THE FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH LITERARY CANON IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY (1640-1694).

by

GAIL ELAINE MOBLEY

A thesis submitted to The University of Birmingham

For the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies

College of Arts and Law

University of Birmingham

March 2017

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the conception and development of an English literary canon across the mid-to-late-seventeenth century, examining ideas about literary production, preservation, genre development, literary criticism, notions of fame and the role of the author in a period before the term ‘canon’ was applied to secular writing. Current scholarship into literary canons often concentrates on the eighteenth century and later. My study argues that many of the ideas, institutions, aesthetic features, and commercial factors that contribute to English literature canon-formation predate the eighteenth century, even if the notion of an English literary canon is not made explicit until this time. I approach this topic through a series of five case studies. Four concentrate on specific categories of writing that I argue influence the development of a literary canon from the mid-seventeenth century onward: printed collections, literary criticism, life writing and commendatory poetry. The fifth chapter focuses on an individual author, Abraham Cowley, and how he endeavours to position himself into the pantheon of English worthies. I am not arguing that the seventeenth century is where canon-formation begins, but aim to demonstrate that ideas about canonicity existed during the seventeenth-century and have impacted the shape and content of the English literary canon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I want to thank my supervisor Dr Hugh Adlington for his time, wisdom and support of what has been both a rewarding and challenging project. He continually believed in my ability to see this project through and for that I am immensely grateful.

I also wish to thank my parents Eugenija and Robert Mobley for their financial and emotional support without which the undertaking of this doctoral project would not have been possible.

Finally, I want to thank my partner Tomos A.B. Davies for his patience and good humour.

CONTENTS

PREFATORY NOTES

In instances where seventeenth century texts bear a lengthy title I have after the first use shortened it. For example, Margaret Cavendish's account of her husband is referred to as either *Life* or *Life of William*. Where I am referring to a primary source that has multiple editions in the same year and/or I am referring to multiple editions/printings of a text I have provided the STC/Wing number where applicable. References to printed sources provide publisher information, barring where the imprint names the printer in which case the reference is 'printed by' in parentheses along with other publication details.

ABBREVIATIONS

British Library – BL

Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts (online adaption of the Index of English Literary Manuscripts 1450-17—compiled by Peter Beal) – CELM

Cambridge University Press - CUP

Early English Books Online – EEBO

Eighteenth Century Collections Online – ECCO

English Short Title Catalogue – ESTC

Journal of English Literary History - ELH

Oxford English Dictionary Online – OED

Oxford University Press - OUP

The Review of English Studies – RES

Short Title Catalogue – STC

INTRODUCTION

The English literary canon consists of the corpus of texts and authors deemed to be the most influential and enduring, determining who and what are read and in which contexts. This thesis investigates ideas about producing, preserving and criticising English literature during the mid-to-late seventeenth century, and considers how such ideas contributed to the early formation of a canon of vernacular English literature. In so doing, I endeavour to challenge long-held notions about the origins and historic formation of the English literary canon, a concept with far-reaching cultural and educational significance. The large majority of recent and older scholarship identifies the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the time in which the concept of the English literary canon – 'a body of literary works…regarded as the most important, significant and worthy of study' – became established in its modern form.[1] This thesis argues that many of the ideas, institutions, aesthetic features, and commercial factors that contribute to the formation of the English literary canon predate the eighteenth century, even if the notion of an English literary canon was not made explicit until this time. My research, therefore, examines a wide range of literary, historical, theoretical, educational and biographical writing in the seventeenth century to uncover the intellectual and literary origins of the development of, and thinking about, the English literary canon. This is not to say that I am arguing that the concept of literary canonicity in England began in the seventeenth rather than eighteenth century, nor that early notions of an English literary canon do not exist in the sixteenth, fifteenth or earlier centuries. Rather, I begin with the mid-seventeenth century in order to make the strongest case possible for reconsidering the period boundaries of canon-formation, encouraging scholars to give fuller consideration to the emergence in England of

[1] *OED*, 'canon',*n.*[1], Draft Additions July 2002, a. The *OED* cites 1929 as the earliest use of the term 'canon' in the context of literary criticism. Influential scholars who date the English literary canon to the eighteenth century include Harold Bloom, Alastair Fowler, Jan Gorak, Jonathan Brody Kramnick and Richard Terry. This at times includes consideration of the late seventeenth century, such as with Richard Terry, but in these cases scholars are still quite critical about the contribution of even late seventeenth century writers and works to the development of the literary canon. Only a handful of critics including Trevor Ross consider the importance of pre-Restoration literary history to the story of the development of an English canon in the period.

ideas of literary canonicity prior to the eighteenth century. As Trevor Ross observes, 'Canon-making begins when authorship begins, in the first cries of poets eager to legitimize their practice, to lend aura to their tradition, and to affirm the power of their art in preserving a sense of the past.'[2] The English literary canon is not something that began to develop after centuries of English literary production. It encompasses a number of renowned poets such as Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, and moreover, it has certainly been shaped and influenced by these same authors, as well as by some of the authors who have fallen into obscurity. It is my contention that the lack of critical attention paid to notions of canonicity in England before the eighteenth century, including ideas about literary fame, authorial reputation and preserving celebrated selections of English prose and poetry, has limited our understanding of how pre-eighteenth-century writers influenced literary tastes and genres, effectively playing a substantial role in the conception, shape and content of the vernacular English literary canon. In this study I demonstrate that thinking about literary canonicity can be uncovered in the seventeenth-century, and that an appreciation of this thinking reveals greater insight into the influence of seventeenth-century writers on the development and evolution of the English literary canon. Moreover, it offers new avenues to analysing and interpreting the writing of pre-eighteenth century authors.

A History of Literary Canons and Canon Theory

Literary canons and canon-formation have preoccupied English literary criticism and theory for centuries. Key points of interest include the origins, shape and extent of the canon. The majority of non-biblical canon criticism today generally splits into two branches: pinpointing the periods in which canon-formation emerges, and identifying the roles canons

[2] Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), p.26.

play more generally in academia and in the modern world.[3] Scholars have varying opinions on what a literary canon is as well as what its purpose might be. For example, Richard Ohmann describes the canon as literature worth preserving, Alastair Fowler as the limited field our criticism and theorising centre upon, and Robert von Hallberg as something made by powerful people in need of opening, demystifying and potentially eliminating entirely.[4] Critics such as Jan Gorak address canon-formation from these modern perspectives, placing heavy emphasis on the many common charges against the idea of a canon, such as it serving as a system of ethnic, gender, social and sexual exclusion, and the fact that it is so heavily entrenched within academic institutions.[5]

The English literary canon includes authors and texts from the beginnings of English language history, such as the alliterative epic poem *Beowulf*. However, recognising, studying and theorising about vernacular literary canons is often thought to be a much more recent phenomenon. Jonathan Kramnick voices mainstream scholarly opinion in observing that 'the English literary canon achieved its definitive shape during the middle decades of the eighteenth century.'[6] Kramnick also argues that criticism and theory about canons have roots in the eighteenth century, with pioneering efforts into the field of canon criticism shaped by mid-eighteenth-century critics and scholars such as Joseph Warton (1722-1800) and Joseph Addison (1672-1719) in their debates over attributes of taste like the sublime and beautiful.[7] Eighteenth century essayists and poets such as Edmund Burke (1729-1797), David Hume

[3] For example, Richard Terry concentrates on the emergence of thinking about the literary past in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), p.11) and Jan Gorak concentrates on the development of critical conceptions about canons, notably the work of Sir Ernst Gombrich, Northrop Frye, Frank Kermode and Edward Said (*The Making of the Modern Canon: Genesis and Crisis of a Literary Idea* (London and Atlantic Highlands: Athlone, 1991).
[4] Richard Ohmann, 'The Shaping of a Canon: U.S. Fiction, 1960-1975', in *Canons*, ed. by Robert von Hallberg (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p.397; Alastair Fowler, 'Genre and the Literary Canon', *New Literary History* 11 (1979), 97-119 (97); and *Canons*, ed. by Robert von Hallberg (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p.1.
[5] Jan Gorak, *The Making of the Modern Canon: Genesis and Crisis of a Literary Idea* (London and Atlantic Highlands: Athlone, 1991). On Gorak's synthesis of the ideas of Ohman, Von Hallberg and Fowler see p.1.
[6] Jonathan Brody Kramnick, *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700-1770* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), p.1.
[7] Kramnick, p.2.

(1711-1776) and Addison are frequently credited with pioneering the effort to define taste and to apply the standards for English literary writing. Other scholars tend to focus on nineteenth-century critics, such as Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), who developed methodologies and terminology still used when analysing canons today.[8] By contrast, Richard Terry in *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past* does offer some consideration of seventeenth-century thinking about literature. He finds that from the Restoration through the nineteenth century '"literature" shrinks down from applying to the entirety of all cultured writings to relating only to those that are imaginative,' arguing that while traces of a seventeenth-century desire to perpetuate an English canon exist, there is never a cohesive seventeenth-century literary history despite the preliminary motions. Instead, Terry provides a historical overview of institutional reform during the Restoration and into the eighteenth century, for example the 1662 Act of Uniformity which required schoolmasters to obtain a license to teach from the church, and how these reforms and educational movements motivated institutional conceptions of a literary canon, though again his more notable area of focus is the eighteenth century.[9] Terry's construction of the English literary past examines the period between 1660-1781, as the 'late seventeenth century is an era of increasing sensitivity to the literary past, in part due to the posthumous staging of plays by the likes of Shakespeare, Johnson, and Fletcher.'[10] Terry endorses the prevailing critical perspective that canons are formed retrospectively by a process of literary reception. However, in this study I argue that notions of canonicity derive from early thinking and writing, that seventeenth-century writers had much to say about ideas closely related to the concept of a literary canon, and their ideas actively influenced the development of what is

[8] Authors who have considered Arnold's critical work in the context of thinking about canons include Ohman (see *Politics of Letters* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), pp.35-36) and Frank Kermode (see *Pleasure and Change: The Aesthetics of Canon* ed. by Robert Alter (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp.39-47, 53-57).
[9] Terry, pp.30, 47 and 189. This act required schoolmasters to declare their allegiance to Anglican liturgy and required that they be licensed by their church, but resulted in the demand for an educational system separate from the state.
[10] Terry, p.1.

later identified as the English literary canon. For modern scholars like Terry, tracing the roots of the English literary canon, writers prior to the late seventeenth century do not write with a view of posterity, achieving eternal fame or building a canon of eminent authors – at least not in vernacular English. According to these scholars, the fact that early modern authors did not use the term 'canon,' and presented their theory in a different manner and using different terminology than what is familiar to modern readers, has resulted in the dominant critical perspective that canon-formation has largely been the work of eighteenth and nineteenth century writers like Joseph Addison, Samuel Johnson and Matthew Arnold. However, while Terry provides a brilliant overview of how late seventeenth century, and particularly eighteenth-century readers thought about their literary past, I must disagree with his claim that 'sensitivity to the literary past,' and the ability to shape and think about literary canons, did not appear until 1660 or later.

