne was killed, which the author of “A Hue and Cry” takes to mean that he was protected by heaven:

579 For libels opposed to Monmouth, see “On the Prorogation” (1671), “The Ghost of Tom Ross to His Pupil the Duke of Monmouth” (1680) [POAS, Vol 2, 251-252], and Thomas Durfey’s “The Whigs’ Exaltation” (early 1680s?) [POAS, Vol 3, 10-14], “A Ballad Called Perkin’s Fibary” [POAS, Vol 2, 122-126], “An Heroic Poem” (1681) [CSR, 68-72], and “In Answer to Old Rowley the King” (c. 1683) [POAS, Vol 3, 484-489] all call Monmouth ‘Perkin.’
But let all loyal hearts to Heaven pay
Their thanks that Monmouth did no longer stay,
That Providence who over him takes care
Had him diverted then from being there.⁵⁸⁰

For this author, Monmouth’s life was saved by heaven, making the duke linked to the
divine. Such an idea also creates a connection to Monmouth’s claim to royal blood,
which is made most apparent in his touching for the king’s evil. As discussed in Chapter
2, touching for the king’s evil was seen as an important indication of the divinity of the
English monarch, making Monmouth’s usage of touching for the king’s evil a political
statement for Monmouth’s legitimacy and right to the throne.⁵⁸¹

The Duke of Monmouth’s place within the politics surrounding the succession
makes it apparent that illegitimate children played an important role within Charles II’s
reign. Many of Charles’s children by other mistresses like Cleveland, Portsmouth, and
Gwyn were given titles and good marriages, and while perhaps not as important
politically as Monmouth, these children were still seen with some concern. As made clear
in the pamphlet war, these mistresses were perceived as not above using their children for
their own ambitions, and Portsmouth in particular was targeted for her desire for power.
The pairing of Portsmouth with Königsmark in The Dutchess of Portsmouts and Count
Coningsmarks Farwel to England points to Portsmouth’s criminal nature, as well as her
role as Charles Lennox’s mother. Concerns about Portsmouth as mother were found not

⁵⁸⁰ “A Hue and Cry After Blood and Murder,” POAS, Vol 3, 22-23 ll 85-88. For more on the murder of
Thynne, see Alan Marshall’s “Königsmark, Karl Johann, Count Königsmark in the Swedish nobility (1659-
Anderson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 220. See also A true and Wonderful Account of a
CURE of the Kings-Evil, by Mrs. Fanshaw, Sister to his Grace the Duke of Monmouth (London, 1681) and
An Answer to a Scoffing and Lying Lybell, Put forth and privately dispersed under the Title of A
Wonderful Account of the Cureing the Kings-Evil, by Madam Fanshaw the Duke of Monmouth’s Sister
(London, 1681). An Answer makes the argument that those against Monmouth were putting out the stories
about touching to make it seem as though Monmouth had ambitions for the throne.
only in libels, however, but also in political pamphlets like *Articles of high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanors against the duchess of Portsmouth* (1680). The anonymous pamphlet, apparently serving as the basis for a charge of treason against Portsmouth during an upcoming session of Parliament, gives a list of twenty-two charges against the duchess ranging from greed to attempting to poison the king. Charge 20 reveals how Portsmouth’s role of mother was a cause of concern since she saw it as a way to increase her influence:

That she has, by her Creatures and Friends, given out, and whispered abroad, that she was married to his Majesty, and that her Son, the Duke of Richmond, is his Majesty’s legitimate Son, and consequently Prince of Wales, his Health being frequently drunk by her, and her Creatures, in her debauches and Merry-meetings, to the great Dishonour and Reflexion of his Majesty, and the manifest Peril and Danger of these Kingdoms, who may hereafter, by such false and scandalous Stories, and wicked Practices, be embroiled in Distractions, if not in Blood and Civil Wars, to the utter Ruin of his Majesty’s Subjects, and Subversion of the Protestant Religion; it being manifest, she, being a Papist herself, will breed her Son in the same Religion, however she may pretend to the Contrary.

Much like the charges against Portsmouth of poisoning and diseasing the king as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, Portsmouth’s supposed actions for her son had larger implications for the kingdom. Not only was Portsmouth trying to place her son upon the throne, but since she was going to raise him as a Catholic, she was going to replace the Catholic James, Duke of York with her own Catholic son. Worries over the creation of civil wars and the destruction of English Protestantism show the concerns attached to Portsmouth as the mother of a royal bastard. That Portsmouth claimed to be married to the king only served to dishonor Charles, even if such a claim echoes the rumors that

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582 For more on *Articles* and its publication and possible authors, see Chapter 1.
583 *Articles of High-Treason, and other High-Creims and Misdemenors, against the Duchess of Portsmouth, The Harleian Miscellany: or, a Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, As well in Manuscript as in Print, Round in the late Earl of Oxford’s Library. Interspersed with Historical, Political, and Critical Notes. With a Table of the Contents, and an Alphabatical Insex. Vol. III* (London, 1745), 486. As noted before, Lennox did not remain in France nor a Catholic, which is also noted in *The Harleian Miscellany* which says, after the text of charge 20, ‘This proved a mistake,’ 486.
stated Monmouth was legitimate because Charles had married Lucy Walter. That the Articles accused Portsmouth of planning to place her own son on the throne does not necessarily mean that she was guilty of it – since other charges such as trying to poison the king seem farfetched – but it does show how Portsmouth as mother was a source of anxiety. The sentiments of Articles are echoed in “Song. Old Rowley the King” (c. 1683) which describes a supposed conversation between Charles (Rowley) and Portsmouth:

“Sir, Monmouth is fit for a roy.
And Richmond for another.
Will you both your babes destroy
For one poor cully brother?
[…] quoth Rowley the King,
“The fool I must please
Or not be at ease,
But I’ll have a trick for him.

“Though having two queens be dear,
And rarely more than one do appear,
I’ll make two: and then ‘tis clear
One has got a son and heir
For brave old Rowley the King
[…] And when I’ve done,
My brother and son
May end their tricks in a string.”

Portsmouth is made to ask Charles to replace the Duke of York with either Monmouth or her own son Richmond, demonstrating the belief found in the Articles that the duchess was conspiring to place her own son on the throne.\(^{585}\) In “Old Rowley,” Charles claims that he must be seen to please his brother, but that he will make Portsmouth a second queen – perhaps a play on the term ‘quean’ meaning prostitute – and so have ‘a son and

\(^{584}\) “Song: Old Rowley the King,” *POAS*, Vol 3, 482-482 ll 65-68, 70-78, 80-82. It is noted that ‘So far as is known, the ballad was never printed, though it circulated in manuscript,’ 478.

\(^{585}\) Nancy Klein Maguire also states that ‘several documents even refer to the possibility of Portsmouth’s son succeeding to the English throne,’ including those by Gilbert Burnet and Paul Barillon the French ambassador who wrote about Portsmouth’s supposed ‘pretentions’ in correspondence. Nancy Klein Maguire, “The duchess of Portsmouth: English royal consort and French politician, 1670-85,” in *The Stuart court and Europe: Essays in politics and political culture*, ed. R. Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 272.
heir.’ The ending of “Old Rowley” is ominous since the king states that both his brother and son, York and Monmouth, may be hung for their ‘tricks’ – so both the pro-exclusionists and pro-Yorkists would lose - perhaps paving the way for Richmond to assume the throne. *Articles* and “Old Rowley” reveal concerns about Portsmouth as royal mistress and mother since she could use both positions to further her own political agenda. The publication of the *Articles* in 1680 means that it was in printed circulation before the pamphlet war, as defined by this chapter, began. Perhaps the *Articles* inspired the ambitions voiced by the Portsmouth created within the pamphlets, making the victory of Protestant Gwyn over Catholic Portsmouth that much more important. Both *Articles* and “Old Rowley” show how reproduction was an important issue within the social and political world of the Restoration, and Portsmouth is given a voice in “Old Rowley,” but it is the pamphlet war which places the women at center stage, with the voices and bodies of Gwyn and Portsmouth battling over who was the best mother of the politically charged royal bastard.

Gwyn’s possession of the best of British blood meant that the blood and attributes passed to her children, her inheritance, were of superior quality to those of the French duchess, even if Gwyn’s own background was suspect. While it is not possible to know whether Gwyn herself breastfed or not, the implication is that if she had, she would only have passed along the best that her nation had to offer to her bastard royal child. Gwyn, for all her dubious past and links to a drunken and corrupt mother, was the better mother and the better mistress because of her place of birth and, one can safely assume, her religious persuasion. She has not diseased the king, she does not face the scorn of the people because she is generous with her money which she spends in England, and she is
most importantly one of them. The medical literature of the seventeenth-century demonstrates how central a role blood played within ideas of motherhood and the molding of children through nourishment, and it was the figure of the mother which played such an important role within political concerns over the succession as demonstrated in this pamphlet war from the 1680s.

A Conclusion

"This making of bastards great,
And duchessing every whore,
The surplus and Treasury cheat,
Have made me damnable poor,"

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The personal tragedy of Catherine of Braganza’s inability to bring a child to full term had implications which affected the Restoration court and its politics. Although it cannot be known how differently the Stuart dynasty and the events following the death of Charles II would have turned out if the royal couple had produced heirs, it can be said that the lack of children caused great political and social anxiety as shown in libels, pamphlets, and other publications of the time. The obsessive writing about the queen’s health evidenced in news-letters to Sir Richard Bulstrode shows how essential it was to the Stuart court that she produce an heir. Every minor illness was seen as a hopeful sign, and each pregnancy tracked until its eventual sad conclusion. Charles II’s legendary ability to have children with his mistresses muddied the political waters as it became apparent that the king was able to have children with almost anyone but his wife, and tensions rose over who should be the king’s heir. The inevitable confrontation between the Catholic James, Duke of York and the king’s eldest son the Protestant James, Duke of Monmouth ended in rebellion and execution, but not before an attempt by some to claim Monmouth as

586 “Song: Old Rowley the King,” 478–479 ll 1-4
legitimate and the true heir to the throne. Within all of this political turmoil, the figure of the mistress as mother plays an important role, one which is highlighted within the 1680s pamphlet war.

The pamphlets discussed within this chapter use rival mistresses of Charles II, particularly Gwyn and Portsmouth, to give voice not only to insults but also to show the role of these women within the Restoration court. Particularly important within these exchanges is their sharing of the title of mother of the king’s child, a status which gave them certain privileges within the royal court. The women often throw clichéd accusations against each other – Gwyn as the common whore born in poverty and moral depravity, Portsmouth as the greedy and pretentious French and Catholic interloper bent on destroying England. Both were censured as whores, both seen as having too much authority within the sinful court, both feared as dangers for the king and his rule. The woman who supposedly called herself a Protestant whore, however, is always the victor in these exchanges. She nimbly shunts aside all of the insults thrown at her by the French duchess, instead claiming that the two women are more alike than different in their bloodlines, and that she will always be better because of her English birth and her Protestant leanings. There is no argument which can topple this trump card, a point which is made clear by Snap-Short’s claim that his mistress Portsmouth could become a Protestant at any time if it helped her cause, a claim stoutly denied by Tutty, who later goes on to beat the French contender. When placed beside their role as mothers these pamphlets and ballads take on a deeper meaning, as the question became not only who was the better mistress or woman, but also who was the better mother. With the king having no legitimate children, and the ambitions of mistresses clear, concerns in libels
and pamphlets like Articles swirled around the meaning of mistress as royal mother, particularly with the threat of Charles’s Catholic brother as heir hanging over the worried Protestants.

As the medical literature of the period shows, the role of the woman within conception was very much a matter of debate. Whether or not the woman produced seed, and whether she was active at all in the creation of a child or merely the receiver and carrier of male design, were all important questions in the early modern period. The emphasis upon female formation of the child both in and out of the womb demonstrates that there was indeed authority to be found within the pregnant and nursing woman. Whether it be her imagination, or the blood within her which nourished a child, a woman could directly shape a child. That blood, often believed to be from the womb itself, directly fed the child was central because it was not merely food the child was taking in, but the attributes of the breastfeeding woman. The question of whether or not a woman should breastfeed her own child led to discussions of what to look for in a nurse in order to keep a child both physically and mentally healthy. A bad nurse could create a bad or even diseased child. There is also a sense that a child could inherit traits of its mother, much as a libelous pamphlet claimed Gwyn as an heiress to her drunken bawd of a mother after her drowning death. Seventeenth-century medical theory helps to shed light upon an assumption of the pamphlet war which starred two royal mothers. Seeing the influence of the mother upon the child, both in and out of the womb, shows how the contest between these two women was not merely two mistresses fighting over the king, but two mothers who potentially (and at times literally within these publications) vied for power through their children’s prospects. That illegitimate children were a cause of
political concern is shown not only by the prominent role of Monmouth within political
discourse, but also the children of mistresses like Portsmouth, who it was feared may try
to place her own son on the throne. That Gwyn bested Portsmouth at every turn
emphasized her superiority as a mother because of her English birth and Protestant
religion. She produced better children because of the blood which flowed in her veins.

That the authors of this pamphlet war chose court women as their combatants
underscores the importance of women in the popular imaginations of the Restoration
court. Gwyn, Portsmouth, and Cleveland are placed upon a public stage and words are
put in their mouths in order to carry on a conversation which voiced concerns found in
Restoration England. While made fun of, Gwyn becomes a sort of voice of the people
while treading across the public stage, battling against the French Catholic adversary,
always winning in the end as a bolster to English and Protestant pride. That women were
fighting these battles shows again the inordinate authority Charles supposedly gave to
court mistresses, but also the shared title of mother of the king’s children made these
exchanges between the women particularly charged. If they could assert authority
through their children, it became important to denote which woman was superior.
Portsmouth was unfit because she was a French Catholic spy, Cleveland was English but
a Catholic convert, and so it fell to the common whore Gwyn, as an English Protestant, to
carry the baton as the best mother of the king’s illegitimate children. Through her double
attributes as English and Protestant, Gwyn bested all of her supposed superiors based on
status, and it was Nell who carried the best of British (and Protestant) blood. In seeing
representations of court mistress as mother, not only the significance of representations
themselves is demonstrated, but also the ways in which gender roles were shaped within
the political and social world of the Restoration. A royal mistress as mother was not simply a whore any longer, but a vessel through which authority and power could be obtained, and it was vital that the veins, so prominent in discussions of disease, contain the correct blood. Ultimately it was the face of Gwyn which the crowd wanted to see at the coach window, possibly with her son sitting next to her as the promise of a future English and Protestant royal child.
Chapter 4
A Divorcee, A Gamemstress, and a Virtuous Courtesan: Eighteenth-Century Uses for the Restoration Court Mistress

‘If Beauty, Wit, or Friends, had Power to save / Alive, what this Tomb does from Death Receive, / It had not yet been here; yet Reader, spare / Not on this Dust, to drop a Friendly Tear. / ‘Tis only Dust lies cover’d in this Tomb, / Her Fame and Soul Employ a larger Room.’

‘It is true that the heavy voluptuousness of the eyes makes him wonder if they really were like Jersey cows who have unwittingly devoured a cake of opium, and cause him to speculate upon the utter alarm they must have caused to nervous young men from the shires.’

The dramatic elegy for Nell Gwyn in An Elegy In Commemoration of Madam Ellenor Gwinn (1687) and Roy Bishop’s viciously amusing interpretation of the Windsor Beauties collection displayed at Hampton Court Palace in the 1930s both point to the interesting ways Restoration court women became part of English history and memory. Beyond simply highlighting how these women were remembered in two different ways, Bishop and the epitaph’s author also demonstrate the ways in which absence, both literal and figurative, played a part in shaping the role of Restoration court mistresses and gender formation in the years following not only Charles II’s death in 1685 but also their own deaths. Either by the replacement of Gwyn with dust at her tomb, or reducing women to the vacuous stares of a drugged cow, royal mistresses served not only as the face of the Restoration court, but also as empty vessels into which could be poured the interpretations, anxieties, and opinions of later generations not only about the Restoration, but also their own time periods.

In looking at representations of Restoration court women in the years following the death of Charles II through the 1750s, it is apparent that these court women were

587 An Elegy In Commemoration of Madam Ellenor Gwinn, Who Depart this Life on the 14th of November, Anno Dom. 1687 (London, 1687).
588 Roy Bishop, Paintings of the Royal Collection: An Account of His Majesty’s Pictures at Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace, Hampton Court, Holyroodhouse, and Balmoral (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1937), 163.
useful figures for thinking through social and political issues. In seeing how the three arguably most important of Charles II’s mistresses – Nell Gwyn, Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland, and Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth – are portrayed within seventy years of the king’s death, different tropes are highlighted within a variety of genres, including ‘memoirs’ and ‘secret histories’ written after the deaths of the women themselves. Cleveland and Portsmouth lived into the eighteenth century, allowing for a longer backward glance on both the women themselves and the court they came to symbolize immediately following their deaths. Given the contemporary emphasis placed on subjects like the ‘Turkish’ harem, disease, and the politics of motherhood, it is interesting to see the roles that these famed court mistresses come to occupy for later generations. In these publications, Cleveland becomes a divorcee, Portsmouth a gamestress, and Gwyn a virtuous courtesan, each role underscoring the preoccupations and fascinations of the early eighteenth-century itself, but also with a political undercurrent which demonstrated how these women continued to represent the troublesome Restoration and its impact on England years later. As with the rest of this project, this chapter’s interpretation of the representations of Restoration royal mistresses is one way of examining common threads within publications, but does not exclude other possibilities. Rather, by focusing on particular themes – divorce, gambling, and ideas of virtue – such an interpretation looks to how specific women were used after their deaths in order to grapple with issues that raised debate and concern. Much as the court mistress in life was a good object to ‘think through’ subjects like corruption and dangerous influence, in death she could also come to embody social problems or concepts through the words of a ‘memoirist’ or ‘secret history’ writer. In seeing how the court mistress
could be used to signify evolving socio-political problems and gender anxieties, a larger picture is drawn not only of representations of the Restoration royal mistress and her era, but also of the politics of gender in the first half of the eighteenth century.

**Introduction**

The relationship between history and memory serves as a fertile ground of discussion for scholars. In his famed work on French national memory and *lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora explains how history and memory have come to be seen in opposition to each other, with memory as a ‘living’ phenomenon and history as a reconstruction. Such an outlook on history and memory can also be helpful when looking at early modern England and its representations of Restoration court mistresses. Nora defines memory as follows:

> Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it; it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic – responsive to each avenue of conveyance or phenomenal screen, to every censorship or projection.

Although Nora’s overarching point is to examine how modern ideas of history and memory have changed, his discussion of memory gives an interesting direction to the study of historical memory in early modern England, since this memory also focused on ‘those facts that suit[ed] it,’ and allowed for the lives of court mistresses to take on various meanings. In examining historical memory of Restoration royal mistresses during the eighteenth century, it is possible to not only better understand the ‘meaning’ affixed to these women after their deaths, but also the ideas and concerns of Hanoverian England.

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590 Ibid 8
Scholarship studying the uses of memory and history within early modern English politics itself demonstrates the importance of, in Blair Worden’s words, ‘the history of historical thinking and […] how successive generations come to form their perspectives on the past.’\(^{591}\) Worden’s work on ‘reputations’ of ‘roundheads’ or parliamentarians in the centuries following the Civil Wars shows how historical memory and representations are important and useful tools of analysis. The use of specific events, like court scandals, as ‘weapons’ by later generations is also discussed in works by Alastair Bellany and Cynthia Herrup on the Overbury and Castlehaven trials respectively. In placing later perceptions of these scandals within studies of the events themselves, Bellany and Herrup underscore how historical memory could be used for political and social ends.\(^{592}\) The historiography of historical memory sheds light on the meanings of past events and people, but also on the people who are remembering the past.