Most recent criticism analyses canonical authors and literary canon theory through a modern lens. Harold Bloom concentrates his study of the Western Canon around twenty six authors and the criteria that make 'the author and the works canonical. The answer, more often than not, has turned out to be strangeness, a mode of originality that either cannot be assimilated, or that so assimilates us that we cease to see it as a strange.'[11] Bloom is frank in arguing that aesthetic value is a complicated criterion for canonicity, and defends his selection on the basis of which texts and authors have survived and influenced modern curricular studies. Indeed, for many modern scholars, such as John Guillory and Richard Ohman, the canon both influences and is influenced by educational institutions. Guillory's study *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993) applies sociological theory to the English literary canon, synthesising the thinking of figures like Marx and Bourdieu in analysing the pedagogical standards that influence both canonical and

[11] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994).

noncanonical writing.[12] Whereas most previous studies concentrate on the literary canon as a vehicle of exclusion and inclusion, Guillory expands on the idea of the separatist strategy, studying minority authors as "*intrinsically* noncanonical…unassimilable to the traditional canon." A separatist (rather than integrationist) theory argues for separate studies of authors and works outside of the canon rather than widening the existing canon.[13] Guillory's work also recognises the difficulty of using social criteria such as race, gender and class in order to revise and expand literary canons, categories that are themselves more complex than most studies recognise.[14] He refers to Peter Osborne who argues that '"identity" on the basis of the experience of a specific oppression' is moralistic and risks exacerbating conflicts between oppressed groups.[15] His work contributes to new ways of thinking about the literary canon and core curriculum, with the university central to the transmission of culture. Ohman, like Guillory, considers the influence of specifically American institutions on the shape of the English literary canon.[16] However, his work gives greater prominence to mass culture and the influence of mainstream media on literary dissemination.[17] Ohman's work analyses the emergence of mass culture, formally introduced by Daniel Lerner, in examining media participation and the political landscape in influencing English literary culture.[18] Ohman argues that humanities curriculum in response to mass culture should be political, theoretical, historical and active, consistently responding to alternative perspectives.[19] Studies like Guillory's and Ohman's expand thinking about and parameters for the English literary canon.

[12] John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[13] Guillory, pp.9-10.
[14] Guillory, pp.12-14.
[15] Peter Osborne, 'Radicalism without Limit? Discourse, Democracy, and the Politics of Identity,' in *Socialism and the Limits of Liberalism*, ed. by Peter Osborne (New York: Verso, 1991), pp.216-17.
[16] Guillory specifically argues that in canonical studies the 'language of revision [responds] a political culture which is specifically American,' p.4.
[17] Richard Ohman, *Politics of Letters* (Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987).
[18] See Ohman, particularly part III, pp.133-211 and Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: 1964).
[19] Ohman, pp.208-11.

However, the case studies, which are primarily from the eighteenth century and later, are scrutinised using exclusively modern critical theory.

The majority of contemporary literary canon criticism and theory rarely addresses the features of the English canon that predate the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. One of the few modern critics who attempts to analyse the development of the literary canon prior to the eighteenth century is Trevor Ross in *The Making of the English Literary Canon: from the Middle Ages to the late Eighteenth Century*.[20] He focuses his work in terms of preliminary case studies that are also selective due to the broad nature of his study. His work is one of the few pieces of modern criticism to address conscious self-canonising efforts in the seventeenth century, such as the publication of Ben Jonson's *Workes* (1616), and evidence of the desire for literary immortality, for example Robert Greene's *Greene's Vision* (1592). However, while Ross's book is one of the few examples of recent critical research that attempts to change the way we think about literary canons, particularly prior to the eighteenth century, the broad nature of his study means that he has minimal opportunity to explore any one literary or historical moment in depth, which is what I do in this thesis. Similarly, Richard Helgerson's *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* offers further perspective into thinking about literature and literary careers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[21] His work does not specifically emphasise literary canon-formation, but offers insight into how authors promoted their literary reputations, shedding some light into the process of self-canonisation, which Helgerson refers to as self-presentation.[22] In this study Helgerson explores the careers of three laureate poets, Spenser, Jonson and Milton, particularly concentrating on the patronage system that was the chief means of advancement

[20] Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).
[21] Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983).
[22] Helgerson, p.2.

in Tudor and Stuart England.[23] With few exceptions, such as the studies by Ross and Helgerson, existing literary criticism on non-biblical canon history tends to ignore or underestimate the contributions of the seventeenth century, and earlier periods, to the development of an English literary canon, deemed as irrelevant to the modern canon debate. Again, I do not argue that the seventeenth century is the precise moment in which the English literary canon begins to emerge, but I do think that it is an important period to analyse because it is a period in which English authors were beginning to write with greater confidence in their vernacular language, focused instead on discussing, emphasising and critiquing the merits of their poetry and prose in a manner that would noticeably influence the works and writers which we later come to consider the forefathers of canon-formation.

Various agents contributed to the formation of the English literary canon during the seventeenth century. One of the most important and active groups in this process are the writers of English poetry and prose, and especially those with a strong sense of literary tradition, the enduring value of the works of particular authors, and their own place in that tradition. This includes writers of poetry, plays, epics, essays, historical accounts, criticism and pamphlets. In addition to writers, literary tastes were influenced by stationers, publishers, printers and booksellers, with many or all of these roles often occupied by one person. In some instances the people involved in publishing included their own opinions about the merits of English poetry and authors in their publications, and proposed their own ideas about fame, genre criteria and reputation in the prefaces to the works that they compiled and sold. Anthologists and book compilers, who were also often stationers and booksellers, also shaped which works and poets would be read and in which contexts, influencing reading habits and early literary tastes. Patrons also played a role in shaping the literary canon, as many authors

[23] I am not examining the role of the patron in this study. For further reading on patronage in seventeenth-century England see Helgerson as well as Dustin Griffin, *Literary patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996) and David M. Bergeron, *Textual patronage in English drama, 1570-1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

were only able to write and publish on the basis of the monetary support and association with the reputation of powerful people. Finally, readers and their interests influenced the development of a canon as works that survived and achieved enough of an afterlife were those that suited the tastes of seventeenth century readers; this audience of course includes other writers, publishers and patrons. For my purposes in this study, the most important agents of canon-formation will be either writers (particularly in relation to criticism, commendation and biography) and publishers (most notably in examining the printed collection in the mid-seventeenth century) as these are the figures most useful in demonstrating that an active interest in canonising English literature and English writers existed in this period.

This study challenges the idea that prior to the eighteenth century there was little awareness or concept of an English literary canon. I argue, by contrast, that the activities of authors, readers and stationers from the mid-to-late seventeenth century helped to shape and contribute to the development of an English literary canon that would become more fully established in the eighteenth century. Indeed, this study shows that seventeenth-century authors possessed a stronger awareness of an English canon than is currently accepted. Opening up studies of the English literary canon to analyse ideas that predate the eighteenth century, considering these earlier writers as active participants in forming the literary canon, will influence how we in the present engage with, read, study, evaluate and preserve texts from the seventeenth century and earlier. Thinking about seventeenth-century, and earlier, figures as actively participating in the formation of the English literary canon will, I hope, add a fresh dimension to recent debates about literary canonicity. Specifically, I aim to synthesise the more curricular and theoretical approaches to canon studies seen in the works of scholars like Bloom, Guillory, Gorak and Ohman with studies like those of Helgerson, Ross and Terry, which concentrate on authorship and early modern thinking about literature

in greater detail. In particular, my study concentrates on the mid-to-late-seventeenth century period that I argue plays a key role in influencing and shaping the English literary canon, and yet is generally overlooked, only briefly considered or completely disparaged in studies about the development of the literary canon.

Key Terms

Terminology will be discussed in greater detail within relevant chapters; however, guidelines for a few terms will be essential to the whole of this thesis. First, I should clarify the parameters in which I mean to discuss the seventeenth century. The focus of this thesis is the period between 1640 and 1694, the period in which the case studies I evaluate in this thesis are all published, in order to discuss canonicity not just as the product of one specific cultural, social or political event such as the Civil War or Restoration, but as a constantly developing and evolving idea that provides insight into the literary motives for creating an English literary canon.[24] There is a complex interplay between literary taste and judgement on the one hand, and a number of extra-aesthetic considerations – religious, political, cultural, social and economic – on the other. My methodology and structure provide the case studies I feel will best demonstrate this. Each chapter analyses texts published between 1640 and 1694, although there will be references to authors and works from earlier periods that demonstrate contextual influences on the texts I am analysing, such as Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes* (1557), Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (1595) and Ben Jonson's *Works* (1616). Similarly, I make reference to texts and authors in the eighteenth century, such as Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (1797-1781), to show the literary and critical influence of these works included in my case studies which I argue both demonstrate thinking

[24] The one source I examine in some detail outside of this date range is Cowley's *Poetical Blossoms* in the context of his early life, however my primary focus is Cowley's *Poems* (1656) and I do not analyse any of the works in this first collection.

about canon-formation as well as, directly or indirectly, influence the idea of a literary canon in the eighteenth century and later.

It is also of course necessary to define what I mean by 'English' in this study. In this thesis I examine English authors and their works written in English. To the latter point there are a few exceptions where I have included translations of works originally written in Latin, such as Abraham Cowley's elegy for himself. By English I am focusing on people primarily from England, and for the most part working in London. While the politics of British vs English identity in the seventeenth century is certainly an important part of studies on English canonicity, it would make for too broad a focus given the nature of this study.[25] While I have arranged this thesis into studies of genre, the majority of authors, publishers and other figures discussed in this study have either worked with or influenced one another.

I want to offer some consideration of the term 'royalist' and what royalist ideas might suggest in this study. The majority of the case studies in this thesis are written by authors with royalist interests and sympathies. Royalist themes played a role in shaping several influential seventeenth-century texts, many of which have continued to be regarded as canonical by modern scholars. Paul Hardacre asserted that "the banishment of the literary leaders of the day had pronounced repercussions."[26] Timothy Raylor analyses several of these repercussions, which includes continental influences as well as an increase in the writing of critical prefaces which were the product of conversations between émigrés.[27] At the same

[25] Works that consider the English and British national identities include Andrew Hadfield, 'Spenser, Drayton, and the Question of Britain', *RES*, New Series, 51:204 (2000), 582-599; Jeffrey Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) and Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).
[26] These leaders included Denham, Davenant, Cowley and Waller (see Paul Hardacre, 'The Royalists in Exile During the Puritan Revolution, 1642-1660', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 16 (1952-53), 362-3).
[27] Timothy Raylor, 'Exiles, Expatriates and Travellers: Towards a Cultural and Intellectual History of the English Abroad, 1640-1660', in *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and its Aftermath, 1640-1690*, ed. by Philip Major (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2016, previously Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp.37-8.

time, the term 'royalist' refers to a broad category of writers and ideologies.[28] Robert Wilcher observes that the first recorded use of the term 'royalist' in the *OED* is recorded in 1643; he argues that prior to 1640 the word was not needed 'until the governing class polarized into parties engaged in an ideological and military contest over the locus of supreme power in the state.' Alan Rudrum observes, in his analysis of the royalist lyric poem, that not all of the royalist writers working during the Civil War period were consistent supporters of Charles I, "Nor is there a consistent Royalist poetic, of attitude, theme or of style; such variables as age, temperament, class, education, experience of battle, sequestration and/or imprisonment, and intensity of religious commitment made for a wide variety of responses."[29] It is clear that the term royalist includes a wider selection of writers and thinking than previously considered.

The seventeenth-century English literary canon from the 1640s onward is in part a royalist compendium. However, there are other important influences and authors that also play a substantial role in shaping English literature and the development of the English literary canon in this period, including contributions by parliamentarian authors like John Milton. In this study, while royalist writers, publishers and compilers comprise a large portion of the case studies, this is primarily coincidental. The case studies selected for this thesis are arguably the strongest or most representative examples of each genre analysed, and were chosen for this reason. Yet, at times, royalism is discussed as a contributing interest to the development of a particular work or genre. For example, the theatre closure and his time in exile enabled Davenant to pursue new genres of poetry, specifically the heroic epic, which he otherwise might not have explored. Many of the themes in Davenant's *Preface* and his poem *Gondibert* are also clearly motivated by his royalist convictions and experience of war and exile. Similarly, Cavendish was incentivised to write the life of her husband, in part, to

[28] 'Royalists' constitute a more heterogeneous group than previously considered in seventeenth-century studies (see Philip Major, 'Introduction', in *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and its Aftermath, 1640-1690*, p.3).
[29] Alan Rudrum, 'Royalist Lyric', in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution* ed. by N.H. Keeble (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.181.

vindicate his reputation after the war, to exemplify the royalist hero as part and parcel to writing the life of an English subject. Politics, like religion, education and culture, influence the authors writing in this period, as in any period, and thus play a role in shaping the English literary canon. In this study, I demonstrate that royalist interests are one aspect of the English literary canon during the mid-seventeenth century.

Of course 'canon' and 'literary canon' are also loaded terms and require clarification. To date, there are numerous definitions of canon that are applicable to literature, but few definitions can be found that recognise a vernacular literary canon as a specific concept. Indeed, it is surprising to note that it was not until 2002 that the *OED* first included literary criticism within its entry for the word 'canon' (as a draft contribution). It is also contrary to expectation that the *OED* cites 1929 as the first time the word 'canon' is used to apply to literary criticism. Many of the definitions of the term 'canon' apply to church decrees and the Bible. Other uses of the term relate to music theory, mathematics, and a more general designation of a rule, law, edict or standard. It was not until the late-eighteenth century that the term 'canon' began to be used in relation to a body of specifically literary works. However, there is evidence of scholars making selective lists of poets worth studying and reading, such as the ones we find in poetic anthologies in the early seventeenth century, which can be traced as far back as the third century BC.[30] For the purpose of this study, one of the more applicable usages of the term 'canon' defines the word as 'a standard of judgment or authority; a test, criterion, means of discrimination.'[31] The majority of examples linked to this definition still relate to the Bible, such as Thomas Hobbes in 1651: 'The sacred Scripture is...the Canon and Rule of all Evangelical Doctrine.'[32] Yet, considerations such as judgment, authority and criterion are all factors canon theorists utilise when talking about canonical

[30] George A. Kennedy, 'The Origin of the Concept of a Canon and Its Application to the Greek and Latin Classics', in *Canon vs Culture*, ed. by Jan Gorak (New York: Garland, 2001), pp.106-7.
[31] 'Canon, n.1', in *OED* Online <http://www.*OED*.com/>[accessed 14 January 2013]
[32] 'Canon, n.1', in *OED* Online <http://www.*OED*.com/>[accessed 9 February 2013]

authors and writing today. I argue, therefore, that ideas underpinning the notion of literary 'standards,' ideas still influential today in debates over canon-formation, existed in early but recognisable forms in the mid-to-late seventeenth century texts considered in this study.

In the seventeenth century, however, different terminology denoted the idea of a canon. For example, in the mid-to-late seventeenth century the term 'classic' was applied to 'a writer, artist, musician, etc., of acknowledged importance and quality.'[33] The terms defined throughout this study will shed light on seventeenth-century mentalities regarding the preservation of literature and authors. Notable seventeenth-century terms will be identified and expanded upon throughout this thesis. However, the term fame or *fama* in particular has an overarching importance to the theme of a seventeenth-century English literary canon. I therefore want to provide a brief summary of the historical and literary usage of fame. Modern uses of the English term fame are more restricted than in the early modern and medieval periods.[34] The English origins of *fama* can be traced to the medieval period in which uses of the term can be found rooted in all aspects of daily life.

> *Fama* with its cognates and derivatives therefore acquired an impressively wide semantic range. It is 'rumour' and 'idle talk,' 'the things people say.' It is 'reputation' and 'memory' or 'memories,' 'the things people know.' It is 'fame,' or perhaps 'glory,' as well as their opposites, 'infamy' and 'defamation.' Across its semantic range *fama* intersected with a number of other terms, such as honour, shame, status, and witnessing, and it glossed the essential nexus of performance, talk, reputation, and speech regulation.[35]

[33] 'Classic, A.adj', in *OED* Online <http://www.*OED*.com/>[accessed 14 January 2013]
[34] Philip Hardie, *Rumour and Renown: Representations of Fama in Western Literature* (New York: CUP, 2012), p.1.
[35] Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail, *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp.1-2.

Performance is one of the key aspects of medieval *fama*; witnessing and talking about *fama* were the primary ways in which one publically displayed both honour and shame. Over time *fama* in relation to personal honour became more about possessor than possessions, but while less tangible it was still something to gain or lose.[36] It is a term that easily aligned itself with authorship, and over time *fama* became linked not only with literature but the reputation of an author.[37] Writers in the seventeenth century such as Jonson and Milton used literature to obtain personal fame. As the term fame became more frequently aligned with literary contexts, an 'author's claim to authority in the world outside can only be staked on his or her power over words. Through those words the individual author seeks to regulate his or her reputation among a group, namely the readership, whether defined more or less narrowly in terms of spatial or temporal extent.'[38] This study examines how the attainment of everlasting fame was one of the primary reasons an author wrote and published in the seventeenth-century.

In addition to defining the term canon, an understanding of what I mean by 'literature' and 'literary' is also crucial to this study. According to the *OED* there are two definitions of literature that exist within the confines of the seventeenth century: (i) 'Familiarity with letters or books; knowledge acquired from reading or studying books, esp. the principal classical texts associated with humane learning…literary culture; learning, scholarship' (*OED*, earliest recorded use 1450); and (ii) 'The action or process of writing a book or literary work; literary ability or output; the activity or profession of an author or scholar; the realm of letters or books' (*OED*, earliest recorded use 1163). Complementing these definitions, we also find terminology in the period such as 'author,' 'text,' 'poetry,' 'criticism' and 'tradition.' Poetry is the term most often used in the early modern period to refer to what we would understand

[36] Fenster and Smail, p.4.
[37] Fenster and Smail, p.213.
[38] Hardie, p.1.

as 'literature,' which can be seen in the critical works of Sir Philip Sidney and George Puttenham.[39]

Finally, the last term to be defined in this introduction, as it pertains to the whole of this study, is 'genre.' When applied to literature genre is generally understood as a work 'characterized by a particular form, style, or purpose.'[40] It is a complicated term because any genre can be comprised of other genres, or sub-genres, and in turn contributes to a broader definition of genre than what I mean here.[41] In this study I use the term 'genre' in two ways. First, I use it in a broad sense to refer to a category of writing. The first four chapters of this thesis will be genre studies considering printed collections, literary criticism, life writing and commendatory writing. Printed collections are a bit different from the other genres evaluated in this study in that they are a secondary work where their compilers are usually not the original author or authors of the included extracts.[42] I argue that an analysis of these categories of English writing can reveal insight into the conception and development of an English vernacular literary canon during the seventeenth century. Within each chapter of this study I also discuss the sub-genres that these broader genres are composed of or refer to. For instance, the genre of commendatory poetry includes the sub-genres of elegy, epitaph, epigram and dedicatory ode, and which at times I may refer to as, for example, the elegiac genre. Additionally, I analyse how certain types of writing contribute to the promotion of other types of writing; for instance, in my first chapter I discuss how the printed collection promotes particular literary genres such as the lyric poem and dramatic writing.