Utilizing dead court women for contemporary social, political, and religious purposes is certainly not unique to the post-Restoration period. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the long-dead figure of Jane Shore, mistress of Edward IV, appeared in the pamphlet war between Gwyn and Portsmouth in the early 1680s. This was but one appropriation of many of Shore’s story. By tracing various representations of Shore, running the gamut from Thomas More’s *History of King Richard III* (1513) to twentieth-century romance novels, Maria M. Scott has explored the culturally conditioned fascination with narratives of female victimization and the intersections of women,

\(^{591}\) Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Allen Lane, 2001), xi. See also Steven C.A. Pincus’s *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) for a discussion on the uses of memory surrounding the Glorious Revolution, the dethroning of another Stuart king.

power, and sex.\textsuperscript{593} By looking at histories, plays, and novels, Scott shows how the memory of Shore, whose actual first name was Elizabeth, changed during the centuries and what that reveals about perceptions of women, gender, and sex. Much as Jane Shore was used as a way to interpret the bitter years following the Wars of the Roses and the reign and death of Richard III, Restoration royal mistresses came to be important symbols of Charles II’s court and its own problematic legacy.

Recent scholarship has focused on the role of the Restoration court mistress in the early rise of the novel. Laura Linker studies the role of the female libertine in works ranging from John Dryden’s \textit{Marriage A-la-Mode} (1671) to Daniel Defoe’s \textit{Roxana} (1724), and argues that the literary figure of the female libertine, that object of mixed fascination and disgust, came to prominence as a result of the rise and power of Charles II’s mistresses.\textsuperscript{594} Alison Conway also uses the figure of the Restoration court mistress to analyze the beginnings of the early novel, although she focuses more on religion, courtesan narratives, and Nell Gwyn’s apocryphal self-titling as the “Protestant whore.” Using Gwyn, who is morphed into the general Protestant Whore, as a springboard into looking at the issues surrounding religion during the Restoration and into the eighteenth century, Conway seeks to show how writing about the courtesan was more than a reaction to the court, but also held important social, political, and religious implications.\textsuperscript{595} Additionally, Conway looks at the enduring meaning of the Protestant Whore as she was used by eighteenth-century writers who saw the past as a ‘spectral

\textsuperscript{593} Maria M. Scott, \textit{Re-Presenting “Jane” Shore: Harlot and Heroine} (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 5.
\textsuperscript{595} Alison Conway, \textit{The Protestant Whore: Courtesan Narrative & Religious Controversy in England, 1680-1750} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 5.
presence’ in their own time.\textsuperscript{596} Both Linker and Conway emphasize the role of the Restoration court mistress in the evolving literary culture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries. Whether trying to contend with the nature of the female libertine or grappling with the messy English religious landscape, novelists and other writers looked to the figure of the royal mistress as a source of critique and inspiration to grapple not only with past issues, but also contemporary ones.

Scott’s work on Shore, and Linker and Conway’s on Restoration court mistresses, all emphasize the need to understand the ways in which images of royal mistresses and ideas of gender were used both during these women’s lifetimes and after their deaths. This chapter continues this inquiry into the utilization of the historical memory of court mistresses after the Restoration, and what ‘facts’ it suited people in the eighteenth century to recall about them. Following a similar path to other scholars, this chapter will go beyond the Restoration to see how those who lived after the period responded to these women and what those women came to mean within specific publications. By building upon the idea that representations shed light on the culture that created them, this chapter will explore why the Restoration royal mistress endured as an object of fascination and discourse. Rather than tracing the image of the Restoration court mistress through to the present, I will focus on the fascinating assortment of memoirs or histories of Gwyn, Cleveland, and Portsmouth published relatively shortly after their deaths. Not looking to become involved in the debate surrounding the rise of the novel, this chapter will instead look to what these publications, supposedly about these women, actually demonstrate about early eighteenth-century gender politics. The analysis focuses on three major tropes: the divorcee, the gamestress, and the virtuous courtesan. Such an enquiry is

\textsuperscript{596} Ibid 8
important not only to see how historical memory can impact gender politics, but also because the eighteenth century is often viewed as a watershed moment in the discourse surrounding women and gender, and even perhaps the temporal site for the invention of ‘modern’ sexual and gender identities.

All three women outlived Charles II. Gwyn died first in 1687 in her late thirties, while Cleveland lived into her late sixties (d. 1709), and Portsmouth into her mid-eighties (d. 1734). This chapter focuses on a handful of texts on these three major court mistresses: Memoirs of the Life of Barbara Duchess of Cleveland (1709); The Secret History of the Duchess of Portsmouth (1690) and the later work for which it serves as the backbone, The Life, Amours, and Secret History of Francelia, Late D[utche]ss of P[ortsmout]h (1734); and Memoirs of the Life of Eleanor Gwinn (1752). As we have seen Gwyn, Cleveland, and Portsmouth all served as integral focal points of critique while Charles II still lived, but by examining the continuation of their use as symbols of the Restoration court even after their own deaths this chapter will demonstrate how each woman’s life and ‘story’ was utilized in specific ways. These women provided opportunities for those who lived within a later Stuart or even Hanoverian England to deal not only with the problematic legacy of the Restoration and its aftermath, but also with their own societal issues, often centering upon the role of women and gender. In discussing these perceptions, it also becomes clear how it is court women’s very absence which makes them, like Jane Shore, into endlessly malleable and therefore immensely attractive subjects which could be shaped into whatever form was necessary at the time.
Wo/Men’s Memoirs and Histories?

Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland

The role attributed to the Duchess of Cleveland in the early eighteenth-century is interestingly revealed in *Memoirs of the Life of Barbara Dutchess of Cleveland*, published shortly after her death in October 1709. A short memoir, it begins with a statement about Cleveland’s noble birth which was of greater importance than any other character attributes associated with her: “Whatever Character has been given to this Lady, rais’d to those Dignities she enjoyed, by satisfying the Pleasures of a Prince, which condition is always attended with much Envy, we cannot but take notice, that her Birth and Quality, was otherwise very Noble […]” The author goes even further in this statement about Cleveland’s noble birth, claiming that although the king could add to her titles, he could not add ‘to her Blodd.’ Cleveland’s association with the king is also mentioned, claiming that it was her beauty that led to her being ‘singled out’ and becoming ‘the first Mistress he had after his return to England.’ Another reason why Cleveland was initially so appealing to the king was her father’s loyalty to the royalist cause – he had died in 1643 of wounds sustained in battle. The memoir claims that it was her beauty and royalist background which helped to seal her role as royal mistress:

for those who had been Sufferers for the King, or had had their Fathers, Husbands and Relations slain for the King, to come and Petition for a Reward, or Redress for their

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597 *Memoirs of the Life of Barbara Dutchess of Cleveland, Divorc’d Wife of Handsome Fielding Who departed this Life at her House at Chiswick, on Sunday Night the 9th of this instant October, 1709. With an account of her Birth and Parentage, her Familiarity with K. Charles II. and the Children she had by him. With other very memorable and curious Passages* (London, 1709), 2. Cleveland was the daughter of William Villiers, 2nd Viscount Grandison of Limerick, and Mary Bayning. The memoir makes the point that although William Villiers was Viscount Grandison of Limerick, they were ‘of a very Noble and Flourishing Family in England’ to emphasize the Englishness of Cleveland’s background, 2.

598 Ibid

599 Ibid
Suffering: This was at least designed to be granted her, but the King’s Liking did very much hasten it [...] 600

This ‘Liking’ provided the title of Earl of Castlemaine to her husband Roger Palmer, and later on gave Cleveland grander titles such as duchess, and titles also upon her children with the king. 601

The triumphs and critiques of the Duchess of Cleveland in the early days of her ascendancy as Charles II’s mistress in the 1660s are glossed over within this memoir. Instead, the memoir moves next to the decline in her influence at court with the rise of rivals such as the Duchess of Portsmouth and Nell Gwyn: ‘‘Tis true, the King afterwards grew less devoted to her Embraces, and more powerful Rivals succeeding to his Love [...] she in a manner took her leave of the King’s Bed, to make room for more powerful Rivals, and fresher Beauties [...]’. 602 Although gaining titles and money, Cleveland still took offense at her declining influence and ‘not being able to book so apparent a Slight,’ began to have lovers herself, eventually being caught by the king with John Churchill, the future Duke of Marlborough. 603 The memoir then jumps ahead to the reign of James II, when Cleveland’s estranged husband was sent to Rome as an ambassador: ‘they never after met as Man and Wife, but it may rather be said, she lived the Widdow’d Mistress of a King.’ 604 Cleveland’s attachment to the king was far stronger than ever it was with her husband, from whom she was formally separated in the 1660s.

Cleveland’s relationship with the king provided, according to the memoir, her most important accomplishment. After stating that Cleveland was a ‘widdow’d mistress,’

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600 Ibid
601 Ibid 3
602 Ibid
603 Ibid. An event discussed in Chapter 1.
604 Ibid
it goes on to claim, ‘There is one thing that ought to make her Name memorable and that
is the Off-spring had by the King, which are at this time a great Ornament to the Court
and Nation,’ going on to discuss the five children briefly - Charles, Duke of
Southampton, Henry, late Duke of Grafton, George, Duke of Northumberland, Anne
Palmer (who was adopted by the king), and Charlotte Fitzroy. The little role Cleveland
was seen as playing was emphasized by the author stating: ‘Having thus given an
Account of her Children, since little of her Life, from that time afforded anything
remarkable, I shall proceed to speak of one thing which was very particular, and made a
great Noise in the World [...]’. This ‘particular’ event was Cleveland’s disastrous
marriage to Robert ‘Handsome’ or ‘Beau’ Feilding in 1705. Feilding was a fortune hunter
who was not above violence to try to get his way: “he strove likewise to get her Fortue
[sic] in his Hands; which not being easie to effect, he thought to do it by ill Usage, which
he exerted in the most barbarous manner; Locking her up, and sometimes almost starving
her [...].” When her sons learned about this treatment, they had him committed to
Newgate, and although he soon had bail, it was discovered that Feilding was also a
bigamist, already married to a Mary Wadsworth before his marriage to Cleveland, and he
was charged with a felony. Feilding was easily found guilty of bigamy, one of the main
pieces of evidence being a set of letters sent to Wadsworth which the memoir author
thought ‘may not be improper to insert here.’ After the pages of letters from Feilding to
Wadsworth, the memoir returns to its original focus, saying that Cleveland obtained a
divorce and no longer saw Feilding. A quick end is then given to the duchess: “Nor,
indeed, is there much more to be said of her, for she liv’d wholly retir’d till the time of her Death [...] and leaves us no room to mention any thing farther of her.”

In eight short pages, the entire life of the duchess of Cleveland was mapped out, with the highlights being her children by the king and her very public divorce from the brutal Feilding.

Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth

The telling of the Duchess of Portsmouth’s ‘story’ requires looking to two secret histories written about her, one in 1690 and one in 1734. Although published long before her death, the 1690 history is an obvious inspiration for the later version, and it is by looking at these histories in conjunction that some ideas of the duchess can be more fully understood.

The Secret History of the Dutchess of Portsmouth (1690) reveals perceptions of the court mistress after the Restoration, but while she was very much alive. Although the title of the work is plain enough about its subject, the history itself uses pseudonyms for all of the characters, with Portsmouth appearing as Francelia. A rather long and complicated story, it begins with stating that Francelia was ‘the Daughter of a French Merchant’ who had retired to the country. He had two daughters, Francelia being the younger, and relations between the sisters became particularly difficult after the elder sister contracted smallpox which ruined her beauty. The witty and beautiful Francelia received all of the attention making the elder sister jealous, and eventually it was decided to send Francelia to boarding school where she excelled:

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610 Ibid 8
In short, she went to the School, where she had occasion to shew her aptness to Learning, her Wit and Ingenuity; insomuch that all her Masters and Mistresses were highly pleas’d with her, and she drew the Eyes and Admiration upon her, of every Body that went to visit their Children at that School[…].

The attention Francelia received only pushed her to ‘accomplish her self as much as possibly she could,’ and she played into her strengths which included ‘a very airy brisk disposition […] but always allay’d with such a Portion of subtle Policy and Craftiness, which made a very agreeable mixture in her Conversation […].’ Upon returning from school her parents began to worry about the attention and admiration she was receiving from young men and decided to send her to Paris under the care of an aunt to watch over her.

Francelia’s aunt was the widow of a man who had depended upon a Duke de Bellame during his lifetime and she continued to depend on the duke and duchess’s patronage after her husband’s death. The aunt hoped that her niece’s ‘Wit and Prettiness’ would please the duchess, and she arranged for a seemingly chance meeting to take place with the duchess at the Tuileries. The aunt and Francelia were walking around the garden waiting for the duchess to appear, but meet with the duke instead. He becomes smitten with Francelia and begins to court her through visits, notes, and even the gift of a pearl necklace. Seeing the danger in the duke’s attentions, and Francelia’s reactions to them, the aunt tries to have Francelia think clearly about the situation and says that these attentions were common and not to be necessarily believed. She eventually persuades Francelia to return the pearl necklace at the first opportunity, but when the duke manages to meet with Francelia alone he persuades her to keep the necklace and Francelia blames her intention of returning the pearls on her aunt, ‘lay[ing] the whole fault on her

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612 Ibid 5-6
613 Ibid 6
Governess.\textsuperscript{614} The duke, having recently heard that he must go to Candia to fight the Turks, lights upon a plan to have Francelia accompany him as his page rather than leaving her to the temptations of Paris, a plan she readily accepts.

An escape plan set in motion during a visit to the Duchess de Bellame involving distraction of chairmen and a footboy allowed Francelia to abscond to the duke’s ship to travel with him to Candia. The duke has Francelia dress as his page, although ‘once arriv’d at Candia, it should be to her choice, whether she would continue under that disguise, or re-assume the habits of her own Sex.’\textsuperscript{615} The joys of the travel to Candia can be imagined, but Francelia’s aunt had no idea what had happened to her niece, and believed her ‘to be stolen.’\textsuperscript{616} The duke was killed by a mine shortly after arriving in Candia, causing Francelia, who remained dressed as a page, great distress.

Not knowing what was to become of her, Francelia is befriended by two men. One, a marquess, comes to her and tells her that he knows she is a woman. The duke was a great friend and patron, and had entrusted the marquess with Francelia’s care if anything happened to him. After meeting with the marquess, Francelia goes to sleep, and while sleeping she cries out, ‘Why will you be gone, my Lord, and leave your poor young Mistress behind you?’ Her words are heard by a page named Chandore in the cabin.\textsuperscript{617} Chandore now suspects that Francelia is a woman, and he tells her that he knows her secret, but promises he will serve her and keep her secret safe. Not believing that the marquess will really help her, Francelia instead leans on Chandore who says he will take her back to France. Plans are laid, but the return of the marquess causes problems

\textsuperscript{614} Ibid 23
\textsuperscript{615} Ibid 27
\textsuperscript{616} Ibid 30
\textsuperscript{617} Ibid 35
because he wants to take Francelia from the ship. Francelia tells the marquess of Chandore’s help, but the marquess insists on his plan, assuring Francelia he would tell Chandore about the change. The marquess has no intention of actually telling Chandore – whom he suspects of being in love with Francelia – where she is, and Chandore sets out to find out where she has gone. Chandore eventually finds Francelia, and suspecting the marquess’s motives to keep her to himself, begins to secretly exchange letters with her, and it seems that Francelia does indeed favor Chandore over the marquess. After various letters and meetings, Francelia and Chandore are seen speaking by the marquess, who devises a way to remove his rival by having him enlisted in the army, although Chandore never knew how he was enlisted. It is assumed that Chandore is killed in the fighting at Candia.

The marquess and Francelia return to France with insinuations that Francelia gave ‘the same Favour’ to the marquess as she did the Duke de Bellame. Upon arriving in France, Francelia discovers that her aunt is dead and she obtains lodgings where the marquess visits her. The marquess spreads the story of his adventure with Francelia, which eventually finds its way to Princess Dorabella (Henrietta Anne). Francelia creates an excuse for her absence and she decides to place the blame upon the duke: “She thought none more fit, than to say, That while, to her great content, her aunt was making means to admit her into the Dutchess of Bellames’s Retinue, the Duke […] had caus’d her to be forcibly carried to Marseilles […] much against her Will […].”618 Using this story to explain her journey to Candia, Francelia found favor with Dorabella and became a great favorite. Soon Tyrannides (Louis XIV) decides to send Dorabella to England in

618 Ibid 75
order to persuade her brother to join in a ‘private League’ with France. Upon meeting Francelia he decides it would be good to send not only Dorabella but also Francelia because she would be a great asset to him in England: “he thought her not only fit to accompany Dorabella into the Isles, but also judg’d her a proper Instrument to forward his Designs on the Isles, and to influence wholly the Prince and the chiefest Ministers of his Councils [...].” Not only was Francelia seen as a fitting ‘Instrument,’ but one ‘proper to manage, with good Directions’ affairs of state in England.

Unsurprisingly, Dorabella’s brother the Prince (Charles II) falls in love with Francelia. He is so infatuated with her he almost forgets his mistress Cornelia (Barbara Palmer), and Dorabella helps to fan her brother’s love of Francelia by telling him that they will soon return to France. Both women play upon the Prince’s desire to keep Francelia in England, and he eventually makes Dorabella promise to return Francelia to England when possible, showing how the women had trapped the Prince ‘in the Net that was spread for him.’ The author makes it clear that the reason for having Francelia return to France was so she could receive orders from Tyrannides: “to bring her back to receive such further Instructions, and to be instructed with such Secrets, which there was no occasion otherwise to disclose to her.” Dorabella felt successful because she not only brought her brother into the secret league, but also managed to implant Francelia within the English court.

Another courtier enters the story here, Villarius (George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham), which leads to a digression as the history begins to revolve for a time.

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619 Ibid
620 Ibid 76
621 Ibid
622 Ibid 79
623 Ibid 80
around Cornelia and her relation to the Prince. First, the author tells the story of why Villarius and Cornelia are such bitter enemies, stemming from a love affair gone awry when Cornelia put her ambition above her love when she chose the Prince over Villarius. Love turned to hate, Villarius now seeks the downfall of Cornelia and sees the Prince’s obsession with Francelia as a way to exact revenge. Cornelia, a jealous woman, even if herself unfaithful, is not willing to simply step aside for Francelia: “She was the Prince’s first Mistress, since his return to the Isles […] and she would not calmly yield all those Advantages to a French-Woman, of neither Birth nor Fortune, beyond what she had got by her Services.”

Villarius hatches a plot for the Prince to catch Cornelia with a lover, and the Prince was looking for an excuse to set aside his troublesome mistress for his new conquest. The first attempt fails when Cornelia manages to smuggle her lover out of her room dressed as a woman while Cornelia pretended to have a headache. Another attempt to catch Cornelia convinces the Prince of her unfaithfulness, although he simply banishes her lover and turns his attention to Francelia. Villarius also advises Francelia on how best to appeal to the Prince by telling her ‘to carry on the same Humour of Modesty and Vertue’ and indeed Francelia used a ‘feigned Modesty’ to ‘inflame’ the Prince.

Eventually the Prince’s attentions lead Francelia to gain not only money but also a child, and the Prince acknowledged both mother and child publicly. The author explains how Francelia went on to steer affairs of state in favor of France, leading the memoir to claim, ‘Wherefore means were found out, so much to alienate his Mind from his own Interest, that he should be brought to act absolutely contrary to his own Design.’

Francelia’s influence over the Prince is most dramatically demonstrated when Francelia

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624 Ibid 91
625 Ibid 96
626 Ibid 128
convinces the Prince to ‘Dissolve the Grand Senate’ by plying him with drink, having herself and two women strip in front of him, and playing a game of Questions and Commands.\textsuperscript{627} Francelia apparently also loved to play cards, losing a lot of money in the process.

Like Cornelia, Francelia was not faithful to the Prince. One lover was Urbirupa who managed to give Francelia a venereal disease, causing Francelia to wonder how she could explain her condition to the Prince. Urbirupa devised a plan to persuade the Prince to sleep with multiple women in one night, allowing Francelia to blame the disease on the Prince. The Prince, remembering his sexual adventures a few days before, felt guilty, ‘and freely confessing his Guilt to the inraged Mistress, most humbly and heartily begging her Pardon […]’.\textsuperscript{628} Apart from deceiving the Prince, Francelia is also accused in the history of taking a share in any money she could, including money that was to benefit France, claiming that it was because of her that the money was available at all.\textsuperscript{629}

Francelia was also eventually discovered by the Prince with a lover, the Sancti Pater (Philippe de Vendôme). Unlike Cornelia, Francelia was caught in bed with her lover, since Cornelia always managed to get her lover out of bed before the king arrived in her apartment. In later trying to find a way out of the situation, Francelia decides to blame the Sancti Pater, much as she had the Duke de Bellame: “all she could build upon, was in laying all the fault on the Sancti Pater’s Insolencies, and making him guilty of attempting to have gain’d by force, what she would not freely yield to him.”\textsuperscript{630} The Prince, before hearing this story, had decided to banish Sancti Pater, who for a time

\textsuperscript{627} Ibid 129-131
\textsuperscript{628} Ibid 142
\textsuperscript{629} Ibid 144
\textsuperscript{630} Ibid 156
refused to leave England. The Prince did not believe Francelia’s story about Sancti Pater being the only guilty party and the incident led to an estrangement for a short time, but Francelia eventually gained influence over the Prince again, ‘and if it was possible she Captivated him more than ever […]’. 631

The history then moves forward quickly to the Prince’s death. The Prince became ill after visiting Francelia in her apartment where he complained of an ‘odd kind of smell,’ and drank ‘some excellent Cordial’ from Spain or Italy which flavor he did not like. 632 He died soon after, ‘expressing his Love towards her to the last day of his Life.’ 633

Upon learning that the Prince was dying, Francelia begins to bring together all the money and jewels she can in preparation ‘for a Retreat.’ 634 Upon returning to France, Francelia fell victim to a fortune hunter, who tricked her out of vast sums by playing cards, and by bringing along well-known gamesters to win money from her. The gamesters get enough money to be able to spend freely, ‘at the Cost and Charge of Francelia.’ 635

A long tale, The Secret History of the Dutchess of Portsmouth served as an obvious starting point for The Life, Amours, and Secret History of Francelia, Late D[utche]ss of P[ortsmout]h published in 1734. After a dedication to ‘Her Grace The Dutchess of _____’ in which the author bestows the history of one royal mistress onto another, the title The Secret History of the D____ss of P____h, &c is found. 636 Francelia used much of the same storyline and pseudonyms as The Secret History, even copying

631 Ibid 159
632 Ibid 160
633 Ibid
634 Ibid
635 Ibid 162
whole sections word for word. However, the differences between the two are important and show how perceptions of the Duchess of Portsmouth shifted between 1690 and 1734.

In *Francelia*, Francelia is the daughter of a French merchant with two daughters. There is jealousy from the elder sister toward the younger, Francelia, who is sent off to school. When she returns from school she then goes to Paris to keep her from the attentions of young men. She is sent to an aunt who is under the patronage of the Duke and Duchess de Bellame. In trying to introduce Francelia to the duchess, she catches the eye of the duke instead who begins to court her and sends her letters and a pearl necklace. Although the aunt tries to dissuade Francelia from falling for the duke’s attentions, Francelia eventually agrees to go with the duke when he is sent to fight the Turks in Candia, dressing as the duke’s page. The game with the chairs is played again, with Francelia being spirited away without anyone seeing where she went, and her aunt is left wondering what happened to her. Francelia and the duke have a joyful meeting at the ship, and although they enjoy each other on the trip to Candia, the duke soon dies on the battlefield. She is befriended by a marquis and later by a page named Chandore, both interested in making her their mistress. *Francelia* is rather shorter than *A Secret History*, so much of the story about Chandore going in search of Francelia once she leaves the ship is cut out, as is the correspondence between the two: “and several Letters pass’d between them; but as the Circumstances are not very Material, we shall pass them over here […].”\textsuperscript{637} The marquis did discover the correspondence and had Chandore enlisted in the army to get rid of his rival for Francelia.

Francelia and the marquis return to France where the marquis spreads the story of their adventures. Again, Francelia discovers her aunt is dead, and she thinks it best to

\textsuperscript{637} Ibid 25
blame the duke for her running away to Candia. She comes to the attention of Dorabella who enjoys her story and Francelia soon becomes a favorite. Tyrannides is interested in sending Dorabella to influence her brother, a Prince of the Isles, into a secret treaty and thinks Francelia would also be able to help French interests in England by seducing the Prince. The Prince duly falls in love with Francelia and makes Dorabella promise to send her back to England when possible. There is another diversion into the tale of Villarius and Cornelia as star-crossed lovers who later become bitter enemies. Cornelia tries to keep the Prince’s attentions and Villarius plots to have the Prince catch Cornelia with a lover, which is bungled when Cornelia disguises her lover as a woman. In a much shorter version than *A Secret History*, the Prince falls for Cornelia’s deception, but soon Villarius arranges for him to catch her again and this time hears her with her lover and the Prince no longer believes his unfaithful mistress’s excuses. The Prince has his own excuse to set aside Cornelia and take up with Francelia, who is soon pregnant, and he publicly acknowledges his mistress and child.

Some deviations with *A Secret History* can now be seen with the greater participation of Nell Gwyn. Little seen in *A Secret History*, she plays a small yet important role in *Francelia* as an irritant to the French mistress in the form of Orangenia who likes to cause affront to the French mistress. On one occasion, after an order had come out by the Great Senate that restricted trade with France and that any French commodities found in England should be burned, Orangenia pulled a violent prank on Francelia. Going to a lady’s house where she knew Francelia would be, a fight broke out in which Orangenia gained the upper hand and ‘threw Francelia on the Floor, took up her Coats, and with a lighted Candle burnt all the Furniture of a Place that shall be
nameless.\textsuperscript{638} Francelia rushed to tell the Prince what had happened, and when summoned
to explain herself, Orangeania replied, ‘Sir [...] you are to blame, if any body, for you ordered all F___h Commodities to be burnt, so that I only obeye your Proclamation.’\textsuperscript{639} The Prince, who loved a joke, could not help but laugh at Orangeania’s antics.
Orangeania also made fun of Francelia when the duchess made a snide comment about
her rich clothes: ‘“Nelly, you are grown rich, I believe, by your Dress; why, Woman, you
are fine enough to be a Queen.’ ‘You are entirely right, Madam, said the other, and I am
Whore enough to be a Dutchess, (alluding to the late Titles Francelia had got conferred
on her.)’\textsuperscript{640} A play upon the use of the term ‘quean’ meaning prostitute, Francelia’s
attempt to denigrate Orangeania is tossed back at her by the quick-witted former actress.

In Francelia, the duchess held great power over the Prince, again getting him to
dissolve the Grand Senate by using alcohol, women, and a game of Questions and
Commands. Unlike A Secret History, the figure of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester briefly
appears in Francelia, given the pseudonym Ovid. Originally interested in Francelia for
himself – Francelia claimed that Ovid ‘frequently took the Prince’s Mistress from him’ –
he later takes a jest too far and gets into trouble with the Prince.\textsuperscript{641} After giving Francelia
a bird from the East-Indies, the Prince asked Ovid if he knew what kind of bird it was, to
which the wit responded, ‘That I do, (says my Lord) for you have given it to Francelia,
and every body now will know it is a Whore’s Bird.’\textsuperscript{642} The Prince, greatly displeased by
this, orders Ovid from court, but not before Ovid can have the following lines stuck on

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\textsuperscript{638} Ibid 47-48
\textsuperscript{639} Ibid 48. The response from Gwyn also echoes the use of terms like ‘Trade’ found within the pamphlet
war discussed in Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{640} Ibid
\textsuperscript{641} Ibid 51-52
\textsuperscript{642} Ibid 52
\end{minipage}
\end{flushright}
Francelia’s bedchamber door: “Within this Place a Bed’s appointed / For a F___ h B___ h and G_d’s Anointed.”

Francelia is again depicted as unfaithful to the king, although the affairs are rather shortened in *Francelia*. Again Francelia acquires a venereal disease from a (nameless) lover, who has the Prince sleep with multiple women to disguise where the disease came from. Francelia is accused of greed and hoarding, sending money off to France, illustrated by a comical incident involving another courtier, Thomas Killigrew. Knowing that Francelia was going to send gold to France hidden in a pie, Killigrew pretended to be ill. When the Prince went to see him, Killigrew said he had lost his appetite for anything except the pie that Francelia had and he wanted a piece. The Prince, going to Francelia, told her he wanted a piece of her pie, and not listening to her protests, cut it open and ‘found some Thousands of his own Pictures in Gold.’ He sent some handfuls of gold to Killigrew and told him they would laugh about it all later. The story of Francelia’s affair with the Grand Prior is again recounted, with a servant plotting to expose Francelia to the Prince. Francelia is caught with her lover and the Prince banishes the Grand Prior. Francelia tries to persuade the Prince that the Sancti Pater was the one to blame for the affair, but the Prince did not believe her. While this caused some estrangement, Francelia later regained her influence over the Prince, and ‘she captivated him more than ever.’

Again, the Prince loved her to his dying breath, and when she learned that the Prince was dying, Francelia made preparations to leave with as much money as possible.

Here *Francelia* adds a new aspect to *A Secret History* because it talks more about her life after the Prince’s death. Like *A Secret History*, the story tells of Francelia losing

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643 Ibid
644 Ibid 57
645 Ibid 63
money through gambling to gamesters, but then expands more on gambling: “Francelia was a great Lover of Gaming, and played very high, which is often the Case of People of Quality, who destroy their Constitutions, and ruin their Estates.” The fact that the duchess was a female gambler raised particular horror in the author, who sees these women as able to think of nothing but cards. Rather than lavishing attention on her family, she instead gives it all to games: “all those Affections of the Mind, which should be consecrated to their Children, Husbands, and Parents, are thus vilely prostituted and thrown away upon a Hand of Quadrille?” Not only their minds and affections but also the beauty of women is impacted by playing cards, leading to the soul being corrupted since ‘Beauties of the Face and Mind are generally destroyed by the same means.’

Drawing a distinction between male and female gamblers, the author claims that a man who gambles too much simply ‘pawns his Estate,’ while ‘the Woman must find out something else to mortgage when her Pin-Money is gone.’ After this two page digression, the author returns to Francelia and says that at the end of her life she ‘lived very retired, spending most of her Time in Acts of Devotion and Charity.’ Francelia also lays out something of her will, and ends by saying that Francelia lived to ‘a good old Age’ and that she died ‘immensely rich.’ While Francelia is printed after Portsmouth’s death, very few new details are given of her life following her departure from the English court than are found in Secret History, apart from the contents of her will and mentioning of her piety and charity.

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646 Ibid 65
647 Ibid
648 Ibid 66
649 Ibid
650 Ibid 67
651 Ibid
Nell Gwyn

Nell Gwyn as a subject became immensely popular in the centuries following her death. Biographies, novels, plays, and even an operetta have been written about her, and she remains probably the most recognized of Charles II’s mistresses. The publication examined here is not a late-nineteenth or twentieth century play, novel, or operetta, but rather a memoir which demonstrates not only how people viewed Gwyn, but also hints at the roles of women, gender, and even virtue in the decades following the Restoration and her death.

The full title of the memoir shows some of the major themes throughout the piece, ‘A Celebrated Courtezan in the Reign of King Charles II. And Mistress to that Monarch.’ The memoir – attributed to John Seymour, comedian – begins with an emphasis on the low birth of Gwyn and her rise to royal mistress: “The Lives of those who have acted a conspicuous Part on the Theatre of life, particularly such as have risen from low Stations to shine in Courts, must naturally carry in them a Variety of Incidents […].”652 Seymour also comments on the uses of beauty in ‘complete Conquests which superior Charms make over the Minds of men […]’ which would help to explain how ‘an Orange Wench, rose to be the Mistress of a Monarch, and dispense the Favours of a Prince with an unsparing Hand.’653 It is this rise from humble beginnings to royal mistress which is a central theme throughout the memoir, as well as what Gwyn did once she received influence at court.

653 Ibid 2
The Gwyn of the memoir is the ‘Daughter of a Tradesman in mean
Circumstances’ who was too poor to really educate his daughter.\textsuperscript{654} Her father did try to
‘early implant in her Mind a great Sense of Virtue and Delicacy, the former of which she
was not long in parting with, without the Misfortune of losing the latter.’\textsuperscript{655} Early on,
Seymour introduces Gwyn’s ambition because as soon as she ‘became conscious of her
own Charms’ she wants ‘to go into the World’ and asks to go live with a lady as an upper
servant so she could gain admirers.\textsuperscript{656} Soon Gwyn gains an admirer in a Mr. Deviel,
‘Counsellor at Law,’ who was hopeful that her low station would make her amenable to
‘accepting Money, in Price of her Virtue.’\textsuperscript{657} Seymour points out that Deviel was correct
in his assumption, but he moved too quickly for Gwyn when he tells her his intentions
and tries to take her virtue at the same time. Gwyn resists but when the lady learns what
happened she turns Gwyn out because she herself was in love with Deviel. Returning to
her father, she finds that the lady has told her father that she was ‘already debauched, and
that she owed her Ruin to her own Vanity’ and told her father to send her to the
country.\textsuperscript{658} Adamantly against leaving, Gwyn instead begins to think of a plan to stay in
the city: “though she was then in the full Possession of her Virtue, she began to entertain
some Thoughts of yielding it, rather than to be sent to the Country, to life in Obscurity
[…].”\textsuperscript{659} Thinking that she ‘would lose all Power of pleasing for ever’ by going to the
country, Gwyn instead thinks of losing the very thing her father was trying to protect. It is
at this juncture that Gwyn decides to join the theatre.
\textsuperscript{654} Ibid
\textsuperscript{655} Ibid 1-2
\textsuperscript{656} Ibid 3
\textsuperscript{657} Ibid 3-4
\textsuperscript{658} Ibid 5
\textsuperscript{659} Ibid 6
Gwyn leaves her father’s house and begins her acting career by pretending to be a lady just arrived from the country in order to procure a place to live. Attending the theatre often, Gwyn wrote to Mr. Betterton to get his support. She invited him to her lodgings, but he said that she was ‘not then fit for the Stage,’ and Gwyn’s hopes of using her ‘Face and Person’ as well as her talent to gain an acting position was in vain.\textsuperscript{660} Fast running out of money, Gwyn became an orange girl so she would not become desperate enough to sell her virginity at a low rate as a common prostitute. Betterton, impressed at her resolve, sent a rising actor – who is only called the Player - to help teach her acting skills, and he promptly falls in love with her. Eventually the two move in together, but Gwyn retains her virginity until she is abducted by Deviel after she went to the theatre to see the Player perform. Taking her in a carriage to Richmond, Deviel tells Gwyn of his intentions and that he will have her no matter her resistance. Here Seymour points out that Gwyn was not particularly upset at the prospect of losing her virtue even if she would rather have given it to another since her version of chastity was based more on pride and ambition than honor.\textsuperscript{661} Losing her virginity that night, Gwyn stays with Deviel for two weeks, and Seymour goes on to describe the feelings of the neglected Player, who did not know where his love had gone. Gone for months, Gwyn began to forget about the Player – ‘such it seems is the Heart of Woman’ – but she makes her acting debut after she returns from Richmond.\textsuperscript{662} Seymour remarks that Gwyn ‘never was remarkable for a fine Actress’ but that her talent was in performing an epilogue.\textsuperscript{663}

\textsuperscript{660} Ibid 8
\textsuperscript{661} Ibid 16
\textsuperscript{662} Ibid 18
\textsuperscript{663} Ibid 19
The memoir then details how Gwyn moved through her next few lovers including Lord Rupert, his friend Earl Meredith, and eventually to the Earl of Rochester. Seymour takes the opportunity to make known his distaste for Rochester’s character and writing while at the same time lionizing his rival John Dryden. According to Seymour, Rochester’s writings ‘have diffused their Poison thro’ all Ranks of Life […].’ Gwyn has to put up with mood swings from Rochester and eventually a plot from the Duchess of Beau to steal away Rochester by having her brother seduce Gwyn and make Rochester aware of it. Rather than fighting for Gwyn, Rochester instead turns down a challenge from the duchess’s brother over Gwyn saying, ‘[…] I shall never fight for a Whore; take her home, my Lord; henceforth let her be your’s […].’ Here, Rochester displays his heartlessness and his cowardice, a theme echoed in Sir Carr Scrope’s “The Author’s Reply” as discussed in Chapter 2. The Duchess of Beau’s plan falls through when Rochester was banished from court when he satirized the king, ‘for such was the Malevolence of his Heart, that the best-natured Monarch in the World could not escape his Satire and wicked Libels.’ Seymour is quick to add that a better fate awaited Gwyn than her old lover Rochester when Charles II, dressed as a private gentleman, went to the theatre and sat in the box next to Gwyn.

Not meeting Charles II until page forty-two of her memoir, Gwyn goes to a tavern with the incognito king and his brother the Duke of York. An amusing anecdote follows in which neither royal brother had money to pay the tab and Gwyn says ‘that she had got

664 Ibid 28-31
665 Ibid 28
666 Ibid 39
667 Ibid 41
into the poorest Company that ever she was in at a Tavern."\textsuperscript{668} Putting aside the inability to pay the tab, Gwyn became the king’s lover soon after. At last, as Seymour notes, ‘Such were the Gradations, by which this celebrated Courtezan rose to the Eminence of the Imperial Mistress [...]’.\textsuperscript{669} After becoming the king’s mistress, the memoir pours praise upon Gwyn for her generosity: “No sooner had she rose to this high Sta-Station [sic], but her Heart, naturally benevolent, overflowed in Acts of Kindness to distressed Merit.”\textsuperscript{670}

Acts of generosity included aiding the ‘indigent’ poet Samuel Butler by setting up a meeting with William Wycherley acting as Butler’s spokesman and the Duke of Buckingham, ‘the Head of Taste,’ as a possible patron, a plan which was dashed when Buckingham left the meeting early to carouse with prostitutes.\textsuperscript{671} Gwyn is also credited in this memoir with being the inspiration for Chelsea Hospital after meeting a man while she was out on a coach ride who told her a story about being ‘wounded in the Civil Wars.’ She went straight to the king to see if something could be done for them:

she considered, that besides the Hardship of those being exposed to Beggary, by Wounds received in defence of their Country, that it seemed to be the most monstrous Ingratitude in the Government to suffer those to perish who stood in their Defence, and screened them from the most hazardous Attempts of Patriotism.\textsuperscript{672}

Gwyn’s warmth of heart is celebrated here, along with her desire to help ex-soldiers.