---

[39] This can be seen in the early critical work such as George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) and Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesie* (1595). The second chapter of this study will provide more historical context for the evolution of critical writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[40] *OED*

[41] Alastair Fowler offers an in depth study into the development of literary genres which I make use of here in clarifying how I use the term: see *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). Other works consulted include Frank Kermode, *The Classic* (London: Faber, 1975) and John Frow, *Genre* (London: Routledge, 2005).

[42] Some collections are compiled by a contributor, for example the six part *Poetical Miscellanies* (1684-1709) were primarily compiled by John Dryden, and heavily featured his own works even after his death (the final two miscellanies were printed 1704 and 1709). See Stuart Gillespie, *Digital Miscellanies Index* <http://digitalmiscellaniesindex.org/featured/?id=06>.

Methodology

I approach the seventeenth-century English literary canon from the angle of identifying and analysing early modern thinking around the notions of authorship, literature and a literary canon in this period. For instance, I analyse the terminology and methods seventeenth-century authors used to define literary worth, as well as how their ideas about literary preservation and the endurance of a vernacular English literary tradition help shape and promote what would later be termed a literary canon. I argue that the English literary canon is not just the result of a retroactive assessment of literary merit, but was constantly in the process of developing and evolving. Analysing the English literary canon merely as a retrospectively constructed artefact limits our understanding of the dynamic play of ideas involved in the historical context and moment of literary production. Moreover, it limits the manner in which scholars, students and the wider reading public interact with certain texts and authors. The historical contextualisation key to prior studies about English literary canons, such as those of Gorak, Ross and Terry, will inevitably be an important aspect of this study. However, my primary focus is to offer greater recognition to the part played by living writers and publishers in constructing the English literary canon than has been done previously.

This study is organised into five chapters. The first four are generic case studies, as previously stated, and examine printed collections, literary criticism, life writing and commendatory writing. The fifth chapter concentrates on a single author, Abraham Cowley (1618-1667), and how his works and literary career demonstrate notions about self-canonisation in the period, as well as influence the shape and content of the vernacular canon more broadly. Some of the genres and activities that reveal thinking about canon-formation in the seventeenth century that I have decided not to consider explicitly in this study include

educational treatises, library collections and letters. Educational treatises could provide useful background into what readers, writers and scholars might do with literature. However, many educational treatises in this period were still focused on either the classical canon or European (particularly French) educational practices at the exclusion of English vernacular literature, which makes literary criticism a more useful genre to discuss both the connections with the classical and European canons as well as the emergence of ideas about an English literary canon. An examination of library collections may have offered insight into collecting habits and reading tastes in this period. However, I argue the printed collection offers a better approach to examining ideas about collecting and disseminating literature. Letters, diaries and other personal memoranda also contribute to literary canon-formation and with further space would be worth investigating in a discussion of early modern literary canons. Yet, as most of these documents are meant to be private they less often reveal evidence of their authors actively attempting to contribute to and influence the shape of an English literary canon, with the more interesting genres such as the epistle form – which was designed for public rather than private reading – really developing more in the eighteenth century. Commendatory poetry, including the elegy and the epitaph, is a more useful genre in which to uncover seventeenth-century thinking about authorship and literary legacies during the mid-to-late seventeenth century.

Structure

I begin my study with an analysis of the mid-seventeenth century printed collection. To modern readers, these early collections of poetry and other writing do not appear to perform the same function as the modern literary anthology. Their construction appears haphazard; they do not always feature the names of the authors included, much less a more detailed description of the extracts. Yet, I argue that these collections of English writing can

reveal a wealth of information regarding notions of preservation and influence. We can glean information about the imagined audience and use for the books, notions about fame and literary preservation, and insight into a canon built around works rather than exclusively the author-centric corpus we are presently accustomed to. These texts can illuminate seventeenth-century thinking about literature, and reveal crucial insight into how stationers, printers and booksellers played a part in shaping the literary canon in this period, influencing market tastes and selecting which works were considered most worth preserving and circulating. The chapter begins with an introduction to the sixteenth-century printed miscellany, particularly Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes* (1557), which opened the English market up to printed anthology and miscellany collections. The Elizabethan miscellanies created a standard for collecting and praising literature, that was developed further in the mid-seventeenth century not just to collect but rank influential texts, genres and, at times, authors. Printed collections were assembled for a number of reasons, including theological and political motives. In particular, during the Civil War and Interregnum periods, royalist ideas played a heavy role in shaping the organisation, content and presentation of these collections. This chapter will take three texts as case studies, demonstrating that the motives and interests of stationers and compilers during the mid-seventeenth century played an important role in the development of an English literary canon. The first text is stationer Humphrey Moseley's anonymously compiled *The Academy of Complements* (1640). The publication of *Academy* re-opened the market for printed anthology and miscellany compilations, which had declined in popularity at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In analysing *Academy* I aim to demonstrate the ways in which this text displays notions of shaping literary tastes. For example, promoting royalist themes, as well as paving the way for Moseley to establish a market for the single-author printed collection, influencing which authors and works were valued in the mid-seventeenth century and later. The second two texts, both compiled by John Cotgrave, are

Wits Interpreter, the English Parnassus (1655) and *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (1655).[43] I argue that these two texts played an important role in shaping the reception of dramatic writing into the English literary canon, promoting drama's increasing prestige as a written genre.

In the second chapter I analyse the contribution of literary criticism to influencing the development of an English literary canon. Where printed collections revealed insight into how literature is gathered and distributed, criticism offers perspective into how authors specifically thought about, critiqued and promoted English literature during the mid-seventeenth century. Literary criticism offers scholarly opinion about a number of ideas relevant to thinking about the development of a literary canon. For example, the criteria required to be a successful writer – which could mean they were widely read, held in high-regard by their contemporaries and antecedents, contributed to the moral or cultural enlightenment of readers, or probably all of these things and more – the qualities of excellent writing and the factors that motivated an author to put their pen to paper in the first place. English criticism in this period also compared English writing with, and at times elevated it above, the classical and European compendiums of uncommon literature. It defends, defines and creates hierarchies on the basis of what seventeenth-century writers and readers considered the most important works, authors and literary genres. In this chapter I analyse the works of three writers, themselves commenting on three distinct literary genres, between 1650-1668: a period often viewed by modern scholars as a low point for English literary criticism. The first is William Davenant's *A Discourse upon Gondibert. An Heroick POEM* (1650) which critiques the epic genre while simultaneously promoting Davenant's forthcoming epic poem *Gondibert* (1651). Davenant's preface illuminates the achievements of English authors, discusses the manner in which a desire for fame shapes English poetry

[43] The latter of these is also printed by Moseley.

and offers an analysis and critique of epic poets and poetry, intending to influence and challenge contemporary opinions about the epic genre. The second case study is Margaret Cavendish's preface for her biographical account of her husband's life, *The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince William Cavendishe* (1667). Cavendish's essay theorises about life writing, which she categorised as a branch of historical writing, endeavouring to influence the manner in which readers think about and engage with biographical texts. Her preface attempts to influence the genre conventions for life writing during the seventeenth-century, and *Life* was considered one of her crowning achievements in her lifetime and after. The final case study in this chapter is John Dryden's *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay* (1668), which is considered to hallmark the beginning of substantial literary critical writing in English. In examining *Of Dramatick Poesie* I intend to demonstrate Dryden's contribution to shaping English dramatic writing conventions and establishing his own position as the century's preeminent literary critic.

The third chapter turns from theory to authorship, most frequently related to a posthumous reputation, in analysing the life writing genre, particularly the increase in writing the lives of authors during the mid-seventeenth century. This genre offers information into early modern thinking about the role of the author, and promoting authorship might be an influential determinant in ensuring a writer and their best works remain of interest to both contemporary and future audiences. Biographical writing also demonstrates the aspects of a writer's life considered relevant to their literary career; this includes an educational background, but also consideration of factors like morality and a good personal character. Writing the life of an author was based originally on clerical life writing traditions, and when lives for poets appeared with greater frequency from the mid-seventeenth century it was clear that contemporary opinion suggested that to be a good author one must be a good person. It was frequently writers who were respected for personal characteristics that were read and

promoted in this period. Many scholars consider Samuel Johnson to be the pioneering figure of the biographical genre, at least in regards to producing lives of literary figures rather than historical or religious chronicles. Yet there are several writers who over a century earlier were using the biographical genre to honour and remember great poets, as well as place these authors into literary hierarchies and advertising their works. In this chapter I analyse two case studies that shed light on the two most common types of life writing during the mid-to-late seventeenth century. First, I examine Thomas Sprat's *An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Abraham Cowley* (1668) as an example of the prefatory life which began to appear ahead of collections of single-author publications, usually posthumously, with greater frequency as the century progressed. Sprat's account of Cowley is one of the earliest lives of a poet which focuses on immortalising the author specifically for his literary achievements, and plays a substantial role in posthumously promoting the reputation of the author. My second case study is Gerard Langbaine's *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691) which is a catalogue of brief lives. Langbaine's catalogue is one of the first examples of using the brief life specifically to pay homage to great poets, in this case dramatists. It also provides valuable insight into the development of the concept of plagiarism, arguing for authorial originality as a key attribute to being a respected author and producing celebrated literature.

The fourth chapter analyses seventeenth-century commendatory poetry written by authors for their literary contemporaries. Poetic genres such as the elegy, epigram and dedicatory ode offered insight into thinking about authorship and renowned poetry, and were also themselves examples of poetry worth praising and promoting. Commendation was used to create literary hierarchies, draw comparisons with the classical greats, and award writer's fame, sometimes for a specific highly-regarded genre like the epic, while simultaneously allowing poets to demonstrate their own literary talents. In this chapter I examine the commendatory work of four esteemed poets writing at different intervals from the mid-to-late

seventeenth century. The first author is John Denham and I examine both his dedicatory ode 'On Mr. JOHN FLETCHER'S Workes' published in the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher folio, as well as his elegy for Cowley, 'On Mr. Abraham Cowley: His Death and Burial Amongst the Ancient Poets' (1668). I argue that Denham's work provides insight into authorial hierarchies and ideas about fame and literary preservation, attempting to promote the reputations of eminent English poets. Next I examine the dedicatory odes of Edmund Waller and Abraham Cowley written to celebrate and promote Davenant's *Gondibert*, and both published with Davenant's *Discourse* on the epic in 1650 as well as with the incomplete epic when it first appeared in 1651. These odes offer insight into contemporary thinking about the epic genre, as well as information about how contemporary poets praised and supported one another in attempting to influence which works were read and acclaimed. Finally, I discuss John Dryden's elegy 'To the Memory of Mr. *OLDHAM* ' printed in *Remains of Mr.* John Oldham *in VERSE and PROSE* (1684), his epigram for Milton printed in the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost* and his dedicatory ode 'To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve, On His COMEDY, call'd, The Double-Dealer' printed ahead of William Congreve's *Double-Dealer* (1694). Dryden's commendatory verse provides insight into notions of literary legacies and eternal fame, as well as his interest in shaping the reception of Restoration poets and poetry at the end of the century and afterward.

Finally, in my last chapter I offer an analysis of the literary career and works of Abraham Cowley (1618-1667). Today he has been relegated to a minor position in the literary canon, but during his lifetime and for a significant period afterward was one of the most venerated and loved authors of the century, influencing many of the major canonical authors like John Milton, John Dryden, Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson. It is from this elevated position that I argue Cowley did much to influence the shape and content of the then emerging English literary canon, and offers an ideal case study into the process of self-

canonisation during the seventeenth century. The mid-seventeenth century is an ideal moment in which to examine an author's role in influencing and positioning himself within the literary canon, as it is in this period that we see an increase in the printing of single-author publications, particularly collections of works brought forth for, and often by, living poets. Editions of literary works assembled with the aim of promoting one author can communicate a great deal about preferred styles and genres, and more notably, an author's self-consciousness regarding their lasting reputation. I argue that in addition to the esteemed position Cowley held during his lifetime, he is an ideal centre for this collection as he, his works or his afterlife have been part of the other four genres I analyse in this study. In this final chapter I consider Cowley as a canonical and canon influencing author through an examination of his publications, including his juvenilia publication *Poetical Blossoms* (1633) and more notably his 1656 edition *Poems*. His works, in verse and prose, his elevated reputation and his influence on his peers as well as major eighteenth-century authors and critics have all contributed to Cowley playing a significant role in shaping the English literary canon as it was understood both in the seventeenth century and today.

CHAPTER ONE

PRINTED COLLECTIONS:

HUMPHREY MOSELEY AND JOHN COTGRAVE

In sixteenth-and seventeenth-century England printed collections, in verse and prose, such as *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557) and *Englands Helicon* (1600) played an important part in shaping changing literary tastes in the period, although such works have received minimal attention from modern readers and scholars. Researchers like Adam Smyth posit that the anonymous authorship of many of the poems and dramatic extracts in these printed collections is the primary reason that critics do not regard these texts as worth reading and studying.[44] Even more discouraging are assertions such as William St Clair's, who argues that printed collections of poetry and prose published between '1600 until after 1774 […failed] to perform the selecting, canonising, and memorialising role which had been theirs in the manuscript age.'[45] Additionally, while manuscript miscellanies, usually of verse, continued to be compiled and circulated on a regular basis well into the eighteenth century, printed collections of poetry and other kinds of writing did not flourish with the same continuity over the same period; for example, printed miscellanies were prolific during the Elizabethan era, yet disappeared almost entirely thereafter until 1640, not fully recapturing the literary market again until 1653. This has led many modern readers and researchers to doubt the impact that these texts had on the literary culture of the period. Nonetheless, evidence can be found that these texts influenced subsequent printed collections and attracted an enduring readership. These texts offer insight into the cultural, political, social and commercial interests of their publishers and compilers, and of the audiences they intended to reach. Such evidence contributes significantly to our understanding of both literary tastes and publishing conventions across the period and prompts a closer examination of these printed collections

[44] Adam Smyth, *"Profit and Delight" Printed Miscellanies in England, 1640-1682* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), p.5.
[45] William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), p.71.

in two chief respects: studying the cultural landscape or conditions out of which the vernacular English literary canon began to emerge, and examining the impact of printed collections on changing fashions in seventeenth-century literary tastes more broadly.

Scholarly attention to early modern printed collections of poetry and prose tends to focus on what are frequently referred to as the Elizabethan miscellanies, initiated by Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonnettes* (1557) a year before the coronation of Elizabeth I, or else on eighteenth-century publications. In the seventeenth century, printed verse miscellanies, barring the occasional re-print, disappeared almost entirely at the end of Elizabeth's reign for almost four decades, as well as for a decade-long interval during the Civil War.[46] Adam Smyth and Mary Hobbs are two of the few critics who have taken a particular interest in seventeenth-century miscellanies, the latter primarily in manuscript versions of such texts, while Ann Moss and Peter Beal have demonstrated an interest in commonplace books, the close cousin of printed collections of verse and prose, during this period.[47] I attempt to build on the work of these and other scholars by analysing three mid-seventeenth-century collections, *The Academy of Complements* (1640), *Wits Interpreter, the English Parnassus* (1655) and *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (1655) in the context of the lives and careers of their compilers: the stationer Humphrey Moseley and anthologist John Cotgrave. Humphrey Moseley, the prominent bookseller who printed the works of many eminent lyric poets during the mid-seventeenth century, is particularly remembered for producing the Beaumont and Fletcher folio (1647) as well as John Milton's *Poems* (1645). Additionally, he also published several poetic miscellanies, one of which, *The Academy of Complements* (1640) proved to be one of the most enduring and popular publications of the period, being

[46] Humphrey Moseley and Humphrey Blunden each published a miscellany in 1640, but no further publications appeared until after Cromwell was confirmed in his Protectorate in the 1650s (Mary Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1992), p.99.).

[47] Some of the texts examined as miscellanies by one scholar are evaluated in comparison to commonplace-book traditions by other critics. Disagreements and various definitions of terminology and its impact on how these texts are studied will be discussed further in the next section.

reprinted numerous times until the end of the eighteenth century. In part because of its great popularity, and its undoubted appeal to readers of the day, *Academy* is the first text I plan to focus on. The second two texts that I analyse were both compiled by John Cotgrave, an anthologist and compiler who was involved in assembling and editing several poetic collections, but who has received very little attention even by scholars of printed collections. These texts are titled *Wits Interpreter* (1655) and *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (1655), the latter of which was another collection printed by Moseley. I am particularly interested in Cotgrave because of his evident desire to promote playwriting during the Interregnum while the theatres were closed. Dramatic texts were only just beginning to receive critical attention as a written genre distinct from poetic genres, in part due to Moseley, who along with printing the Beaumont and Fletcher folio published numerous plays in octavo including those of William Cartwright, Thomas Middleton and Richard Brome.[48] I believe a closer analysis of these publications, compiled and promoted by Moseley and Cotgrave, will shed light on the important, if largely unappreciated, role played by mid-seventeenth-century printed collections of poetry, prose and dramatic writing in contributing to the development of what would later become a recognisable canon of vernacular English literature.

The challenge of classification

One of the most problematic aspects of discussing the contribution early modern literary collections make to canon studies is the lack of clearly defined terminology, whether modern or early modern, surrounding these texts. Seventeenth-century anthologies and verse miscellanies have roots dating back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; predominantly by

[48] On Moseley's publication of play texts see Paulina Kewes, '"Give me the Sociable Pocket-Books…": Humphrey Moseley's Serial Publication of Octavo Play Collections', *Publishing History* 38 (January 1995), 5-21 and Maureen Bell, 'Booksellers without an Author, 1627-1685', in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: OUP, 2007), pp.260-85.

way of commonplace book traditions.[49] The *OED, The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, The Oxford Companion to the Book* and Peter Beal's *A Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology: 1450 to 2000* all attempt to define and distinguish what differentiates an anthology from a miscellany, from a commonplace book, from a florilegium, and so on. Yet, no strict consensus exists in the ways scholars use these terms.

Many critics and sources frequently use terms such as 'anthology' and 'miscellany' in an interchangeable sense when referring to early modern compilations.[50] Peter Beal and Ann Moss, both interested in the commonplace book, differentiate these texts from anthologies and miscellanies which were printed for wider leisure consumption, whereas commonplaces were used either as personal memoranda or as tools for formative education.[51] Mary Hobbs has a particular interest in verse miscellanies, and traces the roots of commonplace traditions in England, but uses commonplace, miscellany and anthology in an interchangeable sense, focusing rather on the distinction between manuscript and print traditions.[52] Similarly, Elizabeth Pomeroy in her study of Elizabethan collections uses the terms 'miscellany' and 'anthology' synonymously, focusing her research on questions of authorship and language

[49] Commonplace books were organised in a variety of ways and compiled for several reasons, but generally they were books 'in which "commonplaces" or passages important for reference were collected, usually under general heads; hence, a book in which one records passages or matters to be especially remembered or referred to, with or without arrangement.' (see 'Commonplace-book n.', in *OED* Online <http://www.*OED*.com/>[accessed 1 July 2013])

[50] For example, *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* writes 'see anthology' in its definition of the term 'miscellany' rather than suggest a more nuanced definition for each individual term; see Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (eds.), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Similarly, William St Clair defines miscellanies as synonymous to commonplace books, as well as anthologies in print (William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004)).

[51] According to Moss, at the end of the seventeenth century commonplace books merge with miscellany and encyclopaedia conventions, but prior to this were part of formative and programmatic education shaping how boys developed linguistic skills. (Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structure of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp.vii-viii.); also see Peter Beal, 'Notions in Garrison: The Seventeenth-Century Commonplace Book', in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985-1991*, ed. by W. Speed Hill (Binghamton, NY: RETS, 1993), p.132.