Additionally, Gwyn is credited with not being pretentious, a label often attached to the Duchess of Portsmouth. While being driven in her coach, her driver began to fight over who had right of way with another driver who had ‘a Lady of Quality’ as a passenger. The other driver said ‘that there was a great Difference betwixt them, for that

\textsuperscript{668} Ibid 43
\textsuperscript{669} Ibid
\textsuperscript{670} Ibid 44
\textsuperscript{671} Ibid 45-46
\textsuperscript{672} Ibid 47
he had the Honour to drive a Countess, while his Lady was neither more nor less than a *Whore* [...] 673 Gwyn’s driver was prepared to make the fight physical after that remark, but when Gwyn hears about the reason for the fight she tells the driver, ‘Go, you Blockhead, says she; never fight again in such a Cause, nor risk your Carcase but in the Defence of Truth.’ 674 Besides keeping her driver out of a fight, this royal mistress who ‘knew it was in vain for her to give herself Airs’ showed further generosity to him by ‘recommending her Coachman to a Place.’ 675

Seymour also portrays Gwyn as not only ‘the least offensive to the contending Parties,’ but also as the only mistress who ‘excited him [Charles] to Dilligence.’ 676 The unpretentious Gwyn is also credited with telling the king that his weakness for women could hurt him: “in the Hours of Dalliance [Gwyn] would drop a Hint, that if ever he [Charles] should fall into Distress, he might thank his Ladies for it.” 677 She also used her wit to tell the king truths, which he was happy to hear when ‘told him in a pleasing facetious Manner,’ and ‘put him in mind of his Affairs’ such as the fighting between the Duke of York and the Duke of Monmouth. 678 Gwyn also plays jokes on the king, including an attempt to ‘cure his Majesty of any further nocturnal Ambulations’ by having the Duchess of Beau’s brother (who was still a platonic friend of Gwyn’s) and other men take the king to a brothel, in which the men told the girls there to pickpocket their client who they did not know was the king. 679 Left alone with no money, the king could not pay the landlord, and the landlord, not knowing this was his king, would not let

673 Ibid 48  
674 Ibid 49  
675 Ibid  
676 Ibid 50  
677 Ibid  
678 Ibid 51  
679 Ibid 55
him leave without payment: “Thus bullied by a notorious Bawdyhouse-keeper stood the
British Monarch, perhaps in as great Distress, however comical, as ever he was in in his
Life.”680 Eventually the king offers a ring ‘in pledge for the Reckoning,’ and the landlord
demands that a jeweler come to appraise the value of the ring before he would let his
customer leave. The jeweler instantly recognizes the value of the ring and becomes
afraid, asking the landlord who it belonged to, and the landlord replied: “I don’t know
who he is, not I; answered the Bully; he’s a tall black ugly looking Son of a B____ who
has got no Money in his Pocket […].”681 It is soon discovered that the man was in fact the
king and he went home, always bearing some resentment for the Duchess of Beau’s
brother, but unable to be angry with Gwyn when he found out that it was her idea.

Apart from being witty and generous, Gwyn is also praised for being faithful to
the king while ‘she lived with him.’682 The real affection felt by the king for Gwyn is
noted in Charles’s dying words ‘not to let poor Nell starve’ but after his death, Gwyn
quickly ‘fell into Obscurity’ because of political and religious tensions.683 She lived the
remaining few years of her life ‘in Retirement, and in that Situation there is no Account
of her Behaviour.’684

**Restoration Women Re-Presented**

These memoirs and secret histories of Cleveland, Portsmouth, and Gwyn all reveal how
the stories of these women were used by others in order to highlight certain important
themes which are augmented by the emphasis on gender norms and their violation. The

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680 Ibid 57. A rather grand statement given that Charles had lived through the Civil Wars and exile after the
execution of his father.
681 Ibid
682 Ibid 59
683 Ibid
684 Ibid 60
stories of these women, told to a varying degree of accuracy, were not written simply out of interest in the lives of dead royal mistresses, but also for the tropes that were attached to them within these memoirs and secret histories. While Laura Linker and Alison Conway argue that the figure of the female libertine and Protestant Whore were used in the rise of the novel, this chapter instead turns to how these three women came to also embody three important ‘types’ within English society: the divorcee, the female gambler, and the virtuous courtesan. In looking at these three particular topics, this chapter looks at how the absence of these women allowed them to be molded and shaped by those supposedly writing about their lives and histories.

The importance of examining tropes linked to dead Restoration court women is made more apparent when placed within the context of eighteenth-century struggles over women, sex, body, and gender. Long seen as a watershed period of changes in ideas of the self, including those of gender, the eighteenth century is when, according to Thomas Laqueur, ‘sex as we know it was invented.’ Tracking a shift from the Galenic one-sex model to the ‘modern’ two-sex model, Laqueur makes the argument that this century saw a huge change in views on women who were no longer ‘a lesser version of man along a vertical axis of infinite gradations,’ but instead ‘an altogether different creature along a horizontal axis whose middle ground was largely empty.’ Although he admits that the change was not absolute, Laqueur points out that there was a transformation in views on the female body as it was divorced from the male. Laqueur claims that this different view of the female body had important political implications with the ‘universalistic claims’ of

686 Ibid 148. For discussion on how women’s bodies came to be used in science see Londa Schiebinger’s *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006 [originally 1993]).
the Enlightenment since male dominance in public affairs needed to be explained, and the two-sex model provided a way to explain this dominance biologically. Karen Harvey in her work on eighteenth-century erotica notes the political reasoning behind the change in body perceptions, but also states that eighteenth-century culture was not ‘monolithic,’ meaning that not all genres – or indeed individual publications – equally showed the same shifts as political writing. Harvey explains that there is a ‘plurality of female [and male] bodies’ to be found within eighteenth-century erotica, complicating Laqueur’s argument about the shift in views on women’s bodies.

The eighteenth century is also associated with the creation of the ‘modern’ idea of identity. Scholars such as Dror Wahrman discuss this formation within this period, as well as its impact upon categories like race and gender. Wahrman notes, for instance, that charges of effeminacy were not necessarily gender specific – meaning that not only men could be called effeminate – but rather an assault on luxury. That the term effeminacy could be seen as a derogatory term itself poses an interesting point about gender, but Wahrman’s point aligns with Harvey’s that sex and gender within the eighteenth century were not seen through one lens. Laura Rosenthal’s work on eighteenth-century

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687 Ibid 194-207
688 Karen Harvey, Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 6-8.
689 Ibid 8. See also Harvey’s “Gender, Space and Modernity in Eighteenth-Century England: a Place Called Sex,” History Workshop Journal 51 (2001) for her arguments about the relationship between women and space, such as the feminization of groves and grottoes which were often associated with sexual assignations.
691 The long held association between women and shopping has its roots within the eighteenth century and the new consumer goods available within England. Scholars note that men also shopped and were enticed to do so by advertisements catering to them, but the association with women is particularly strong. For more on the influx of goods in the eighteenth century, as well as its gendered implications and assumptions, see Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830, ed. John Styles and Amanda Vickery (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2006) and Maxine Berg’s Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
prostitutes further demonstrates the complicated relationships between identity and gender when she argues that depictions of prostitutes within this period’s literature ‘suggest to readers both an assuring alterity and anxious potential self-recognition.’

Rosenthal argues that, unlike their nineteenth-century sisters who were seen as ‘irredeemably other[s],’ prostitutes in the eighteenth century were placed within the anxieties surrounding the changing nature of commercialism. The prostitute was still at a safe distance from the reader, but also represented a similar vulnerability to the market. Rosenthal also states that eighteenth-century reformers ‘felt that prostitutes could actually improve from their abjection, in part because they did not see domesticity as the only alternative.’ Such a claim goes to the heart of another long held assumption about the eighteenth century – virtue and the growing emphasis on the gendered domestic world.

Scholars such as Michael McKeon have noted the increasing importance of the ‘domestic’ to virtue within the eighteenth-century world, which in turn led to Victorian ideals surrounding women. Rosenthal’s argument about depictions of eighteenth-century prostitutes complicates this view by showing how virtue was not always strictly tied to domesticity. As Shelley G. Burtt observes, there were many kinds of virtues – moral, civic, private, public – discussed in the eighteenth century, but she notes a

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693 Ibid
694 Ibid 8
privatizing of what modern scholars call civic virtue, meaning that a person could
‘engage in behavior that advances the stability, freedom and flourishing of their polity’
without being necessarily a political figure.\(^\text{697}\) By civic virtue, Burtt does not mean
simply the animating quality of a classical republic, but rather defines a ‘civil mode of
life as one that is grounded in “participatory self-rule”’ with civic virtue:

nam[ing] those dispositions of the individual that makes him or her a good citizen of
this sort of regime [one ‘in which individuals participate, to a greater or lesser extent,
in the shaping of their collective destiny’] – that is, that lead him or her to engage in
the sort of public (and private) behavior that enable a civic mode of life both to survive
and to flourish.\(^\text{698}\)

Burtt complicates the meaning of ‘civic virtue’ beyond its classical republican roots,
arguing that there were ‘varieties of virtue in eighteenth-century political argument,’ and
it is Burtt’s definition of civic virtue that this dissertation uses.\(^\text{699}\) As Gwyn’s memoir
indicates, female virtue was often associated with virginity, but Burtt’s idea of virtue
being tied to ‘private’ behavior shows again the multiple ways in which virtue, so often
gendered, was viewed within the eighteenth century.

While scholars such as Thomas Laqueur and Dror Wahrman place emphasis on
the later eighteenth-century as the watershed moment of movement towards modernity,
others look to an earlier point of rupture which makes even clearer the role Restoration
royal mistresses were given within the memoirs and secret histories discussed in this

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\(^\text{697}\) Shelley G. Burtt, *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England 1688-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1 and 9. Burtt further defines those who followed this private branch of civic virtue as ‘individuals who are exemplary citizens, energetically defending the ideals of their polity in public, political action, but who are disposed to these endeavors by concerns or character traits that lie outside of or do not directly engage the public realm,’ 10.

\(^\text{698}\) Ibid 6-7

\(^\text{699}\) Burtt also claims that ‘it may turn out, as one examines the alternatives, that the classical republican tradition is uniquely persuasive about the virtues required to uphold a civic regime; that fact does not however justify dismissing all other comers out of hand,’ 12. Burtt also notes that the term ‘civic virtue’ was not used during the eighteenth century and ‘is generally limited in application to the account of these qualities provided by the classical republican tradition, although I argue here that it need not be,’ 12.
chapter. Placing the moment of change in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century, scholars such as Lawrence Stone, Faramerz Dabhoiwala, Alan Bray, and Mark Knights focus upon shifts in views on sex and marriage – and the shifts in society, politics, and religion they heralded - to describe what some term an English Enlightenment. Lawrence Stone’s discussion of the growth of the idea of companionate marriage and the ‘individual nuclear group’ led to profound and disquieting questions about the role of women and sex during this period.\textsuperscript{700} Stone also notes how these changes had negative impacts, such as the decline of the meaning of older people and ‘vertical family ties,’ as well as the feeling that the ‘institution of marriage was undergoing very severe stresses,’ showing how change was not necessarily comfortable or easy.\textsuperscript{701} Faramerz Dabhoiwala follows Stone’s assessment of the importance of the watershed moment of this period, studying the ‘world-changing cultural shift’ which saw a movement away from emphasis on sexual repression.\textsuperscript{702} In doing so, Dabhoiwala argues that sex was linked ‘to the major political, intellectual, and social trends of the period’ – including the Civil Wars and Glorious Revolution – and that the modern view of the ‘history of sex […] as part of the history of private life’ was in fact the ‘consequence of the Enlightenment’s conception of it [sex] as an essentially personal matter.’\textsuperscript{703} The roots of ‘the culture of sexual discipline’ were strong and built into the fabric of politics and philosophy as well as a reaction to immorality, but Dabhoiwala

\textsuperscript{701} Ibid
\textsuperscript{703} Ibid
notes how factors such as religious conflict and the growth of urban centers, particularly London, led to ‘the collapse of public discipline.’

Alan Bray boldly states this period saw a ‘far-reaching transformation which English society underwent in the course of the seventeenth century, a transformation which played its part in making the world in which we now live,’ moving backward in time the creation of the ‘modern’ from Laqueur and Wahrman. In discussing the ‘molly’ and ‘molly house,’ Bray argues that a ‘massive change’ took place in England with the growth of a homosexual ‘subculture, a miniature society within a society’ with a ‘particular identity,’ a change from the earlier ‘amorphous forms’ homosexuality held within England which ‘could no longer be easily ignored.’ Much as Stone notes the negatives of such changes, Bray states that the creation of a homosexual subculture and identity led to a more specific target of ‘violent condemnations’ – rather than the shadowy and ambiguously defined ‘sodomite’ – and hostility which led to ‘mass arrests,’ something Bray contends was new to this period. Mark Knights also discusses the watershed moment of the Glorious Revolution and later seventeenth-century on issues such as marriage. Arguing that change was not instantaneous but slow, Knights too observes the unease surrounding change during the early English Enlightenment. Framing his discussion around the Cowpers of Hertford, Knights contends that ‘the late 1690s and early eighteenth century saw something of a panic about a tide of immorality

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704 Ibid 35 and 37-40
706 Ibid 80, 104, 86, and 92
707 Ibid 92. Bray uses the term ‘pogrom’ to describe the arrests and persecutions, 94. See Farid Azfar’s “Geneaology of an Execution: The Sodomite, the Bishop, and the Anomaly of 1726,” *Journal of British Studies* 51.3 (July 2012) for a discussion of one of these persecutions, as well as a dialogue with scholars such as Bray.
and vice,’ which seemed to attack foundational aspects of society such as the family.\footnote{Ibid 98}

As all four of these scholars argue, immense changes were to be seen in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries in what some term the English Enlightenment, but they were often seen with fear and unease. Placing the moment of change in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century, these scholars also make links between ideas on sex and sexuality with broader political, social, and religious implications. Sex was an intrinsic, if problematic, part of social and political beliefs in the early modern world, and examining perspectives on it – and the people heavily associated with it like royal mistresses – allows for a better understanding of a society’s ideas and anxieties.

The impact of the later seventeenth-century can also be seen in debate surrounding its revolutions and rhetoric in the eighteenth century. The legacy of the Civil Wars and Commonwealth had obvious far-reaching effects in the centuries that followed, as shown in Blair Worden’s work on representation and ‘roundhead reputations,’ but so too did the troubling reign of Charles II with its religious and political upheavals, including the Popish Plot, Exclusion Crisis, the infamous creation of parties, and a growth in popular involvement in politics such as the explosion in coffeehouse culture. As Mark Knights states, the Glorious Revolution created debates that ‘were still being argued out at least a generation later.’\footnote{Ibid 1. Pincus’s \textit{1688} also discusses large changes in England during the seventeenth century, although more in the realm of economics and urban growth.} Although the Glorious Revolution directly impacted on James II, it is not unfair to think that the reign of Charles II and the drama surrounding the prospective succession of the Catholic James, Duke of York, also played a role within this larger revolutionary debate. The impact of Commonwealth thinker, sometimes termed Whig martyr, Algernon Sidney certainly demonstrates how the politics
of the Restoration were pertinent into the eighteenth century. Executed in 1683 for treason, the anti-monarchical Sidney was used by later Whigs to further their own ends, including changing him ‘into a respectable country party M.P.’ because ‘events [at the end of William III’s reign] were pushing radicals toward the middle ground […]’.\textsuperscript{711} Such a characterization, Jonathan Scott argues, is antithetical to Sidney’s actual life and beliefs and shows instead how the ‘whig mythology of Sidney was a vehicle for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political sensibilities, not the seventeenth-century realities of Sidney’s own.’ Scott states that Sidney was, in fact, ‘a violent civil war era insurrectionary,’ not the Whig satisfied with the Glorious Revolution or respectable M.P.\textsuperscript{712} Much like the Restoration court mistress, the figure of Algernon Sidney was shaped by the exigencies of others, and shows how politics during the Restoration could be shaped by later generations. The importance of Sidney to ideas on the Restoration itself is discussed by Blair Worden who claims that the reign of Charles II was one not merely of humiliating international impotence but also of exceptional depravity, frivolity, and profligacy. Of course, the idea might be true, but who has ever demonstrated its truth? […] In [this view’s] development, Sidney has played an important part […]\textsuperscript{713}

Although not the only one to perceive the court this way, Sidney’s portrayal of Charles II’s reign and court, Worden contends, has had an important impact on the historical memory of the Restoration, much like representations of Sidney and royal mistresses change and often distort their lives. The Glorious Revolution and the politics of the


\textsuperscript{713} Worden, “The Commonwealth Kidney,” 37
Restoration remained subjects of debate during the eighteenth century, and combined with Mark Knights’s ideas about the perceived growth of immorality and the panic it caused, show the importance of the troubling legacy of the Restoration into the early Hanoverian period.714

Placing the memoirs and secret histories of Restoration court mistresses within their eighteenth-century context highlights the importance of examining the tropes that come to be associated with specific women in these publications. Long seen as a watershed of change in views about identity, sex, and gender, it becomes apparent that eighteenth-century culture was not a monolithic block of change that heralded the Victorian or ‘modern’ world, but one of myriad ideas, with different possible points of transformation from an early English Enlightenment to the later eighteenth-century. In using Restoration mistresses to discuss issues like divorce, gambling, and virtue, eighteenth-century writers were not only trying to create an entertaining story about a dead mistress or even just understand better the troubling Restoration period, but also intervening in debates about gender roles and norms which were still in flux. The role of politics is also seen in debates surrounding the Restoration and Glorious Revolution, and also in the history of sex and its transformation during the eighteenth century, which scholars link to wider social and political contexts. The political importance of

representation is also revealed through the uses of Algernon Sidney, and the connections
between ideas on sex, morality, and politics underscores the significance of examining
the figure of the Restoration royal mistress and the ‘facts’ it suited people to ‘remember’
about them. Although divorce, gambling, and virtue might not be the only points of these
publications, placed within the circumstances and complexities of the eighteenth century
it becomes clear that examining these tropes will allow for a better understanding of
representations of Restoration court mistresses and the uses they had for eighteenth-
century people.

The Divorcee

Although the Duchess of Cleveland was infamous in the 1660s for the supposed
influence she held over Charles II, *Memoirs of the Life of Barbara Duchess of Cleveland*
chooses instead to emphasize other aspects of her life. By calling attention to her children
with the king, her noble heritage, marriage and subsequent divorce from Robert Feilding,
the memoir eschews the powerful court woman in favor of the mother and divorcee.

Cleveland as mother in this memoir does not provoke the same anxieties we saw in the
exchange between Portsmouth and Gwyn in Chapter 3, but instead her children are
described as ‘ornaments’ of the court and given little mention beyond their names. It is
Cleveland as wronged wife and divorcee which takes up almost half of the memoir,
marking a clear emphasis upon this event late in the duchess’s life. The very title of the
memoir highlights this part of her life most: *Memoirs of the Life of Barbara Duchess of
Cleveland, Divorc’d Wife of Handsome Fielding* [sic]. Only is it later mentioned in the
title that she was ‘familiar’ with the king and had children by him. It is apparent that in
1709, the Duchess of Cleveland was known not so much as a royal mistress, but as a divorcée. Certainly divorce itself became politicized in the seventeenth century when arguments about the ability of subjects to replace their king led to analogies of wives being able to divorce their husbands, but the main emphasis in *Memoirs of the Life* is upon the sensation of her case, not on loyalty to the monarchy.  

Barbara Palmer was certainly not new to marriage when she wed Feilding in November 1705. Married to Roger Palmer in 1659, her many infidelities eventually ended in a formal separation between the two in the 1660s, although Roger Palmer never tried to remarry. Created a duchess in 1670, Cleveland held important titles even as she was losing the king to other mistresses like Gwyn and the future Portsmouth. Cleveland also went to live in France in 1676, not returning to England on a permanent basis until 1682, by which time she was thoroughly in Portsmouth’s shadow. The story of her disastrous marriage to Robert Feilding in 1705 perhaps seemed in 1709 to be the culminating event in a life that had seen a woman’s influence rise and fall dramatically.

The marriage and divorce of the Duchess of Cleveland and Robert Feilding is a messy and outrageous tale which requires looking into another sort of memoir, that of Robert Feilding detailed in a book published shortly after Cleveland’s death: *Cases of Divorce for Several Causes* (1715). In this book, several cases are laid out, including those of Cleveland, John Dormer, George Downing, and that of another famous court woman, Frances Howard, all of which were used to discuss the issue of dissolving a

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marriage. The fascination with Feilding and Cleveland makes this case first to be discussed in the book, and a rather lengthy ‘memoir’ of Feilding is published at the beginning of the case: “it was thought that such Memoirs as we could procure of the Life and Character of this Celebrated Gentleman, as they would render the Narration more compleat, would likewise be acceptable to the Reader.” Describing him as ‘Our Heroe,’ supposedly because he was the subject of the memoir, Feilding’s arrival in London society is noted, along with his many attractions to women who threw themselves at him. His ability to conquer any woman is almost celebrated, with women tossing aside their pride to be with this handsome and fashionable man: “Thus we have seen, That neither the common natural Virtues nor Vices have been any Security to the Ladies, against the Power of the Symetry of our Beautiful Heroe.” Moving quickly from mistress to mistress, Feilding was also notorious for the amount of money he spent, and he decided to marry the Countess of Purbeck, who brought with her a ‘large Fortune.’ The Countess died in 1698 and after Feilding ran through her money he decided to marry for money again. His eye fell on two women of fortune – the Duchess of Cleveland and a young widow named Anne Deleau. It is here that the tale takes a turn toward the strange.

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718 A second edition of Cases of Divorce for Several Causes was published in 1723 which is very similar to the first edition with some minor re-arrangement of content and the addition of the case of John Manners, first Duke of Rutland, also known as Lord Roos. The inclusion of Frances Howard reveals again the impact of dead court women and the Overbury murder scandal.  
719 Cases of Divorce for Several Causes (London, 1715), i-ii.  
720 Ibid xv  
722 Ibid
Feilding, known for his lavish and rakish lifestyle, could not gain access to see Deleau because she was in mourning and being closely guarded by her father. As detailed in a statement published in *Cases of Divorce for Several Causes*, Feilding tried to meet with Deleau by using her hairdresser, a Mrs. Charlotte Villars, promising her money if she could get Deleau to agree to see him. After going over the will of Deleau’s husband to make sure she was indeed wealthy, Feilding made attempts to meet with or even simply get a glimpse of Deleau. They were all repulsed, and he never got a good look at her. Villars decided that, in order to get the promised money, she would send a prostitute with a likeness to Deleau named Mary Wadsworth to meet Feilding. Feilding believed completely that Wadsworth was in fact Deleau and showered her with gifts, even as he was also courting Cleveland. Wadsworth and Feilding eventually wed in November 1705, Feilding still believing that he had married a rich widow. Even after marrying ‘Deleau,’ Feilding kept meeting with Cleveland, convincing ‘Deleau’ to keep their marriage a secret, supposedly because of her father and not to offend Cleveland, and had her sent out of London all the while trying to get Cleveland to marry him as well.

Interestingly, as *Cases of Divorce for Several Causes* points out, he married Cleveland in late November 1705 still believing that he was married to a rich widow: “One thing I confess I cannot comprehend the Reason of, which is, That he should Marry the Dutchess, even before he had discover’d, that his Wife was not the real Mrs. Deleau.”

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724 Ibid 62-63
725 Ibid 64
726 *Cases of Divorce* xxxii
Rarely seeing ‘Deleau,’ Feilding did not discover that he was actually married to Wadsworth until May 1706, after the supposedly rich widow kept asking for money.\textsuperscript{727}

The discovery of his wife’s true identity is told differently in \textit{Memoirs of the Lives, Intrigues, and Comical Adventures of the most Famous Gamesters and Celebrated Sharpers In the Reigns of Charles II, James II, William III, and Queen Anne} (1714) which also detailed the marriage of Feilding and Cleveland. In this telling, Feilding discovers that he is not married to the real Deleau when he goes to Tunbridge to see his ‘wife’ after she has not turned up in London when she was supposed to:

boldly entering Madam \textit{Delaune}’s House, he ask’d the Servants whether the Lady \textit{Fielding} [sic] was at home: They told him, Madam \textit{Delaune} was at home; but they knew no Lady, \textit{Fielding}. […] and Madam \textit{Delaune} was as much surpriz’d to hear of her being demanded for a Wife, before she was betroth’d to any body […].\textsuperscript{728}

Additionally, \textit{Memoirs of the Lives} insinuates that Feilding married the duchess after he learned that he was actually married to Mary Wadsworth, so the details of the story are rather contradictory. However he found out, Feilding was furious at being tricked, and called Charlotte Villars to see him. When she arrived, he restrained, beat, and threatened her to keep the secret of his marriage to ‘that Bitch’ Wadsworth from the duchess.\textsuperscript{729} She promised to not tell the duchess, but after Feilding assaulted a pregnant Wadsworth in the street, she and Villars went to the duchess, although in other versions of the story, Feilding’s bigamy is discovered after it is learned that he is treating the duchess ‘barbarously’ and he is ‘committed to Newgate’ on the instigations of her sons.\textsuperscript{730}

\textsuperscript{727} Stone 65
\textsuperscript{729} Stone 65 and \textit{Cases of Divorce} 44-46
The truth of Feilding’s bigamy coming to light and the duchess seeking vengeance saw him charged with a felony. Bigamy was a grave charge because it was technically punishable by death, although in actuality was punished by ‘burning in the hand.’ Cleveland may have been additionally motivated to prosecute Feilding because he was not only married to another woman but also having an affair with Cleveland’s own granddaughter Charlotte Calvert, who was staying in the duchess’s home while her own marital separation was being worked out. Apart from the word of Villars, the duchess also had in her possession a series of letters written by Feilding to Wadsworth/Deleau, in which he calls her his ‘Dearest Wife’ and himself her ‘Affectionate Husband,’ and these are the letters mentioned in *Memoirs of the Life of Barbara Duchess of Cleveland*. Feilding was found guilty and sentenced to be burned on the hand, a sentence that was commuted ‘by Her Majesty’s Gracious Pardon.’

Cleveland was given her divorce, and the marriage itself was declared null:

> We also pronounce, decree, and declare, the said pretended Marriage, or rather show of Marriage, between the said Robert Feilding, Esq; and the said most Noble Lady Barbara Dutchess of Cleveland […] was, and is, from the beginning Null, and according to Law altogether invalid […].

Cleveland managed to separate herself from Feilding, but Wadsworth was not so lucky as after the trial Feilding was imprisoned for debt and they lived in Scotland-Yard until his death in 1712. That their life together was not entirely miserable is borne out by

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733 *Memoirs of the Lives* 216  
734 *Cases of Divorce* 27  
735 *Memoirs of the Lives* 216 and Turner ODNB
Feilding leaving most of his estate to his wife, even making her the executrix of his will.\footnote{Cases of Divorce xlv}

The scandal of such a marriage clearly impacted upon the legacy of the Duchess of Cleveland. Her glory days in the early years of the Restoration far behind her, Cleveland was instead remembered for the sensational story of her bigamous second marriage to a known rake. She alone of the three court mistresses discussed in this chapter ever married, but Cleveland’s involvement in a scandalous marriage was not unique amongst mistresses of Charles II as Hortense Mancini, Duchess Mazarin, was the talk of Europe when she left her husband in 1668. In 1672, Hortense’s sister Marie, Princess Colonna also left her husband and the adventures and imprisonments both women faced caused equal amounts of horror and fascination.\footnote{See Elizabeth C. Goldsmith’s The Kings’ Mistresses: The Liberated Lives of Marie Mancini, Princess Colonna, and Her Sister Hortense, Duchess Mazarin (New York: PublicAffairs, 2012).}

While not attempting here to make a new argument about early modern book markets or the history of the book, Cases of Divorce allows for an important peek into the world of the eighteenth-century bookseller and the tastes of his readership. Sold by one E. [Edmund] Curll, Cases of Divorce was one example of many of the books Curll published, ranging from scandal books and soft pornography to poetry in his long career from the late seventeenth-century through the 1740s. Famous for his trouble with the law and decades long clash with Alexander Pope, even earning a place in The Dunciad (1728), Curll’s reputation has undergone massive shifts over the years. At one time seen as ‘unspeakable,’ today some see him as ‘heroic outsider,’ and Curll demonstrates the very active role that booksellers and publishers had within the eighteenth-century book
market. Pat Rogers argues that Curll was an important bookseller in the way he used advertising, but also in the way he used ‘a notoriety that fueled sales.’ His well-known clashes with Pope – and other famous writers such as Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe, and Joseph Addison – problems with the law, and even being pilloried at Charing Cross in 1728 all helped to make Curll’s name known, helping the sale of his publications. Curll further used the books he published to ‘serve as his chief promotional vehicle,’ meaning he would insert footnotes to advertise for other books or even insert himself within a publication. Curll played an active if not entirely reputable role within the eighteenth-century book world. With his goal of selling books, and uses of advertising and self-promotion, it makes sense to assume that in publishing books such as *Cases for Divorce*, Curll believed that there was an audience interested in tales of scandal and divorce in this period which Lawrence Stone and Mark Knights claim saw changes, however uneasy and slow, within the family and conceptions of marriage. That the book went into a second edition supports this idea, as do Paul Baines and Pat Rogers who argue that ‘if Curll had nothing fresh to lay before the public, he could always lay his hands on some material to recycle,’ such as cases of divorce. In choosing to fall back on stories of divorce and sex, Curll indicates what he believed the reading tastes of his audience were, beliefs that were well-founded since the book went into a second edition. That *Cases for Divorce* placed such an emphasis on the marriage and annulment of Feilding and Cleveland shows

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739 Rogers 227-230
740 Rogers 230 and Baines and Rogers 167-169
741 Rogers 230
742 Baines and Rogers 73. ‘Recycling’ scandals and marketing them for a current audience is also described in Bellany and Herrup’s discussions of the later uses of early seventeenth-century court scandals.
how famous the scandal was and how interested Curll thought his reading public would be in the story of a former royal mistress and her rakish husband.

Beyond the interest in scandal lies a tale of violence that plays at the center of the sorry tale of the marriage of Feilding and Cleveland. Lawrence Stone claims that by 1705 Feilding, a major-general, was already ‘known as a bully, repeatedly embroiled in duels and acts of violence’ as well as ‘a lecher,’ ‘unscrupulous fortune-hunter,’ and ‘spendthrift.’\(^{743}\) Feilding’s embodiment of the rake figure also hints at ideas of masculinity as the seventeenth century ended and the eighteenth century began, since the rake combined ‘elite social status and reputation for dazzling erotic and stylistic prowess’ with ‘overtly violent and criminal features,’ and is uniquely masculine since ‘there is no feminine analogue for the rake.’\(^{744}\) In the figure of the rake, Feilding was both the glamorous playboy and violent husband, playing upon ideas of masculinity which continued to evolve during the eighteenth century.\(^{745}\) These were not the best attributes in a second marriage for a former royal mistress in her sixties (Feilding was in his fifties), and it is unsurprising that violence played a role in their marriage and divorce.

Violence against women is committed by Feilding in some form or another in the various versions of the story. His threatening of Charlotte Villars is vividly described in the articles Cleveland brought against Feilding in the trial, with him locking her into restraints, beating her, and threatening her with worse: “[he] did hold up to her Head an Instrument or Weapon, being a Hatchet on one side, and a Hammer on the other […] that

\(^{743}\) Stone, *Broken Lives*, 61
\(^{745}\) For more on masculinity in the eighteenth century and the changing meaning of the term libertine, see Anna Clark’s “The Chevalier d’Eon and Wilkes: Masculinity and Politics in the Eighteenth Century,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32.1 (Fall 1998) and Peter N. Miller’s “Freethinking” and ‘Freedom of Thought’ in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” *The Historical Journal* 36.3 (Sep 1993).
he the said Robert would slit her Skull and Nose, if she should dare to mention his the said Robert being Married to Mrs. Wadsworth […]”. 746 According to Stone, the promise of silence Villars gave was broken when Feilding assaulted Wadsworth, although it is violence towards the duchess herself that is the implied catalyst for the detection of the bigamy in other sources since it was her terrible treatment at Feilding’s hands which led her sons to have him committed to Newgate. 747 Whether the violence came before or after Feilding’s bigamy was brought to light it is interesting to note that violence against the duchess is not mentioned in Cases of Divorce, which purports to use original manuscripts from the various cases it discusses. The threats used against Villars are there, but not the various indignities the aging duchess endured. Memoirs of the Life said that Feilding ‘Lock[ed] her up, and sometimes almost starv[ed] her’ while Memoirs of the Lives mentions simply his ‘barbarous Usage of the Dutchess.’ 748 Stone’s account speaks of Feilding beating the duchess when she discovered his secret, which caused her to commit him to Newgate, all of which speaks to mistreatment of the duchess. 749 Yet, this violent treatment is not mentioned in Cases of Divorce. Certainly she was badly treated by Feilding when he deceived her and brought her into a bigamous relationship, but the violence is only reserved for Villars, the lowly hairdresser.

Perhaps this lack of discussion of violence was simply because it was not necessary to do so. The evidence against Feilding was substantial with the love letters he sent to Deleau/Wadsworth and the testimony of Villars, and perhaps Curll thought the violence unnecessary with the inclusion of the more titillating letters. That Feilding was

746 Cases of Divorce 45-46
747 Memoirs of the Life of Barbara Duchess of Cleveland 5
748 Ibid and Memoirs of the Lives 216
749 Stone, Broken Lives, 66
already known as a bigamist and that the duchess wanted a trial to clear her name is stated in the last article against Feilding as listed in the section of *Cases of Divorce* dedicated to Cleveland’s case: “That all and singular the Premises were and are true, publick, notorious, manifest, and even famed; and of, and concerning the same, there is as publick Voice and Fame.” Maintaining that everything was not only true but well-known about the case she built against her bigamous husband, the Cleveland as voiced in *Cases of Divorce* was well aware that her case was already ‘notorious’ and a scandal, and perhaps did not wish to add to it by bringing in violence perpetrated against herself.

Divorce cases are documented by Stone which use violence and cruelty as cause, but such cases often required extreme behavior, and only created a breaking of the marriage, not nullification like Cleveland sought. Wife beating, according to Joanne Bailey, was seen with growing distaste by those in the early modern period, which drove some abusers to simply take their actions ‘behind closed doors, in order to avoid witnesses and to conceal their behaviour.’ Feilding’s behavior was not subtle, and since he is accused in various accounts of abusing two wives and a servant, his actions were not isolated either.

By making the Duchess of Cleveland, so in/famous in the early Restoration for her supposed influence with the king, synonymous with a scandalous divorce in the last years of her life, the author of *Memoirs of the Life* seemingly eschews the issue of

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750 *Cases of Divorce* 48
751 See Boteler v. Boteler (1656-1675) and Blood v. Blood (1686-1704) in *Broken Lives* for examples of such cases which occurred before Cleveland’s own.
Cleveland as possible political actor. By showing her as the poor deceived woman to a rakish and brutal man, *Memoirs of the Life* briefly acknowledges her past as Charles II’s mistress, but quickly moves straight into her role as mother and then divorced and aging woman. The abused woman, who depended upon her sons to help her in *Memoirs of the Life*, seems a far cry from the brilliant virago of the 1660s, and even the woman who brought this very public suit against her bigamous husband. By associating her primarily with her divorce, the author instead looks to shoehorn Cleveland into the role of a helpless woman, whose only real accomplishments in life were that she gave the king children and that she participated in a disastrous marriage.

Yet, it could be argued that even this apparently depoliticized depiction of Cleveland fed into (or engaged with) contemporary politics, especially when we read the Cleveland memoir next to the near contemporaneous publication of the two volumes of Delarivier Manley’s *The New Atalantis* (1709).

‘Secret memoirs’ on the supposed misdeeds of the Whigs, *The New Atalantis* is often seen as a libel against Sarah Churchill, Lady Marlborough, who was a favorite of Queen Anne’s at the time. Manley’s Tory politics helped to fuel the writing of such works as *The New Atalantis*, and her writing against a court woman links her to libels against Restoration court mistresses. That Manley included the Duchess of Cleveland specifically within works like *The New Atalantis* perhaps shows not only a personal dislike of the duchess – with whom Manley had briefly stayed with in 1694 – but also a political statement about the ‘vicious [female] libertine.’753 While *The New Atalantis* and other works such as *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians* (1705) were

753 For more on the politics and trial of Manley, see Catherine Gallagher’s “Political Crimes and Fictional Alibis: The Case of Delarivier Manley,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23.4 (Summer 1990). For quote, see Linker 98.
often specifically libelous of Sarah Churchill, Manley creates links between Cleveland and Marlborough by portraying them both as ‘brutal’ libertines, as Laura Linker explains in a discussion of Manley’s autobiographical *Adventures of Rivella* (1714):

> she [Manley] creates a distinct division between her female libertines in *Rivella*: the brutal characters based on the Duchesses of Marlborough and Cleveland sharply contrast Rivella, a victimized sufferer […] who desire[s] tenderness and humanity from others.\(^{754}\)

While *Rivella* was published a few years after Cleveland’s death, it is interesting to note how there was a divide made between the two groups of libertine women – the influential Churchill and Cleveland on one side, and the more vulnerable Rivella on the other - showing how Manley was trying to define her own perceived libertinage against that of the duchesses. Rebecca Bullard and Rachel Weil note the Tory politics to be found in Manley – part of the debate over politics which included the Restoration as noted above with the Whig appropriation of Algernon Sidney – with Bullard describing how Manley’s use of the ‘secret history’ form, so often associated with the Whigs, was actually a way to ‘bolster the Tory cause’ while Weil argues that Manley created a ‘synthesis of toryism and feminism […] predicated on a fervent attachment to the person of the queen [Anne],’ revealing again the role of gender within politics.\(^{755}\) In creating a distinct line between different kinds of female libertines, Manley highlights her Tory politics by creating a gentle and brutal version, with herself as victim and Marlborough and Cleveland as

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\(^{754}\) Linker 98. Interestingly, *Adventures of Rivella* was published by Edmund Curll after he managed to ‘acquire’ Manley following the success and scandal surrounding *New Atalantis*, Baines and Rogers 50-52. Many scholars have noted the similarities between *Queen Zarah* and *Hattiage*, a secret history discussed in Chapter 1. For examples, see Gallagher 512 n 27 and Ruth Herman’s *The Business of a Woman: The Political Writings of Delarivier Manley* (Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing, 2003), 45.

brutes, making a further connection between early eighteenth-century politics and the Restoration.