[52] Hobbs is particularly interested, when considering printed collections, in what print has borrowed from manuscript culture. For further details on the evolution of the commonplace tradition in Tudor and Stuart England see Hobbs, pp.13-23.

rather than issues of bibliographical taxonomy.[53] These researchers all offer definitions which are either coloured by the particular requirements of their own studies, or which they feel best synthesise modern terminology with early modern thinking about these texts.

Most reference works and scholars, then, either gloss over the problem of terminology, or attempt to establish firm lines between the different types of early compilation traditions in manuscript and print. Adam Smyth is one of the few to acknowledge the difficulty in properly demarcating genre boundaries between anthologies, miscellanies and commonplace books, as well as other texts likes conduct manuals, educational pamphlets or song books.[54] Instead, he offers a definition of miscellany based on 'variation in authorship as its founding definition' but does not 'attempt to reconstruct a precise mid-seventeenth-century understanding of the word.'[55] For the purpose of this study, I find Smyth's very broad definition most useful. It is virtually impossible to separate one collecting tradition from another in this period, with most publications fitting into several of the different categories that have been identified by modern scholars. To this end, I have decided to adopt the terminology that seventeenth-century compilers and publishers generally use in the prefatory material of these texts. Most commonly used is simply the term 'collection.' For example, of his *Wits Interpreter* Cotgrave claims that the '*English tongue* was never honoured with a larger or a more *Accurate Collection*.'[56] Occasionally the compilers and publishers of these collections seem deliberately to avoid using a single term to describe the nature of the text. The anonymous compiler of *The Marrow of Complements* (1655), for instance, discusses in his prefatory epistle the 'reception of this, which includes

[53] Pomeroy notes that the term 'miscellany' was not in use during the sixteenth century and offers the modern definition of a 'printed volume of poetry having three or more authors, even collections ascribed to a single author but now suspected or known to be by several.' She excludes from her own study texts not in English, music compilations and collections of one writer accompanied by commendatory material (Elizabeth Pomeroy, *The Elizabethan Miscellanies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p.1); According to the *OED*, 'miscellany' began to be associated with treatises and compilation books in the early seventeenth century.
[54] Adam Smyth, p.2.
[55] Smyth, p.2.
[56] *Wits Interpreter*, sig.A5r.

the summe and marrow of all former contrivances of this nature.'[57] It is clear from the compiler's description what 'this' is, but it is not given a name. Rather than offer a strict definition, then, I use the term 'collection' loosely, to discuss a set of texts that possess, in different measures, features of miscellany, anthology, commonplace and other early modern compilation traditions.

Origins of the printed collection

I conclude this introduction by offering a brief overview of the sixteenth century miscellany tradition and the re-emergence of printed collections of English verse and prose during the mid-seventeenth century. Richard Tottel's 1557 *Songes and Sonettes* is generally thought of as the first influential verse anthology in English.[58] Tottel's popular miscellany went through several editions and reprints throughout the sixteenth century, and has been credited by scholars such as Pomeroy and Hobbs as providing the model and inspiration for subsequent verse miscellanies. Tottel's preface to the reader demonstrates a key aim of publishing a verse collection, imitated in later collections:

> That to have wel written in verse, yea and in smal parcelles, deserueth great prayse, the workes of diuers Latines, Italians, and other, doe proue sufficiently. That our tong is able in that kynde to do as praiseworthely as the rest, the honorable stile of the noble Earle of Surrey, and the weightinesse of the depewitted sir Thomas Wyat the elders verse, with several graces in sundry good English writers, do shew abundantir (sic). It resteth now (gentle reader) that thou think it not euyll done, to publishe, to the honor of the Englishe tong, and for profite of the studious of Englishe eloquence,

[57] Philomusus, *The Marrow of Complements* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1655), sig.A2
[58] Tottel has at least one known precedent, *The Court of Venus*, which was published in 1538 but currently exists only in fragments.

> those workes which the vngentle hordes vp of such treasure, haue heretofore enuied thee.[59]

As Pomeroy observes, Tottel's anthology 'was intended to vindicate the English language, to exemplify and instruct in refinements of style' and to establish 'English as a language capable in itself of variety and refinement.'[60] Tottel's desire to promote and celebrate English poetry is precisely why his publication served as the stimulus for further collections attempting to contribute to this objective. Numerous collections imitating Tottel's model were published over the remainder of the Elizabethan period. These include *A Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1566), *The Paradyse of Dainty Devices* (1576), *Brittons Bowre of Delights* (1591), *The Phoenix Next* (1593), *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), *Englands Helicon* (1600), *Belvedere or the Garden of Muses* (1600), *Englands Parnassus* (1600) and *A Poetical Rhapsody* (1602). The collections varied in content and structure, with some collections designed for singing, and verse selections including the epigram, dramatic excerpts, lyrics and the pastoral ode. Many were organised under general topical headings, yet some did display an interest in authorship, such as *Englands Parnassus*, which included authors' names alongside some poems. However, like Tottel, these collections focused primarily on gathering amorous lyrics, derived from English poetry, and thereby honouring English poets. While our knowledge of publishing practices and motives during this period remains fragmentary, the one common factor among all these early printed compilations is evidence of a desire to both promote and stabilise the English language.[61]

From the end of the Elizabethan period until 1640, however, there is a distinct dearth in the publication of printed collections, although manuscript miscellanies still circulated

[59] Richard Tottel, *Songes and Sonettes* (1557), Fo.1.
[60] Pomeroy, pp.31-2.
[61] For further information about these miscellanies and publishing practices during the sixteenth century see Pomeroy (pp.117-18).

during this time.[62] Mary Hobbs has postulated several factors that may have contributed both to the disappearance and later re-emergence of printed collections. She has suggested that the print market had become oversaturated with texts that were too similar to one another, resulting in many readers preferring manuscript publications. However, in the troubled times leading up to the Civil War there may have been an increased demand for pocket-sized reading material as a distraction from political strife.[63] Additionally, marginalia in printed collections reveal that they were at times used as a source of cheap paper.[64] Smyth discusses the importance of the Civil War (1642-1651) and Oliver Cromwell's Commonwealth rule in shaping the bulk of these mid-century collections, and while certain that they would have appeared in some form regardless of political strife Smyth sums up the importance of politics and royalism on these collections as follows:

> What defines most miscellanies is their sense of grievance and protest…they were able to organise themselves as a voice of disenfranchised Royalism…that ready supply of sources–the university manuscript miscellany…offered a fitting vocabulary for protest. Once established, this sense of grievance was sufficiently defining as to be maintained by many later texts, despite changing political contexts. When it did begin to decline, the threads binding printed miscellanies started to loosen, and these books separated away toward new types of texts…Without Royalist defeat in the Civil War, printed miscellanies would probably have appeared, but as looser, more decorous, duplicates of undergraduate wit–with less anger, less consistency of purpose, and, I am sure, less success.[65]

[62] Mary Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1992), p.97.
[63] Hobbs, p.97.
[64] Smyth reveals that plain paper was expensive at this time, but these books were cheap to produce so even non-readers may have purchased them as a source of paper. (see *Profit and Delight*, p.35).
[65] Smyth, *Profit and Delight*, pp.171-2.

I concur completely with Smyth's conclusions regarding how the conflicts leading to the Civil War in England shaped the content of printed collections and the political motives of those publishing them, whether volumes were packaged and sold as collections of commonplaces, handbooks of courtly compliments or collections of exemplary poetry.

In this chapter, I do not wish to downplay the importance of either the political and cultural history so clearly outlined by Smyth, or the relationship between manuscript and print that Hobbs found most intriguing about seventeenth-century collections. However, my focus will be on the literary merits of these compilations, or at least how these literary merits were appreciated and understood by readers in the period, and thus what such collections might offer studies of literary history specifically. I argue that these mid-seventeenth-century collections were published with a stronger confidence in the literary qualities and suitability of the English language than the earlier Elizabethan miscellanies, which focused primarily on praising English poetry, and were more often aimed at an elite group of leisured readers. By contrast, these mid-seventeenth-century collections demonstrate a greater interest in shaping reading habits, literary tastes and genre conventions for a wide and diverse readership. Thomas Corns considers the emergence of the 'middling sort', and states that 'by the mid-seventeenth century, readers of modest attainment devoured texts aimed at a wide readership with a discerning and evident intelligence that alarmed their social superiors.'[66] Seventeenth-century collections responded to a growth in the demand for literary genres seen as appropriate for leisure reading and an increase in literate audiences, while simultaneously attempting not to alienate the elite upper class audiences that had once been the only consumers of literature.

Moseley's *Academy of Complements* (1640) was one of the first printed verse collections to appear in the mid-seventeenth century, almost four decades after the final few

[66] Thomas N. Corns, *A History of Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp.3-4.

Elizabethan miscellanies were published. It enjoyed a longer lifespan than any other seventeenth century collection and its commercial and public success undoubtedly played a part in opening up the market to a variety of new collections. *Wits Interpreter* (1655) and *The English Treasury* (1655), both assembled by John Cotgrave with the latter also being published by Moseley, are two very different types of printed collection, and yet both, I argue, play an important role in promoting English dramatic writing and, consequently, in contributing to the eighteenth-century emergence of dramatic anthologies. In this chapter I aim to shed light on how these three collections were not just a gathering of compliments or commonplaces, assembled with only economic interests and the desire to protest against the Commonwealth in mind, but that they were in fact envisioned as literary texts actively participating in the evaluation, preservation and dissemination of English poetry. Moreover, what follows will show that the selection of excerpts and the structure of these three printed collections were clearly meant to cater to the literary tastes of seventeenth-century readers and continued to influence the shape of poetic collections well into the next century.