That Cleveland still held political importance is borne out by Manley’s use of her within a critique of Queen Anne’s favorite long after Cleveland had lost influence at court, but the memoir published immediately following the duchess’s death chooses instead to focus upon her sensational divorce. Another potential interpretation of Memoirs reflects back upon Manley herself, since one of the many ‘immoralties of leading Whig politicians’ she discusses is the trial for bigamy of William Cowper. When it is noted that Manley herself was the victim of bigamy, it is possible to think that the writer of Memoirs of the Life was commenting upon Manley’s use of Cleveland in The New Atalantis. Rather than simply observing the shifting definitions of female libertines, the writer might also be drawing a comparison between Manley and Cleveland, ‘both wronged bigamists,’ to perhaps deflect Manley’s criticisms of the Whig Sarah Churchill by using her own method of ‘politicization of immorality’ against her. The inordinate amount of space given to Cleveland’s divorce when placed next to Manley’s use of her in a politically charged secret history draws comparisons between the two women in a possible bid to show Manley’s own hypocrisy in speaking out against Churchill and the Whigs. If this was the author’s intent, then the deliberate emphasis placed on Cleveland as simply mother and divorcee was a political commentary on Manley’s own past.

Within this memoir, Cleveland as divorcee is defanged, and serves to show the perils of marrying a lower status rake and fortune-hunter, a far safer Cleveland than the

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756 Knights 138
757 Ibid 137 and 139
one portrayed in 1668 or even in *The New Atalantis*. Curll’s shrewd decision to publish a book on famous divorces reveals the fascination people had with scandal, but also highlights Mark Knights’s argument about anxiety and morality during the early eighteenth-century and its repercussions on a ‘centrally important institution’ such as marriage.\textsuperscript{758} Lawrence Stone contended that this period saw the growth of the more modern idea of the companionate marriage, but as with many of the shifts during the eighteenth century, there were negatives as well as positives, including fears of divorce and its impact on marriage.\textsuperscript{759} *Memoirs of the Life* chooses to emphasize Cleveland’s role as divorcee which glosses over her role within Restoration politics, but shows how she is a useful tool to ‘think through’ political and social issues of the eighteenth century.

**The Gamestress**

*The Secret History of the Duchess of Portsmouth* (1690) and *Francelia* (1734), while similar in many ways, reveal most in the ways they differed. Published over forty years apart it is obvious how *Francelia* borrows plotlines, character names, and even whole passages from *Secret History*, but the differences demonstrate the use of the Duchess of Portsmouth in Hanoverian England. Much like Cleveland as divorcee, Portsmouth can be interpreted as symbolizing a woman involved in a disastrous endeavor – gambling. Shorter than *Secret History*, *Francelia* makes certain storylines much more concise than its earlier inspiration, but does add story elements and characters, such as giving Gwyn a bigger role. Perhaps the most interesting change, however, is seen at the end of each story. *Secret History* insinuates that Francelia (Portsmouth) poisoned the Prince (Charles

\textsuperscript{758} Ibid 110

II) with a strange cordial he drank in her rooms – which ‘she had newly received from Spain or Italy’ – and the Prince died soon after.\textsuperscript{760} Such accusations are not found in Francelia. This change points to the characteristics of the secret history itself as it evolved into the eighteenth century, and how politics remained within the depiction of the gambling duchess.

The secret history in its late seventeenth-century form was inherently political. As Rebecca Bullard explains, ‘secret history undermines received or official accounts of the recent political past by exposing the seamy side of public life.’\textsuperscript{761} These politics of disclosure allowed for the ‘royal cabinet of clandestine letters’ to be made public, exposing tales of sex and political greed.\textsuperscript{762} Part of this emphasis on exposure, as Bullard explains, comes from an impulse to defend ‘British political liberties […] against French-style absolute rule,’ again highlighting the political nature of the secret history.\textsuperscript{763} Royal sex scandals, so often found in these secret histories, are also a part of the political nature of secret histories as they focused on the king’s body, assaulting the ‘reverential distance between monarch and people.’\textsuperscript{764} Certainly both Secret History and Francelia are tales of sex and intrigue at the Restoration court and help to make the body of Charles II less sacred through its depiction of his sex life and manipulations by the courtiers surrounding him. The inherent politics to be found within secret histories further allows Bullard to

\textsuperscript{760} Secret History 159-160. For more on accusations against Portsmouth of attempted/actual murder, and the meanings behind accusations of poison in terms of gender and nationality, see Chapter 1.
\textsuperscript{761} Bullard 1
\textsuperscript{762} McKeon 455
\textsuperscript{763} Bullard 1
\textsuperscript{764} Ibid 7
separate the secret history from the more famous book genre emerging during this period, the novel.\textsuperscript{765} The features of the secret history did not remain constant over the decades:

By 1724 [...] the political conditions that had inspired secret history over the course [of] the previous half-century were barely discernible any longer. In particular, the royal prerogative was diminished to such an extent that the sexual intrigues of kings, courtiers, and their mistresses had become curiosities and matters for entertainment, rather than issues of national security.\textsuperscript{766}

The emphasis placed in secret histories upon exposing political corruption in order to save English liberties was no longer in evidence because of the different political landscape.\textsuperscript{767}

The shift Bullard describes in the form of the secret history from revelation to entertainment is evidenced in the differences between \textit{Secret History} and \textit{Francelia}. \textit{Secret History} is filled with court intrigue and the machinations of ambitious courtiers, and emphasizes the role Francelia played in insinuating French policies and interests within the English court. \textit{Francelia} is also filled with tales of intrigue, but is also much shorter and given to ‘amusing’ anecdotal stories such as Gwyn burning Portsmouth’s pubic hair and Killigrew wanting a piece of gold-filled pie, highlighting more the entertainment of these later secret histories. These stories poke fun at the French duchess by showing her greed and how she is outwitted by English courtiers, but they are also rather more lighthearted than \textit{Secret History} tends to be, since \textit{Secret History} in the 1690s emphasizes more the corruption of arbitrary government, in this case through the king’s mistress. \textit{Secret History}, as Bullard explains, ‘explicitly claimed that the Duchess of

\textsuperscript{765} Ibid 23. For more on Bullard’s arguments about the differences between secret histories and the novel, particularly in Defoe’s \textit{Moll Flanders} and \textit{Roxana}, see 156-158. For her analysis of Eliza Haywood’s more blurred use of the term ‘secret history,’ see 161-181.
\textsuperscript{766} Ibid 157
\textsuperscript{767} In having that different political landscape, Bullard argues, writers like Defoe might be actually making political statements about ‘the triumph of Whiggism under the Hanoverian monarchs,’ continuing the political features of the secret history but in a different way, 158.
Portsmouth’s control over Charles II was evidence of the political consequences of arbitrary government,’ while the 1734 *Francelia* accepts the inevitability of royal mistresses and, like other amatory secret histories set at court, ‘closer in kind to sensational, prurient narratives.’ The different aims of the secret histories perhaps explain the different endings of the stories. *Secret History* has Francelia poisoning the king, while *Francelia* does not accuse Francelia of murder but instead of becoming a compulsive gambler. As noted in Chapter 1, accusations of poison against Portsmouth in *The Amours of the Sultana of Barbary* underscore her foreignness as both French and Catholic but also echo earlier, and apparently earnest, charges of treason against the duchess. The publication of *Secret History* in 1690 was also in the wake of the Glorious Revolution in 1688 and in the opening years of the Nine Years’ War, showcasing William III’s anti-French policies. The omission of a murder accusation against Portsmouth in *Francelia* supports Bullard’s idea that the secret history no longer needed to ‘disclose’ the political secrets of the court, but could focus more on entertainment.

*Francelia* is not entirely lacking in political bite, however, since it too discusses Portsmouth’s supposed role in advancing French interests at the English court, but politics is also seen in the dedication of the secret history. Starting with ‘To Her Grace the Dutchess of ____,’ the dedication then goes on to ask for ‘patronage’ from the duchess since it tells of ‘many Adventures in the Kingdom of Love, and like-wise as they give a History of the Life and Amours of a very celebrated Personage, who was Mistress

768 Ibid 186
769 For more on William III and his anti-French foreign policies, see Wout Troost’s ‘“To restore and preserve the liberty of Europe”: William III’s ideas on foreign policy,” in *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe (1650-1750)*, ed. David Onnekink and Gijs Rommelse (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).
to a Monarch, in whose Reign Love and Mirth abounded.\textsuperscript{770} The dedication then states that it was a great pleasure for a woman to be in the arms of a king, but even more his heart, and then states that ‘Your Grace had the Happiness to be admired and beloved by a Prince, as famous for being as great a Lover of \textit{Mars} as of \textit{Venus}.’\textsuperscript{771} The dedication goes on to ask the duchess, since ‘poor \textit{Francelia} is dead,’ to protect the ‘following History’ ‘which does not, by any means, intend to insult her Memory.’\textsuperscript{772} Such a dedication, seeming to pass the torch of formerly influential mistress from Portsmouth to an unnamed duchess, is not apolitical when it is considered for whom this dedication was intended. The phrasing of ‘Your Grace had the Happiness to be admired and beloved by a Prince’ seems to indicate that this unnamed duchess was the former mistress of a dead king, identifying Ehrengard Melusine von der Schulenburg, mistress of George I, as the likely target of the dedication. George I had created Schulenburg Duchess of Kendal and Munster, and he had been dead seven years by the time \textit{Francelia} was published.\textsuperscript{773} Particularly of interest with Schulenburg were accusations that she held too much influence over George I and that she was greedy, rather like the charges laid against Portsmouth decades earlier.\textsuperscript{774} With this dedication, the author of \textit{Francelia} was pointing to the similarities between the rapacious French mistress of Charles II and the rapacious German mistress of George I, making the later secret history perhaps not as apolitical as Bullard insinuates, but the ending which highlights gambling over murder is a notable

\textsuperscript{770} \textit{Francelia} 3
\textsuperscript{771} Ibid 3-4
\textsuperscript{772} Ibid 4
\textsuperscript{773} George II also had mistresses, but his two main ones – Henrietta Howard and Amalie Sophie Marianne von Wallmoden – were countesses (of Suffolk and Yarmouth, respectively), not duchesses, and George II was still alive in 1734.
shift in perceptions of Portsmouth and her usefulness as an object lesson to Hanoverian England.

The ending of *Francelia* sees the title character come to symbolize a troubling trend in the eighteenth century as a female gambler or gamestress. Certainly Portsmouth was portrayed as a gamestress before, including in *Secret History* where she was described as ‘a very great lover of Cards’ who gambled with huge sums and who once, ‘with sitting up for several nights, in hopes to regain some back […] so heated her Body, that she had upon it a dangerous fit of Sickness […]’. Portsmouth is also mentioned, along with Gwyn, in *Memoirs of the Lives* because of large sums lost to Hortense Mancini, another of Charles’s mistresses and a skilled gamestress. *Francelia* is thus not making a new claim in connecting Portsmouth to gambling, but the emphasis placed on it underlines eighteenth-century thoughts not only on gambling, but also on the female gambler in particular.

Anxieties surrounding gambling were not unique to the eighteenth century. An attempt at a national lottery in the 1560s led to many publications against gambling and covetousness in the following years, showing the religious concerns that gambling could raise in England. Interestingly, Jenny Uglow’s recent biography of Charles II is entitled *A Gambling Man: Charles II’s Restoration Game*, in which she frames the 1660s within gambling terms, even though Uglow admits that Charles himself was ‘not a wild

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775 *Secret History* 133-134
776 *Memoirs of the Lives* 249. She won 1400 guineas playing basset one evening with Gwyn, and 8000l from Portsmouth. *Memoirs of the Lives* also points out that Mancini enjoyed winning not only because of the money but also ‘because they were her Rivals in the Royal Favour,’ 249. For more on Hortense Mancini and her gambling, including her hosting of ‘gambling academies,’ see Goldsmith, particularly Chapter 7 “Hortense’s London.”
The use of gambling highlights the risk Charles faced in being
restored to the English throne, but also perhaps points to the ubiquity of gambling itself in
the later Stuart period. As James E. Evans explains, there was a ‘rage for gambling’
during this period, particularly at court where gambling became more than a fun pastime
but a status symbol ‘as a form of conspicuous, unproductive expenditure.’
Gambling was seen as acceptable among courtiers as long as it was done within moderation, but the
views on gambling shifted in the years following the Restoration, ‘when reform-minded
writers routinely link gambling to other libertine conduct as a legacy of the
Restoration.’ Gambling did not disappear, but there was more criticism of it during the
reigns of William III and Anne. Prevalent in plays during the Restoration and later into
the eighteenth century, the gambler changed from a ‘genteel gamester into the object of
the audience’s disapproving gaze’ and gambling was no longer simply a ‘folly’ but a
‘vice.’ Negative views on gambling also bled into perceptions of the relatively new
phenomenon of life insurance in eighteenth-century England, which was seen as ‘betting
on lives’ and was regulated in a piece of legislation called alternatively the Life Insurance
or Gambling Act (1774), as well as the disastrous South Sea Bubble which financially
ruined many after gambling on market shares in the South Sea Company in the early
1720s.

778 Jenny Uglow, A Gambling Man: Charles II’s Restoration Game (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux,
2009), 1.
779 James E. Evans, “‘A sceane of utmost vanity’: The Spectacle of Gambling in Late Stuart Culture,”
780 Ibid 5 and 8. Goldsmith states, in relation to Hortense Mancini’s own propensity for excessive drinking
and gambling during the 1670s and 80s, ‘It would not be until decades later that gambling became the
subject of extended and disapproving moral treatises,’ 153.
781 Ibid
782 Ibid 16
783 See Geoffrey Wilson Clark’s Betting on lives: The Culture of Life Insurance in England, 1695-1775
(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) for more on the growth of the life insurance industry. It
seems in many respects that life insurance took on aspects of gambling – ‘betting’ on which of two people
gambling from the Restoration into the eighteenth century, with perceptions changing from permissible folly (if done in moderation) to disapproved of vice, indicating that concerns about gambling in 1734 were much greater than in 1690.

The issue of gambling is also of interest to literary scholars when examining the growth of the novel, revealing another set of assumptions about the vice. In discussing the complex relationships between reason and chance during the Enlightenment, as well as economics, scholars like Thomas Kavanagh, Jesse Molesworth, and Jessica Richard explore the links between gambling and the novel in eighteenth-century France and England. Social aspects of gambling are also examined, with Kavanagh and Richard discussing the social mores that grew around gambling within the royal courts. It was the social aspect of gambling which drew censure from books such as *Memoirs of the Lives, Intrigues, and Comical Adventures of the most Famous Gamesters and Celebrated Sharers* (1714) which was ostensibly published to save people from being tricked by gamesters and sharpers, but also traces the various actions and misadventures of the often ill-fated gamesters discussed. Lamenting the willingness of the nobility to begin gambling with disreputable people, the author states:

Thus we may see, that this Vice of excessive Gaming, is as frequent in that Nation [France], as in England; where a Foot-man shall play with a Marquis, or an Earl; a

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would die first, when the pope would die, or even the biological sex of Charles de Beaumont, Chevalier d’Eon – and life insurance was banned in other European nations. Clark also examines life insurance in terms of determination and chance.


For example, Kavanagh mentions that, although aristocrats were to be ‘cavalier [in their] treatment of debts’ there was an exception: “It was the duty of a gentleman always to pay his gambling debts, and that before any other kind of debt,” 41. Richard discusses how in Britain, ‘wagers were generally considered contracts in law,’ 11.
Black Guard-Boy with a Dutchess; Barbers, Pedlars, Tinkers, Taylors, and Ostlers, with Generals, Brigadiers, and Colonels of the Army.\textsuperscript{786}

The cross status nature of gambling, and the groups of people it could possibly bring together, are a source of concern for the author, and point perhaps to worries over the ‘libertine legacy’ of the Restoration. Especially troubling is that the ‘People of Quality’ were lowering themselves in the process: “A wise Man could scarce believe there should be in this Kingdom of Great-Britain, such a fool in Nature, as a Person of Quality that puts himself upon the Level with one, that he knows makes Gaming his Livelihood […].”\textsuperscript{787} By gambling with those of a lower status, the nobility were not only losing money at an alarming rate, but also their social status by mingling with gamesters and lower status people.

The loss of money and status were particularly alarming for one group of gamblers – women. \textit{The Secret History of the Dutchess of Portsmouth}, as noted before, discusses Portsmouth’s enjoyment of gambling, and it is noted at the end of the story how she falls prey to a fortune hunter when she returned to France. She loses a fortune to him and his gamester friends ‘for understanding how forward she was at playing at Cards, he made himself of the same Humour […].’\textsuperscript{788} Capitalizing on the duchess’s weakness for gambling, and making her think he was in love with her, \textit{Secret History} takes delight in how these men stole Francelia’s ill-gotten gains by cheating her, afterwards ‘spend[ing] as high as they best, at the Cost and Charge of Francelia.’\textsuperscript{789} \textit{Francelia} also brings up this story of Portsmouth losing to a fortune hunter, but then takes the issue of gambling even further. Rather than simply taking a vicious delight in seeing the duchess bilked of her

\textsuperscript{786} \textit{Memoirs of the Lives} 107
\textsuperscript{787} Ibid
\textsuperscript{788} Ibid 161
\textsuperscript{789} Ibid 162
money. *Francelia*’s author latches onto the issue of gambling and the particular dangers it posed to women. Much like Lucas, the author of *Memoirs of the Lives, Francelia* voices concern for People of Quality in general ‘who destroy their Constitutions, and Ruin their Estates’ through gambling, but it is the issue of the ‘Female Gamster [sic]’ which causes particular alarm.  

In about two pages of digression, *Francelia*’s author details the myriad impacts gambling had on women. Obsession with card playing and neglect of family were two of particular importance. Such a neglect went against the nature of women, although this is unsurprising since it is also noted that ‘Female minds are of such a Make, that they naturally give themselves up to every Diversion’ and that play ‘engrosses the whole Woman.’ Gambling made women neglect their duties as wives and mothers because it was within their very make-up to become obsessed and engrossed, making gambling dangerous from the very first game played by a woman. Not only her family suffered, but also her face and mind because, ‘Every thing which corrupts the Soul decrays the Body. The Beauties of the Face and Mind are generally destroyed by the same means,’ particularly tragic because women ‘are designed to please the Eye.’ Dire warnings about female gamblers explore the issue of the body further, because the question arises of how a woman will pay her gambling debts when ‘her Pin-Money is gone.’ A man simply ‘pawns his Estate,’ while a woman must ‘dispose of […] her Person.’ In essence, a gamestress will inevitably become a prostitute since she had no way to pay her

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790 *Francelia* 65  
791 Ibid  
792 Ibid 66  
793 Ibid  
794 Ibid
debt once her limited amount of money was lost.795 The linkage of the gamestress and
prostitute is particularly telling given that it is within a secret history of the Duchess of
Portsmouth, a famed royal mistress who was enormously wealthy through her association
with the king.

Placing this invective about gambling females within *Francelia* is especially
interesting because the words are not those of the author. Instead, they are lifted almost
wholesale from Joseph Addison writing in *The Guardian* in July 1713, who was very
interested in depicting gambling as a danger to female honor and in no way a ‘genteel
diversion.’796 While not exactly word for word - there is some material cut out or changed
slightly - *Francelia*’s author took this entire discussion of female gambling from a
twenty-year old periodical.797 Such actions are not entirely surprising given that
*Francelia* is itself a condensed and somewhat modified version of *Secret History* from
forty years before, and is in the spirit of the material recycling practices of publishers like
Edmund Curll; but it is interesting that the author would choose to add the passage
without citation. Both Steele and Addison were dead by 1734 (1729 and 1719
respectively) so they did not author this anonymous secret history. Changes in fashion are
also evident in a minor change to Addison’s text. As quoted above, women ‘vilely
prostituted’ affection for their family ‘upon a Hand of *Quadrille*’ while the 1713 version
said ‘upon a hand at loo!’ showing the current popularity of quadrille, a French import,

795 Richard claims that even when a woman won money it was still seen with sexual connotations, 118.
796 Evans 15
797 “No 120. Wednesday, July 29,1713. A Bit for the Lion” in *The British Classics: Volume the Fourteenth. Containing the Second Volume of the Guardian* (London: John Sharpe: 1804), 165-168. Richard credits Steele with this issue, but *The British Classics* ascribes it to Addison, and although *The Guardian* was started by Steele in 1713, Addison often contributed, Richard 112. Interestingly, Mark Knights notes how tensions between religious groups (High Churchmen, Low Churchmen and Dissenters) caused moral instruction to be ‘pushed into the hands not so much of the clergy as the periodical writers, especially Addison and Steele whose papers were specifically designed as secular sermons, witty instructions about how to navigate the new world of temptation with a degree of virtue,’ 141.
over loo. In choosing to plagiarize The Guardian, Francelia’s author pointed to the still vibrant concern attached to not only gambling but also to the impact it had on women. Not simply losing money, they also could lose their souls, beauty, minds, and virtue. The female gambler was at risk of losing everything of value in her life.

In bringing Addison’s words into a history of the Duchess of Portsmouth, the author was using the figure of the French royal mistress as a warning to all women about the dangers of gambling that went far beyond finances. The last line of Francelia underlines this point: “Thus I have traced Francelia from her Infancy, through a long Series of surprizing Adventures, to a good old Age, for she was upwards of 90 when she died, immensely rich.” Although cheated of much money from a fortune hunter and some of his gamester friends, Francelia still died ‘immensely rich,’ so it is not the monetary losses from gambling which the author is concerned about. Instead, it is the loss of the woman’s beauty, affections, and body which are paramount, with also possibly a vicious joke at the duchess’s expense. As a former royal mistress, her sexual virtue was long since seen as corrupted. With money and virtue not an issue for the duchess, it becomes apparent that it is the impact on the body, mind, and soul which is at stake, perhaps also a pointed reference to the linking of gambling to the libertinage of the Restoration.

After telling the story of a woman who used deceit, lies, and cheating for her own gains, it is unsurprising that her interest in gambling is heavily emphasized at the end. This woman, who throughout Francelia arguably bartered away her body, virtue, and even her soul in pursuit of money and titles, is now reduced to the pitiable role of an

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798 “No 120” 167
799 Francelia 67
‘engrossed’ gamestress who loses to a deceitful fortune hunter. All of the strategy and ambition seen in *Francelia* is shown, ultimately, to be the obsessions of a female gambler who ‘vilely prostituted’ her affections not only when playing cards, but in her entire life. Her influence over the king and her role as a French intercessor come to be seen through the lens of a woman who simply managed to play her cards right, at the cost of what were seen as her natural feminine qualities. Even Francelia herself seems to have understood the terrible life she led since in her ‘late Years Francelia lived very retired, spending most of her Time in Acts of Devotion and Charity,’ possibly in penance for her past sins, but the charity of the elderly Francelia perhaps also gives her a small amount of vindication as she made some effort to mend her earlier transgressions.\(^800\) In making the ending to *Francelia* a cautionary tale about female gamblers, and using the voice of a famous author to do it, the author points to the problem of the gamestress within English society and gives his audience a negative example. Not only was Portsmouth foreign, a Catholic, and a whore, but she also gave in to the temptations of gambling, demonstrating the devastating road that inevitably all female gamblers travel down, one which was tied in the eighteenth-century mind with the excesses of the Restoration. That she died rich, living a charitable life in her last years and leaving money to her servants, underscores the true dangers of Francelia and the duchess’s life – her money may remain intact, but her body, mind, and soul were in shambles, a situation it is implied Francelia herself understood by the charity she displayed late in her life.

*Francelia* does not contribute much to the story of the duchess past the 1690 *Secret History*, even though it was published over forty years later. Nothing is added between her losing money to the fortune hunter and the noting of her charity at the end of

\(^{800}\) Ibid
her life. *Francelia* is not interested in illuminating the reading public about the life of Francelia and the Duchess of Portsmouth, but rather in emphasizing the poor example this woman set. In the author’s ‘digressing from the Subject,’ he demonstrates that *Francelia* is not merely a scandalous history of a former royal mistress, but also an indictment of gambling itself, and the ways in which it could lead to the destruction of a woman.\textsuperscript{801} Through the use of gambling, Portsmouth’s role within the Restoration court and its politics is also implicitly critiqued, as revealed in the cheeky dedication to George I’s former mistress Schulenburg, as well as the inherently political form of the secret history. In drawing comparisons between Schulenburg and Portsmouth, the author is underlining the important issues of female influence and foreigners at the English court. In this way, *Francelia* is also political like *Secret History*, but it is Portsmouth as gamestress which is the final and heavily applied image taken from *Francelia*. Portsmouth herself is erased within *Francelia* and turned into a gambling libertine who held undue influence over a king, making her a useful vessel to grapple with and portray the legacy of the Restoration.

*The Virtuous (and Ambitious) Courtesan*

Published over sixty years after her death, *Memoirs of the Life of Eleanor Gwinn* (1752) gives important indications of how Gwyn was remembered and how, in her turn, she was used to remember the Restoration. The author, John Seymour, himself stated that it was important to bring Gwyn out of obscurity: “After the Death of His Majesty, Nell fell into Obscurity; the Bustle at Court, the political Cabals, the Contention betwixt the Popish and Protestant Interests, quite engaged the attention of the Publick, and drew it from such

\textsuperscript{801} Ibid 66
Subjects as Nell." The author’s statement is well founded, as this memoir was ‘the first full-length life story of the actress.’ Written so long after her death, this memoir was a way to reclaim Gwyn from that obscurity and show the importance Gwyn had to the Restoration court.

Given that a comedian supposedly wrote this memoir, it is interesting that the title does not mention Gwyn’s acting career. The full title, *Memoirs of the Life of Eleanor Gwinn, A Celebrated Courtezan in the Reign of King Charles II. And Mistress to that Monarch*, highlights only the fact that Gwyn was a courtesan and mistress of Charles II, not her fame as a comedic actress. The deliberate choice to leave out Gwyn’s acting in the title may indicate that the author did not find her particularly talented except at delivering Epilogues. Instead, Seymour is more interested in those who ‘have risen from low Stations to shine in Courts’ and how the orange girl became the mistress of a king. As Felicity Nussbaum phrases it, ‘The memoir, then, is not so much the biography of an actress as a whore’s progress towards her eventually impersonating a lady of quality.’ According to this perspective, Seymour thought that Gwyn was not a true actress, but used her small talents to augment her own low status to mimic ‘a lady of quality,’ finally giving her the opportunity of becoming the king’s mistress.

Certainly Nussbaum’s point is well taken that Seymour was critical of Gwyn’s skill. He notes that there can be a ‘great Difference […] betwixt Propensity and Genius’ and that, as noted before, her only true talent lay in the Epilogue: “Miss Gwinn never was remarkable for a fine Actress; her great Power lay in speaking an Epilogue, and exposing

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802 Seymour 59-60
803 Nussbaum 95
804 Ibid 95-97
805 Seymour 1
806 Nussbaum 97
any Characters of Vanity, with a striking Air of Coquetishness [sic] and Levity.”

So while Gwyn had some talent, she was not a great or even fine actress. Yet, it is interesting to note the detailed picture Seymour paints of Gwyn’s struggle to become an actress.

From her decision to join the theatre in order to stay in London after it is suggested to her father that she be sent to the country until she finally is on the stage, takes up about six pages of a sixty-page memoir. Certainly other incidents intervene in this section, such as Gwyn’s kidnapping and deflowering by Deviel, but much of the story here is about Gwyn’s determination to join the theatre. After rejection from Betterton she becomes an orange girl, impressing Betterton into rethinking his position and he sends a promising player to tutor Gwyn in her acting ability. Some pages are spent on the escapade with Deviel and the passionate feelings of the player for Gwyn both before and after her kidnapping (although never named, the feelings of the player are rather minutely detailed) but Seymour makes much of the way Gwyn clawed her way onto the Restoration stage. Once she is on the stage Seymour then talks about her series of lovers including Lord Rupert and Rochester, and then her finally meeting the king and becoming his mistress (which summit is reached on page forty-two, over two-thirds through the narrative). Being the king’s mistress, according to Seymour, was the culminating role in Gwyn’s life, with her time as an actress merely one of the steps she took toward becoming a ‘celebrated courtezan.’

With the story of Charles II and Gwyn’s affair not occurring until page forty-two out of sixty it is easy to wonder what Seymour was actually emphasizing with his

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807 Seymour 18-19
808 Nussbaum underlines this when she speaks of Charles II’s attitude toward Gwyn’s profession: “King Charles II underscored this identity [mistress and mother of his children] by treating her as a mistress rather than as a respected professional,” 97.
memoir. As Nussbaum says, Seymour examines much more closely Gwyn’s ‘sexual life’ than her acting career, making acting ‘merely incidental in defining her more lasting identity,’ but there seems to also be a genuine admiration for Gwyn. According to Seymour’s account, Gwyn decided to join the theatre and against all odds succeeded in doing so. Her numerous affairs do indeed take up many of these pages, with various intrigues by Lord Rupert and the Duchess of Beau lending some romantic drama to the memoir. Once Gwyn becomes Charles’s mistress, however, the narrative turns more into a list of her behavior and accomplishments than an account of romantic drama. Apart from the prank Gwyn instigated against the king at the brothel, the last third of the memoir is mostly about the good that Seymour claims Gwyn performed within the Restoration court and the ways in which this most ambitious of low status girls became a ‘virtuous’ courtesan.

The portrayal of Gwyn throughout Seymour’s memoir is not entirely positive. Not only is she not the best actress but she was also rather careless with her sexual virtue. While she did not actually lose her virginity until Deviel took it from her, Seymour notes how the young Gwyn was willing to use it as a tool:

her Money diminishing apace, she began to be alarmed lest Poverty should overtake her, and in Place of bringing her Virginity to a good Market, she should be obliged to turn Prostitute for Bread; and that too, without any Prospects of Advantage, or rising in the World […].

Not concerned about losing her virginity but her marketability, Gwyn’s approach to her sexual virtue was not the usual response of a woman expected to protect her virginity at all costs. Gwyn’s thinking on her virginity was also not driven by sexual pleasure ‘for she

809 Nussbaum 97
810 Seymour 8-9
was born, not more with a Love of Pleasure, then of Distinction.\(^{811}\) Gwyn’s drive did not come from a desire for sex but to rise above her low station. After Deviel abducted Gwyn and took her to Richmond, Seymour does not depict her as wailing or sobbing, but rather calmly, if begrudgingly, accepting her fate:

> Upon hearing this, a Woman, in whose Heart Virtue had taken a firm Root, and who sees nothing so dreadful as Loss of her Innocence, would have fainted away, *Nell* was not discomposed to any extraordinary Degree […] for such is the Difference betwixt those who are chaste from Principles of Honour, and those who are chaste for Convenience, from Pride or Ambition.\(^{812}\)

Hoping to keep her virginity not out of a sense of honor but of pride and ambition, this memoir depicts Gwyn’s ‘calculated way [of] advancing’ from one lover to the next.\(^{813}\) Gwyn does go through a string of lovers, but it is when she becomes Charles II’s lover that Seymour’s writing takes on a much more positive tone.

> After meeting the king at a play Gwyn soon becomes his mistress. Earlier, Gwyn is criticized for her treatment of the poor player who loved her and was left behind after she was abducted by Deviel but whom she began to forget:

> Half a Year elapsed before Miss *Gwinn* made a public Figure again in the World, and she began likewise to forget her former Tenderness for the Player; for such it seems is the Heart of Woman, that a Variety of Lovers bewilders her Affections, and she can fix them no where while she is a Slave to Admiration.\(^{814}\)

> Once Gwyn becomes the king’s mistress, Seymour emphasizes that Gwyn was faithful to him: “That *Nell Gwinn* was faithful to His Majesty during the Time she lived with him, cannot, I think, be doubted […].”\(^{815}\) Taking her new role as ‘Imperial Mistress,’ Gwyn no longer had the need to advance, and was able to understand the importance of staying

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\(^{811}\) Ibid 9  
\(^{812}\) Ibid 16  
\(^{813}\) Nussbaum 95  
\(^{814}\) Seymour 17-18  
\(^{815}\) Ibid 59
faithful to her royal lover. Beyond staying faithful to the king, Gwyn is also praised for many acts of generosity. Apart from writing about Gwyn, Seymour also uses the memoir to discuss his views on Restoration literature, denigrating Rochester and lionizing Dryden, while also praising Gwyn’s championing of Samuel Butler, even if her effort was ruined by that ‘paltry Wretch,’ the Duke of Buckingham. Gwyn is also credited with inspiring Chelsea Hospital after encountering a beggar who claimed to be an ex-soldier, and is commended for instructing her coachman to not fight on her behalf after being called a whore.

Gwyn’s behavior and treatment of others are spoken of with great admiration by Seymour. She did not put on airs or think above herself: “This celebrated Lady, notwithstanding her unexpected Rise and Exaltation, never once betray’d the least Pride or Insolence towards her Inferiors, nor ever desired to be looked upon with more Reverence on account of her lying in the Arms of a Monarch.” Not becoming an imperious lady, as Portsmouth was accused of being, Gwyn instead remembered who she was and maintained her place. Although commenting on ideas of status, this also shows how Seymour, who painted a picture before of an ambitious woman climbing up through her lovers, depicted Gwyn once she reached the pinnacle of royal mistress. Once Gwyn attained her goal of ‘distinction,’ Seymour becomes interested in how she handled her

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816 Ibid 46. It is interesting to note the posthumous reputation of Rochester in particular who has, as Harold Love claims, ‘always been edited from a perspective,’ *Rochester*, xv. Into the mid-eighteenth-century it was expected by writers such as Daniel Defoe and Henry Fielding that their readers would recognize Rochester references, although this period also saw a general condemnation of Rochester’s immorality even if his verse was admired. The 1750s saw more condemnation of Rochester which reached to both ‘man and poetry,’ leading to a general silence on Rochester through the first half of the nineteenth century. See *Earl of Rochester: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Farley-Hills (Routledge, 2005 [originally published in 1972]), 8-15. See also *That Second Bottle: Essays on John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Nicholas Fisher (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) which describes how ‘the shadow of Rochester’s non-poetical activities has continued to cloud critical judgment into modern times,’ see Fisher’s “Introductory,” 2.

817 Ibid 48
influence and good fortune. Gwyn was credited with being well-liked by all: “Of all King Charles’s Mistresses, Nell was undoubtedly the least offensive to the contending Parties; she never engaged in any Disputes; she raised no Enemies by her Ambition, and lost no Friends by her insolence […].”

Seymour went even further and claimed that Gwyn told the king, when asked what he should do to please his people, to ‘Dismiss your Ladies, may it please your Majesty, and mind your Business; the People of England will soon be pleased.’ Rather than having the king hold onto his women and let them retain their positions, Seymour’s Gwyn understood that the best way for the English people to be happy with their king was for him to get rid of them and ‘mind your Business.’ Of course Charles did not do this, so Gwyn then made the effort to ‘put him in mind of his Affairs,’ including having the king attend to the growing fight between the Dukes of York and Monmouth. In short, Gwyn was interested not only in her own well-being, but in those below her in status and the English in general.

In the end, Seymour bestows upon Gwyn the mantle of morality, which many would have considered lost to her because of her sexual lifestyle. Perhaps, as Nussbaum notes, chastity ‘was not the only gauge of a woman’s virtue’ and her ‘benevolence made her “virtue” seem worthy of a prince.’ Nussbaum’s use of the term ‘benevolence’ points to an important concept in the eighteenth century which, as Sarah Lloyd discusses, came to encompass ideas about charity, individual behavior, and social structures, and even sentiment ‘in which sympathetic feeling – a sort of emotional instinct – connected donor to recipient,’ which is certainly seen in the stories of Gwyn’s reactions to the ex-

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818 Ibid 50
819 Ibid 50-51
820 Ibid 51
821 Nussbaum 97
soldier and coachman.\textsuperscript{822} Benevolence was also a counter argument to Bernard Mandeville’s infamous claim in \textit{The Fable of the Bees} (1714) that private vice was beneficial to the public good – as shown by the rest of the title ‘or, Private Vices, Public Benefits’ - since ‘no society can be raised into such a rich and mighty kingdom, or so raised, subsist in their wealth and power for any considerable time, without the vices of man.’\textsuperscript{823} Those who championed benevolence (‘love for others’) claimed that benevolence was ‘the main business of a virtuous socially purposeful life.’\textsuperscript{824} For some, as Karen O’Brien argues, benevolence ‘came to endow the moral agency of women with public significance,’ echoing Shelley G. Burtt’s observation that civic virtue could be more broadly defined to include private actions that contributed toward the public good.\textsuperscript{825} Seymour gives Gwyn back a sense of virtue that is not based upon her sexual behavior, but in her social and political behavior.\textsuperscript{826} Describing her as a ‘Lady,’ Seymour closes his memoir with the following sentence: “She was a Lady of distinguished Talents; she united Wit, Beauty and Benevolence, and if she deserves Blame for want of Chastity, there are few who challenge such lavish Encomiums for other moral Qualities.”\textsuperscript{827} Gwyn’s wit and beauty served her throughout her life, and her benevolence made her a good mistress to the king and a good woman to those around her. It is perhaps

\textsuperscript{825} Ibid
\textsuperscript{826} Such a definition of virtue echoes the arguments Veronica Franco made about the virtuous courtesan in sixteenth-century Venice. Although Franco emphasized intellectualism, she too called for a change in views on feminine virtue. See Margaret F. Rosenthal’s \textit{The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
\textsuperscript{827} Seymour 60
unsurprising that Seymour did not include acting in the title of his memoir, since he is not attempting to write the story of an actress, as Nussbaum notes, but nor does it seem likely he is merely writing a ‘whore’s progress.’ Instead, Seymour tells of Gwyn changing from an ambitious woman into a benevolent and virtuous courtesan. The comedian, writing about a fellow actor, chooses to discuss her sexual escapades, pandering to those interested in scandal, but in the end is interested in making Gwyn into a generous and witty woman.

In depicting Gwyn as a flawed yet ultimately good mistress to Charles II, Seymour alludes to the perception of Gwyn seen in Chapter 3. Though still denigrated for being a whore and her humble background, Gwyn champions over mistresses like Portsmouth because of her Englishness and Protestantism. Seymour is careful to say that Gwyn was the least offensive of Charles’s mistresses and that Gwyn even went so far as to recommend that the king rid himself of all mistresses. It is acknowledged that Gwyn was a part of the problem of female influence and expense during the Restoration, but Seymour mitigates this by claiming that she demanded that the king pay attention to affairs of state, and coaxed the king into acts of charity such as Chelsea Hospital. Although still a whore, Seymour still calls the low status Gwyn ‘Lady’ and allows that Gwyn could be praised for other moral virtues even if she was not a chaste woman. Such a statement expands female virtue beyond the sexual and into social actions, highlighted by Seymour’s use of the word benevolence. It could be said, taking Shelley G. Burtt’s argument about the movement of civic virtues more towards the private, that Seymour is making a statement about the meaning of virtue in the eighteenth century. If a royal mistress could still be praised for morality because of her actions for the good of others,
then perhaps virtue could be defined in other ways. Civic virtue would mean that Gwyn’s actions in helping ex-soldiers and coachmen could have larger political consequences, particularly if private actions can ‘serve the public.’ 828 In nudging Charles into political action, Gwyn acted in the interest of the public good, and in that respect the royal mistress showed civic virtue. Unlike the Catholic Cleveland and Portsmouth, Gwyn turned from an ambitious lower status woman into a royal mistress who used her influence not simply for her ‘distinction’ but also to help her fellow countrymen. As a symbol of the Restoration, Gwyn served not only as the Protestant Whore, but, according to Seymour, also an example of the importance of private actions to the greater good.