Humphrey Moseley (b. in or before 1603 – d.1661)

Humphrey Moseley, the pre-eminent stationer of the mid-seventeenth century, published the poetic and dramatic works of many of the period's most influential and widely read writers, including Beaumont and Fletcher, Carew, Cartwright, Cowley, Crashaw, Davenant, Denham, Middleton, Milton, Suckling and Vaughan. Despite this, little is known about his personal life and character. As John Curtis Reed has noted, most of what we know about Moseley comes from remaining stationer records such as his entries in the Court Book of the Stationers' Company, the prefatory epistles he wrote for several of his books and his

will.[67] We know that he was apprenticed to Matthew Lownes from the 27 March 1620 until 7 May 1627, at which time he began a partnership with Nicholas Fussel trading at the Ball in St Paul's Churchyard. He was admitted into the Stationers' Company on 28 October 1633 after which he set up his own shop at the Three Kings (1634) before moving to the Prince's Arms (1638) where he would remain until the end of his life. He was married to Anne (d.1673) with whom he had four children, only one of which survived into adulthood, and his wife carried on his business for a few years after his death.[68] After Anne, Henry Herringman took over many of Moseley's more popular titles.[69] Although typically remembered today for his contribution to establishing single-author publications, Moseley published a variety of other books including religious writings, translations and collections of poetry. Of the latter, the most well-known volume was his *Academy of Complements* (1640), which is the text I examine first in this section in order to demonstrate the contribution of both Moseley and seventeenth-century printed collections in shaping literary tastes during the mid-Civil War period. This includes analysing both the text and contemporary reactions to it in order to uncover the ways in which *Academy* promoted and celebrated authors and works that supported his own royalist interests, as well as shed light on an unexpected consequence of the popularity of literary miscellanies in this period: that is, the growth in demand for and supply of single-author collections of (mostly) poetic works.

The success of Moseley's *Academy of Complements* and Humphrey Blunden's *Witts Recreations*, which both appeared in 1640, demonstrate a seventeenth-century resurgence of the printed collection, although it would be a further decade before the market for literary

[67] John Curtis Reed, 'Humphrey Moseley, Publisher', in *Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers*, 2 (1930), 55-142.
[68] For further biographical information on Moseley see Paulina Kewes, '"Give me the Sociable Pocket-Books…": Humphrey Moseley's Serial Publication of Octavo Play Collections', *Publishing History* 38 (January 1995), 5-21; Reed, 55-142; and Robert Wilcher, 'Moseley, Humphrey (b. in or before 1603, d.1661)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19390>.
[69] Peter Lindenbaum, 'Humphrey Moseley', in *The British Literary Book Trade, 1475-1700*, ed. by James K. Bracken and Joel Silver (Detroit: Gale Research, 1996), p.177.

compilations regained the vigour it had had during the Elizabethan period. Both *Academy* and *Witts Recreations* appear to have sold relatively well, indicating an appetite for such material packaged in a miscellany format. Blunden's *Witts Recreations* went through at least seven printings by 1683, while Moseley's *Academy* was reprinted around 18 times in at least 12 editions, ever-increasing in size as new material was added, over the next century and a half; eight of those editions appeared during the publisher's own lifetime. The majority of the collections that were published between 1640 and the end of the century generally only ran to one or two succeeding editions if any. The only other seventeenth-century printed verse collection to have a similar popularity and longevity was Samuel Speed's *The New Academy of Complements* (1669) which was published in a final edition in 1748. Clearly the fact that Moseley's *Academy* remained in print until 1795, appearing in multiple editions, suggests that this was a popular and enduring work.

The Academy of Complements is a hybrid format, drawing on both the courtesy book and verse miscellany genres, and is more reminiscent of a handbook or guide than a collection of poetry. At first glance the organisation appears eclectic, loosely assembled around the theme of pleasant verses and social dialogues for use by a gentleperson in polite company, but lacking any semblance of a cohesive way in which to navigate the book. The title page clearly states the book's purpose: 'Wherein Ladyes Gentlewomen, Schollers, and Strangers may accommodate their Courtly Practice with most Curious Ceremonies, Complementall, Amorous, High expressions, and forms of speaking, or writing.'[70] Smyth argues that 'to twenty-first century eyes it is a curious text: a farrago of unattributed poetry,' but when compared to similar mid-seventeenth century collections it demonstrates 'a sense of gathered diversity – of poetry, exemplary compliments, "Questions with their answers

[70] Humphrey Moseley, *The Academy of Complements* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1640), *STC* 19883.5, sig.A2r.

resolving the doubts of Lovers," tables "of hard words"– other printed miscellanies are eclectic to the point of discordance.'[71]

As in the paratexts of many seventeenth-century collections, the anonymous compiler of *Academy* presents himself as the author of the collection. He uses the pseudonym Philomusus, although text is sometimes attributed to 'J.G.'[72] In Philomusus's 'The Authors Preface to the Reader,' he promises that 'this Book…is purged and perfected to the Booksellers owne content,' implying that to some extent Moseley has been involved with this publication. Readers are instructed to consult the *Academy* so that 'thou mayst learne from it to cure thy dumbenes, to discourse confidently with thy friends, and assuredly to tender thy wit and service, to those thou shalt have occasion to acknowledge, especially in the Court.'[73] This preface is similar to most prefatory notices in the seventeenth century, seeking to appeal to a diverse audience.

After several editions in which both the length and content of *Academy* increased, Philomusus wrote a second preface around 1645, 'The Authors Epistle to this new Edition,' included directly after the original, and unaltered, 'Authors Preface to the Reader.' Unlike the original preface, which pleads the favour of an unknown audience, this new preface takes the time to discuss *Academy*'s reception in the five years since its first publication. In doing so, Philomusus particularly concentrates on three types of 'Delinquent' who would censure the publication:

> [*The*] *first of them is bashfull…he will not buy it himselfe, but sends another to procure it for him…*[*he*] *reads this Volume in his study more privately than his*

[71] Adam Smyth *Profit and Delight*, p.1; Adam Smyth, 'Such a general itching after book-learning': Popular Readers of 'the most eminent Wits', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 263.
[72] Potentially John Gough (fl.1640) who was the author of at least one play, *The Strange Discovery* (London: Printed for William Leake, 1640). The pseudonym Philomusus perhaps is meant to be read etymologically, one who loves the muses, but potentially recalls the satirical *Parnassus Plays* (1598-1602) in which the characters Philomusus and Studioso embark on a journey to reach Parnassus, initially representing the university but eventually turning to their attempts to become writers of poetry.
[73] Philomusus's 'The Authors Preface to the Reader,' in *The Academy of Complements* (London: Printed for Moseley, 1640), *STC* 19883.5, sig.A8v.

> *prayer-Booke, and perhaps with more devotion, though he will not let the world know so much, for feare his phrases should grow common: it is his Diary…This Reader is my publicke enemy, but my secret friend.*[74]

The first accusation is levied at readers who enjoy the book but pretend otherwise. These readers, it is argued, are embarrassed to admit that they like a cheap book, and worse, to need a handbook on polite conduct, when they would rather convince their friends that their wit is their own, even if that is not the case. However, as Smyth has noted, '[if] print runs imply popularity, printed miscellany prefaces reinforce a sense of commercial success.' Smyth suggests that print runs for these texts could have been as high as 2,000 copies which was the maximum print run at the time.[75] Given the number of editions *Academy* went through all before 1685, with occasionally less than a year between printings, it is likely that rather than frequently selling out of a small print run, Moseley's text sold well enough to allow a large print run every few years, implying that the text indeed had more friends than enemies. These prefatory defences offer insight into reader responses and the role of literary agents – stationers, publishers, booksellers, authors, writers of prefatory material – in trying to respond to these demands. This is in part a market concern but it is also a literary concern, especially with a collection like *Academy* that in the end went through a number of iterations. The purpose of the prefatory defence was not simply commercial, concerned with selling the most recent edition of the collection, but to establish a particular text as worth reading and circulating. In this way the preface defends the reputation of *Academy* in order to secure the publication an enduring position in the market rather than a fleeting appearance.

The arguments made for the continued publishing and reading of texts like *Academy* are on the basis of usefulness, in this case in conversational settings, as well as for the

[74] Philomusus (1645), *Wing* G1401A, sigs.A9r-v.
[75] Smyth, *Profit and Delight*, p.10

reader's pleasure. This is made clear when Philomusus provides the second reason certain readers criticise the text.

> *A second, but of another forme, that will bee displeased, is a pretender to Wit and Language; but that's all can bee said of him; to him the Fancies seem flat, the Lines are not sublime enough, the worke throughout not well disposed; he would have* Chimeraes *in the Expressions,* Rodomontados *in the Stile, Tragicall plots in the Discourses, and such lofty things…But Reader, this man will not understand what he sayes himselfe: much lesse suffer others to speake or write to be understood*.[76]

The types of readers discussed in this section often pretend to be too cultured for the collection, but are in fact more foolish than the collection they mock. The charges raised here are ones frequently levied at printed collections in the period; here the author uses these accusations to discuss why it is unfair to judge a collection on the basis of what it is not, for example, a tragic play. The prefatory material for the *Academy* demonstrates recognition of different genres, and while epics and tragic plays may be considered higher forms or artistic expression in this period, the preface nonetheless argues that miscellaneous collections have their own place in the repertoire of English poetry. This is addressed most directly in the third charge rebutted by the defence:

> *My third and last opposer is one that takes it very unkindly…that I should rob him of his Common place Booke…this Gallant is utterly undone, and sequestered of all, he pursued his Mistris with such Language, write thus, sung the same songes, and was so happy; as to winne admiration from such set-formes*.[77]

[76] Philomusus, *Academy* (1645), *Wing* G1401A, sig.A9v.
[77] Philomusus, *Academy* (1645), *Wing* G1401A, sigs.A9v-A10r.

The preface addresses readers who would rather compile their own commonplaces rather than use a printed manual. Moreover, a printed handbook puts into circulation compliments that were better left in the private realm. Philomusus mocks this gallant figure, and implies that *Academy*, despite offering a selection of compliments and polite verse, does not actually intend to work as a secret guidebook to instruct readers in wooing but rather to gather together beautiful selections of verse. The suggestion is that certain readers want to restrict access to the best of English verse, making such selections available only to an elite readership. By contrast, *Academy* endeavoured to widen the readership of such verse. In their attempts both to stoke and satisfy the appetites of aspiring 'middling sort' readers for literary self-improvement, mid-seventeenth-century printed collections like *Academy* mark the beginning of a distinct shift in the status of certain forms of writing. This shift, put crudely, may be thought of as a movement from an aristocratic age in which literary worth was in large part a function of its restriction to a noble coterie readership, to a more democratic age in which literary worth began to be linked not only to social exclusivity but also to popularity and a work's appeal to a large audience. It is related to this idea that I now examine the manner in which Moseley's *Academy* evolved overtime from a book of polite and eloquent phrases into a collection of poetry.