Conclusions
Although an examination of the accuracy of these various memoirs and secret histories would be enlightening, this chapter is not interested in this task. It is important to note that these memoirs and secret histories are not completely accurate in their depictions, but for the purposes of this chapter, the ‘truth’ of these writings is not what is important. Instead, it is the representation of these women and how these authors chose to portray these women that are paramount, since through these choices can be sensed the uses of the Restoration court mistress in the shifting gender politics of the long eighteenth century.

All three women, Cleveland, Portsmouth, and Gwyn, are appropriated within the very memoirs and secret histories which purport to be about them. They are not entirely missing, as aspects of all three women’s personalities and lives are highlighted, but it is not the actual lives of these women that these authors are trying to write about. Cleveland

828 Burtt 9
is remembered in skeletal terms as a woman from a noble family, mistress of the king and mother of his children, and the wife of Robert Feilding. She is only remembered in terms of her relationships with men, and the success or lack thereof she had with them.

Portsmouth is given much more personality, but it is her pride and subtle craftiness which underscores both of her narratives. Manipulative and deceitful, she comes to influence the king and amasses enormous wealth at the expense of the king and England, all the while pretending to a nobility and virtue that was patently untrue. Ultimately, however, Portsmouth is beaten at her own game, and loses money to a fellow fortune hunter. Her inability to control her gambling makes her lose control of her life and money, and she is only slightly vindicated in later life by being charitable and religious. Cleveland is seemingly made powerless by her loss of influence over the king and her marriage to Feilding, in which she was a dupe to a bigamous and violent man. Portsmouth manages to attain great heights of money and influence with the English court through devious means, but *Secret History* and *Francelia* both close with the image of a woman bilked of her money – someone bested her at her own game – with *Francelia* further turning her into an obsessive gambler, a pathetic creature. Like Cleveland, she was made into a pawn, but in Portsmouth’s case, of her own obsessions and desires, the end of *Francelia* seemingly stripping her of political importance.

Gwyn, on the other hand, escapes Seymour’s memoir on a much more positive note. The same Gwyn who, during her lifetime, was criticized for being a low status whore, and decried for her supposed involvement in the attack on John Coventry, is portrayed quite differently in *Memoirs of the Life of Eleanor Gwinn* which claims ‘none
ever libelled [sic] her, but the malevolent Lord Wilmot.\textsuperscript{829} Although Seymour does qualify himself by saying that Gwyn was liked by those ‘who were Friends to the King,’ he still makes it seem as though Gwyn was simply a benign presence at court, when it is obvious from Restoration libels that she was not considered so by everyone. Even if she was less of a threat than Portsmouth and Cleveland, she was still a low class woman sleeping with a king, a situation of much concern. As Alison Conway notes, Gwyn became ‘a mostly banal figure’ by the mid-eighteenth century with ‘her association with the Catholics of Charles II’s court forgotten or forgiven […].’\textsuperscript{830} Seymour took Gwyn very much outside of her context and created her into a virtuous courtesan, remembered for her good works rather than as a royal mistress accused of overstepping her social rank and using her influence with the king for her own ends. No longer associated with Charles’s Catholic court, Gwyn instead becomes a symbol of the good mistress, one who did not try to take too much influence for herself, and did not become prideful or pretentious. Apolitical, Seymour’s Gwyn held Charles on a steady course, goading him into attending to affairs and reminding him of the folly of his continuing to keep so many mistresses. If Conway is correct that Gwyn benefited from a kind of historical amnesia about her place within Charles’s court, it was not a condition which Cleveland and Portsmouth benefitted from. The lack of discussion of Cleveland, and the insistence that

\textsuperscript{829} Seymour 43. Beauclerk discusses Gwyn and Rochester’s possible early affair, 82-83, and there is a couplet included in the ‘First-Line List of Poems Omitted’ from David Vieth’s edited \textit{The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002): “In a letter of 4 July 1951, Professor John Harold Wilson, of Ohio State University, informs me that in \textit{Francelia}, 1734, a part-fictional, part-fact life of the Duchess of Portsmouth, the following couplet is attributed to Rochester: Within this Place a Bed’s appointed,/For a F—ch B—- and G-ds Anointed. The couplet is reproduced in Wilson’s \textit{Nell Gwyn: Royal Mistress} […]. A variant version appears without ascription in Bodl. […] as “Written over Nell Gwins doore”: These Lodgings are ready lett, & appointed / For Nell y’ Bitch, & y’s Lords appoynted [sic],” 236. It is interesting to note that this is a very similar couplet to the one in \textit{Francelia}, and that there may be a connection to Rochester. That there was such animosity between Gwyn and Rochester is not borne out by evidence such as a letter from Rochester to Arthur Capel, Earl of Essex, on behalf of Gwyn as her ‘Trustee’ in 1677, Stowe 211.330.

\textsuperscript{830} Conway, \textit{The Protestant Whore}, 179
only her children and marriage to Feilding are of importance in her life, make it seem that it was better to leave the subject of the powerful mistress alone. Portsmouth is made more of an example, a cautionary tale about how the foreign and Catholic could infiltrate England and use deceit to gain influence. Gwyn’s is also a cautionary tale about ambition and the loss of virtue, but also a tale of redemption with Gwyn using her good fortune to help others. She, the only Protestant of the three, showed Christian benevolence to those around her while she was a royal mistress – she did not have to wait until later life like Portsmouth – and she also had a wit and humor which was not a mask like Francelia’s.

Even such a positive interpretation of Gwyn is, however, an erasure. Gwyn’s acting career is reduced to a stepping stone in her life’s goal of ‘Distinction,’ making her little more than ‘A Celebrated Courtezan.’

As with the case of the long history of re-presentations of Jane Shore discussed by Maria M. Scott, much of the appeal of these women lay in the gaps in and malleability of their life stories. Little is known about Portsmouth and Gwyn’s early life, and aspects of Cleveland’s life, such as when she first met Charles I, are up for debate. Creating a tale about Portsmouth running off with a duke to Candia or Gwyn’s decision to lose her virginity to remain in London should be read as projections based upon pre-formed assumptions about these women’s characters. Using them to look at contemporary issues – divorce, gambling, and the meaning of virtue – these memoirs and histories reworked these women’s lives in order to grapple with the authors’ own preoccupations about the legacy of the Restoration, and about the politics of gender.

831 Bryan Bevan’s sympathetic biography of Portsmouth, for example, jumps from her birth and very early upbringing in poverty to becoming maid of honor to Henrietta-Anne. Charles the Second’s French Mistress: A Biography of Louise de Keroualle Duchess of Portsmouth, 1649-1734 (London: Robert Hale, 1972), 13. Charles Beauclerk’s Nell Gwyn: Mistress to a King (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005) shows the dearth of information on her early life, since it cannot be definitively established where she was even born or the status of her parents, Chapter 1 “Humble Beginnings.”
Such uses for the court woman do not entirely obscure the court politics associated with them even into the eighteenth century. Cleveland’s appearance in Manley’s *The New Atalantis*, written to critique Queen Anne’s favorite Sarah Churchill and published a few months before the duchess’s death, reveals how she was still an important symbol of the overly influential court woman. The inherently political form of the secret history, even with rather different emphases, indicates that *Francelia* was not devoid of political criticism since it still censures Portsmouth for her supposed role in advancing French interests at the English court and for the huge amounts of money the duchess took. Although more interested in entertaining with anecdotal stories, *Francelia* is also dedicated to another royal mistress – Ehrengard Melusine von der Schulenburg – who was accused of taking money and bringing her German influence to the English court. The ‘lives’ of Cleveland and Portsmouth were connected within their stories to current court women, creating links between Hanoverian England and the troubling legacy of the Restoration. The positive picture of Gwyn also holds some political value because her rise from lowly orange girl to royal mistress, and her transformation from ambitious to virtuous courtesan, perhaps demonstrates the meaning of civic virtue since private actions – such as persuading the king to be more diligent in his duties and inspiring Chelsea Hospital – could impact on the public good. Placing Gwyn within discussions of virtue, and its gendered meanings, again linked Hanoverian England to the Restoration, but also looked to past examples in order to make a point about virtue. In this century traditionally seen as a watershed moment in ideas about gender, sex, and even identity, Gwyn was used to show how female virtue could go beyond the sexual, and that civic virtue could be performed in private. All three were used within debates
surrounding the legacy of the Restoration and Glorious Revolution, which raged throughout the eighteenth century, incorporating them within historical memory. Not entirely taken out of political context, Cleveland, Portsmouth, and Gwyn are still made to fit certain tropes within their memoirs and secret histories which made these Restoration royal mistresses useful to eighteenth-century England.

In using the figures of Cleveland, Portsmouth, and Gwyn after their deaths, the authors of the memoirs and secret histories looked to craft the figure of the court woman into an image that served their own political and social purpose. Whether positive or negative, these writings erased the actual women they were supposed to be about, and made them instead into a divorcee, a gamestress, and a virtuous courtesan. Much as Gwyn was reduced to dust in her 1687 elegy, and the Windsor Beauties became drugged cows in the 1930s, it is by the absence of Cleveland, Portsmouth, and Gwyn that they were shaped into something anew. Certainly they were libeled and represented in various ways during their lifetime, but their deaths allowed for memoirs and secret histories supposedly giving their life stories when in reality the authors used dead women to understand current social and political issues. In focusing on divorce, gambling, and virtue, these authors were also looking into concerns about gender and how to work through these issues. The influence of the Restoration reached well into the Hanoverian period, and the role Charles II’s royal mistresses played was seen as vital in comprehending its troubled legacy. By making Cleveland, Portsmouth, and Gwyn into symbols of current social issues, these authors underline just how central court mistresses were within perceptions of the Restoration court. In Hanoverian England it was not seen as possible to look at Charles II’s court without grappling with the role of the women
surrounding him, a perspective which needs to be acknowledged more within Restoration studies today.
Epilogue
The Courtesan and the Empress

Four short years after the publication of Memoirs of the Life of Eleanor Gwinn war broke out in Europe. The Seven Years’ War (1756-1763) was in many ways a continuation of the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748), but with important changes in alliances and an expanded theater of war which included European colonies in the Americas. England and its Hanoverian king George II were old allies of the Austrians since George II took seriously the Pragmatic Sanction – and his interests in Hanover – and supported the claims of Maria Theresa to the Hapsburg throne against an alliance of Prussia and France during the War of Austrian Succession. But British interests in Hanover helped to break the Anglo-Austrian alliance when in January 1756 the British and Prussians signed the Convention of Westminster, ‘a treaty of friendship between Prussia and Britain.’ The purpose of the Convention of Westminster was as a means of protecting Hanover from aggression, but at the cost of any remaining alliance with Austria. Maria Theresa saw Prussia as her implacable enemy, particularly since it held Silesia after the War of Austrian Succession, and she wanted it back within Hapsburg territory. The signing of the convention allowed Austria to finalize its own treaty with former enemy France at the Convention of Versailles in May 1756. These new alliances were put to the test later in May when France attacked the British held Minorca, and in August when Prussia invaded Saxony. The fighting continued for seven long years.

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833 Nick Harding, Hanover and the British Empire 1700-1837 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), particularly Chapters 4 and 5 “The War of Austrian Succession” and “The Seven Years’ War.”
835 Ibid 128-129
In October 1756, a letter was published in rebus form entitled *Nell Gw[i]nn 2 the Hungary [har]lot 1756* (See Figure 1). This curious document demonstrates the appropriation of a Restoration court woman in the fraught climate of the Seven Years’

War. At the top of the rebus is a drawing of a woman, ostensibly Nell Gwyn, and the text reads:

Nell Gw[i]nn 2 the Hungary [har]lot 1756. M[adam] w[as] [eve]r such a f[al]se [puss] as U R the Most un[grate]full [bitch] [i]n the [world]. U t[hat] was [al]most t[orn] 2 pieces [last] war & Sav’d only by the [i]ntervent[i]on of our Good [King] & now [to] t[urn] t[ail] 2 a french Ra[scal] 1 t[hat] w[hen] he’s Serv’d h[i]s turn will C U at the [Devil] [be]4 he’ll stir a [foot] 2 serve you [but] this [i]s the [case] with most wh[ores] the man [that] [i]s kindest [to]’em they [al]ways slight U w[i]ll find w[hen] [matt]ers R 1ce Concluded U w[i]ll [be] an Abandon’d [house]wife [Yours] Nell Gwynn.836

As the text makes clear, there is great animosity in England toward Maria Theresa for turning her back upon the ‘Good King’ of England in favor of the ‘french Rascal’ Louis XV. The date of the rebus shows the war was about five months old when it was published, with battles in Europe and the American colonies well known.837 Maria Theresa, once an English ally, is described in this publication as a ‘harlot,’ ‘bitch,’ and ‘whore’ who will find her treachery in joining the French repaid in becoming an ‘Abandon’d housewife,’ perhaps insinuating that her new French allies will dethrone her once the war was over as they had tried to during the War of Austrian Succession. Like other whores, Maria Theresa slights the good man in favor of a rascal who does not care

836 *Nell Gw[i]nn 2 the Hungary [har]lot 1756* (London, 1756), Lewis Walpole Library 756.10.16.01. The listing for this publication in the Lewis Walpole Library’s Digital Collection lists the title as “Nell Gw[y]nn,” probably because the spelling of her name is Nell Gwynn at the bottom, but I have taken the use of the drawn eye for the letter ‘i’ since that is how it is used throughout the rebus. See Frederic George Stephens’s *Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum Division I Political and Personal Satires* (No. 3117 to No. 3804) Vol. III. Part II. 1751 to 1760 (1877), No. 3362 for a helpful key to deciphering the rebus.

837 A British loss at Fort Oswego in New York occurred in August 1756. See Anderson’s Chapter 13 “Oswego.” See Anderson also for discussion of the role of indigenous people in the Seven Years’ War, or as it is known in America, the French and Indian War (1754-1763) which began because of attempts to gain control over Ohio Country.
for her, and she risks losing everything for her costly mistake. The rebus form itself is interesting because it is considered by some as ‘one of the oldest forms of satiric design,’ and the language it uses is not formal but demotic. Using terms like ‘puss’ and ‘rascal,’ it is clear that this is not the usual form of a missive to an empress, and perhaps points to the humble origins of Nell Gwyn herself. Known for her witty tongue, Gwyn’s voice is appropriated to chide Maria Theresa in the voice of a lowborn person, but one who presumes to advise an empress.

The libel upon Maria Theresa is unsurprising given her change in alliance from England to France, traditional enemies, and the earlier losses experienced by the British in places like Minorca and the American colonies. Maria Theresa was a turncoat who abandoned the British, and she is compared to the basest of women, whores and harlots. That the rebus is signed by Nell Gwyn reveals how the long dead Restoration royal mistress was still well-known within the Hanoverian world, and it is interesting that it was her figure used to address the Hapsburg empress. Derided herself as a whore, Gwyn is made to draw a comparison between herself and the empress, one whore speaking to another, much like in the pamphlet war between Gwyn and the Duchess of Portsmouth in the early 1680s. Gwyn’s role as the Protestant Whore is also underlined here since Maria Theresa was a Catholic empress allied to France, a symbol of Catholicism and absolutism.

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838 Joan L. Dolmetsch, *Rebellion and Reconciliation: Satirical Prints on the Revolution at Williamsburg* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1976), 101 print 44. A visual puzzle popular in Picardy since the sixteenth century, it seems that for a time the rebus was more popular in France and Italy than England. See *OED* for more on the supposed beginnings of the term *rebus de Picardie* and Srinivas Aravamudan’s *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 375 note 24. The rebus would become more popular in the later eighteenth-century, as shown in rebus titles *Britannia to America* (1778) and *America to Her Mistaken Mother* (1794), and the similarities between some of the pictorial devices used in 1756 and 1778 indicate that there were perhaps common rebus forms in the eighteenth century. For example, the use of the eye for ‘i,’ the awl for ‘al’ or ‘all,’ and ewer for ‘your.’ Benjamin Franklin also used the rebus form in his “The Art of Making Money Plenty.”
in the Protestant English mind. The form of the rebus and the sharp language of the libel seem to indicate Gwyn’s reputation for wit, while also using her status as an unmarried woman to make fun of Maria Theresa’s supposed future as an abandoned housewife. Although memory of Gwyn’s role within the Restoration court had perhaps changed since her death, as discussed in Chapter 4, there was at least an awareness of her influence at court. Whether or not that influence was seen as troublesome, as it certainly was during Charles II’s reign itself, it is still important to note that a royal mistress is made to converse with an empress. Perhaps this denotes unease with female authority, which Maria Theresa certainly held as empress, with the less threatening Gwyn telling her fellow whore that her inconstancy to the British would end only with her downfall.839 Using Nell Gwyn to chastise Maria Theresa shows how representations of Restoration court mistresses resounded into the eighteenth century. By addressing the empress through the voice of Gwyn, the author of the rebus looked to point out Maria Theresa’s inherent whorishness, while also denigrating her by using the figure of a low status former actress to speak to her.

The appropriation of Gwyn’s voice in this rebus shows how the libel was meant to quickly denigrate Maria Theresa. The meaning of Gwyn as Protestant Whore also underlines the Catholicism and foreignness of Maria Theresa, a new stand-in for the foreign Other Gwyn triumphed over during the Restoration. The figure of Nell Gwyn within this rebus allowed the author to make rapid connections between Maria Theresa and a long dead mistress, underscoring the importance of the Restoration court mistress

within English memory, but also revealing how these women were still useful in thinking out social, political, and religious concerns.

*Nell Gw[i]nn 2 the Hungary [har]lot 1756* furthers the themes of this project by underscoring the importance of the representations of the Restoration royal mistress. In appropriating a woman’s voice, it emphasizes the political uses of gender, but also gendered concerns about female power. The rebus also shows the construction of representation, as perceptions of Gwyn in the 1750s were built upon those from the Restoration itself. Choosing Gwyn as England’s champion, Restoration representations had her battling her French Catholic rival Portsmouth, and that fight is recreated with Gwyn’s letter to Maria Theresa. Placed, within the context of the rebus, on an international stage, Gwyn spars with a powerful empress who defies ‘good’ men, and by doing so helps to define the foreign and female Other. By placing representation within its wider context, it is possible to see how Restoration royal mistresses, so often dismissed by modern historians as trivial to politics, were used both in their own time and for generations after to grapple with social, religious, gender, and political concerns. In studying how representation was used in Restoration discourse, this project has demonstrated how gendered assumptions helped to underpin concerns about the Other as embodied by the ‘Turk,’ diseased and reproducing bodies, and even social issues such as divorce and gambling, and how the royal mistress came to symbolize the glittering and dangerous reign of Charles II.
Figure 1, Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University
Appendix

The following short entries give important dates and details for each of the three main royal mistresses discussed in this dissertation.


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