Structurally, the *Academy* groups extracts under broad thematic sections. The second section, or 'Choice and faire Flowers, Selected out of the Garden of Eloquence, to adorne our language with variety of expressions, upon several occasions,' for example, tends to group passages by themes such as 'Beauty' and 'Sovereignty', although it refrains from using the topical headings common in Elizabethan commonplace books and printed collections. For instance, several passages in this section are on love and wooing including 'On effects of their Love' and 'Experience of a Lover.' After these extracts on love, the collection next offers polite courtesies with which to address members of court including 'A tender of

Service to ones Soveraigne', 'A tendring of Service to the Queene' and 'An humble addresse to a great Lord.'

As the collection expands in later editions, the shape and content of the *Academy* begins more closely to resemble a collection of poetry with the inclusion of not just new material, but new sections dedicated specifically to poetry rather than the previously mentioned sections of polite phrases. The *Academy* promises that it contains English poems and plays, but even in subsequent editions the compiler does not include the names of authors or sources either alongside the works or in an appendix. However, when a new edition of *Academy* was published in the same year as the first edition, the title page was altered to advertise 'A Worke perused and most exactly perfected by the Author with Additions of witty Amorous Poems.' These poems are ensconced in a new section of their own titled 'Complementall and Amorous *Poems*' and this new division is reminiscent of several of the earlier Elizabethan miscellanies which promised to compile the choicest selections of poetry written by the most illustrious English poets. Sixteenth-century miscellanies tended toward moral headings and selections like Angels, God, Innocence, Beauty, Courage, Honour or Woe. In the *Academy* the selections of verse are tailored toward the theme of compliments, with the short excerpts bearing titles like 'On her Lockes' and 'On her eyes', and the longer pieces presented as dialogues.

Another short wooing fit in verse.

I. Sweet soule to whom I vowed am a slave,
Let me the injoyment of my wishes have.
M. Sweet Sir, Let not a wretch that is so poore,
Expect to hord up treasure for his store.
I. Yet still take heed least thou by selfe submit.
M. To one that hath his wealth, but wants his wit.

I. Prethee be silent, beauty takes in rent.

M. But folly bought is worse than money spent.

I. Well for this once, Ile take thee as thou art,

M. For richer for poorer agreed, mine owne sweet heart.[78]

These selections of verse, while arranged as discourses, are not overly dialogic like dramatic selections but are selected as beautiful lyrics. The lines could be read conversationally, and even dropping out the male/female characterisations, they still function as light, pretty verses. Throughout the forties and fifties, Moseley established his reputation as the number one publisher of lyric collections showcasing a single author. Augmentations to *Academy* suggest that Moseley was interested in providing printed collections of poetry rather than a random assortment of commonplaces. By the 1645 edition of *Academy*, Moseley's intention to consolidate and promote some of the best selections of lyrics and lyric poets becomes abundantly clear.

The 1645 edition promised that it has been 'inriched, by the Author, with additions of witty Poems and pleasant songs.' This edition includes another new section, featuring longer extracts, often whole poems extracted primarily from plays and masques, entitled 'The Court of Venus *Songs, of Love and Mirth*.' This section is perhaps one of the most interesting features of *Academy*, potentially recalling the now fragmentary *Court of Venus* (1538), one of the earliest known printed miscellanies, predating Tottel by about 20 years. The early miscellany is known to have contained predominantly love poetry, starting what Pomeroy describes as 'a dialectic of moral and amorous verse which continued through all [Elizabethan] miscellanies.'[79] The poems in this section of *Academy*, unlike in the majority of the collection, are not accompanied with the instructions the aphorisms carry in the rest of the

[78] *Academy* (1640), *STC* 19883.5, sig.H1r.
[79] See Pomeroy for more on this text, pp.3-5 (p.5).

text about how to use these verses for wooing, writing letters and addressing nobility. Instead they are presented as poetry, or more specifically, songs and lyrics, and feature the work of some of the most eminent authors of the early seventeenth century including Francis Beaumont (1584-1616), Thomas Campion (1567-1620), John Fletcher (1579-1625), Ben Jonson (1572-1637), Thomas Carew (1595-1640), Phillip Massinger (1583-1640), Sir John Suckling (1609-1641), James Shirley (1596-1666) and Robert Herrick (1591-1674).

Academy's 'Court of Venus' does not name sources, as previously stated; however, many of the works included were taken from well-known dramatic sources, had previously been printed under the authors' names and it would have been an easy task for most seventeenth-century readers to identify the authors. For example, the compiler takes an extract from Thomas Campion's fourth *Book of Ayres* published in 1618, as well as lines from Act five, scene 1 of William Davenant's *The Just Italian* (1630). There is also an abundance of material taken from the plays and masques of Beaumont, Fletcher and Jonson interspersed throughout the section, ensuring that readers frequently encountered the poetry of these respected dramatists. Throughout his career, Moseley demonstrated an interest in providing readers with previously unpublished material when producing literary volumes such as the first Beaumont and Fletcher folio (1647).[80] However, much of the identifiable material in 'Court of Venus' had previously appeared in print, which I argue suggests an interest in promoting authors because Moseley's *Academy* was consolidating selections of familiar poetry. Moreover, I think this section of *Academy* shows direct evidence of Moseley's interest in shaping literary tastes in two distinct ways. First, he promotes royalist authors and agendas, adding this new section to the miscellany during the middle of the Civil War and after the closure of the theatres in 1642. Secondly, this section features authors that were published by Moseley in his author-centric lyric collections, such as James Shirley's

[80] I discuss this folio further in my fourth chapter on commendatory poetry.

Poems which appeared the following year (1646) and the Beaumont and Fletcher folio which was printed in 1647. This provides some insight into how Moseley attempted to disseminate and promote specific, eminent poets during the mid-seventeenth century.

Some of the poems printed in this section highlight early seventeenth-century theatre politics, and contribute to *Academy* making selections about which authors to promote. For example, the very first extract in the 1645 edition of the miscellany is taken from Jonson's satire *The Poetaster* (1601).[81] The play is one of several written as part of what some scholars have termed the 'war of the theatres,' a conflict between the Elizabethan playwrights Jonson on one side, and John Marston and Thomas Dekker on the other. Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels, or the Fountain of Self-Love* (1601), from which *Academy* derives its third song, also participated in this theatrical dispute.[82] What is interesting about the section is that it begins by featuring a number of extracts from Jonson's plays that were part of this conflict, as well as other selections of his oeuvre, but does not include work by either Marston or Dekker. This suggests that *Academy* is participating in elevating Jonson over his contemporaries, and siding with Jonson in earlier debates about the nature of dramatic works. Both of these plays, *Poetaster* and *Cynthia's Revels* were originally performed in the private Blackfriars Theatre by the Children of the Chapel. Some of the extracts come from plays staged in private theatres, such as Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge* (printed 1615), others were staged initially in public theatres such as Suckling's *Aglaura* (1638), although again may of the plays appeared on both private and public stages at some point prior to the theatre

[81] The play was entered into the Stationers' Register on 21 December 1601. It was published in quarto for M. Lownes in 1602 and included in Jonson's folio in 1616.

[82] From 1599-1602 these three playwrights directed personalised satirical attacks at one another in their plays. For further background reading on this theatre conflict, which predates the parameters of this study, see James P. Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poets' War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp.155-174 and Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1598-1602: A Catalogue*, vol.4 (Oxford: *OUP*, 2014); The play was entered into the Stationers' register in 1601, and printed in quarto for Walter Burre in the same year. Jonson included it in his first folio (1616).

closure.[83] This suggests that the compiler, and quite possibly Moseley himself, had an interest in promoting playwriting that had been popular at court. The 1645 edition of *Academy* appeared mid-war, after the theatres had closed, and suggests a royalist agenda, a key aspect of many of these printed texts as observed by scholars like Hobbs and Smyth, prompting readers to feel a sense of community with the stage, which had long been supported by the court, and thus, more subtly attempting to garner sympathy for the royalist plight during the Civil War.[84]

This section does more than promote royalist agendas, and indirectly rank royalist playwrights in regards to whose works are included and in what quantities; it provides evidence of Moseley's long-term publication goals. For example, several extracts are taken from Carew's works, whose poetry Moseley would publish in 1651. Similarly there are a number of extracts taken from Beaumont and Fletcher. In this instance *Academy* features extracts that have been previously published rather than works he would use in the 1647 folio, such as an extract from *Cupid's Revenge*, which was published in quarto in 1615/16 and then in subsequent editions in 1630 and 1635. However, Moseley was at this time preparing to print a folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's unpublished works, and these extracts served as a whetting of the appetite for his forthcoming new material. Of greatest interest in the 1645 edition is the attention paid to James Shirley. Of the 38 selections of verse in 'Court of Venus,' eight can be traced to Shirley's works. Moseley published Shirley's *Poems*, in collaboration with the author, in 1646. Compiling and editing the material for *Poems* was probably underway when 'Court of Venus' was added to *Academy*, and the majority of the

[83] For background information on private and public theatre conditions during the Renaissance see Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp.1-20; Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp.61-72, 95,; and Eoin Price and Ian Cuthbertson, *'Public' and 'Private' Playhouses in Renaissance England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[84] On the expression of royalist ideas and sympathies in printed miscellanies see Smyth, *Profit and Delight*, pp.132-174. On community building in royalist writing more generally see Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), pp.157-192.

Shirley poems are all grouped together at the end of this section. This suggests that *Academy* directly advertised and promoted Shirley in advance of honouring the author with his own collection.[85] In later editions of *Academy* the 'Court of Venus' expanded adding in more mid-seventeenth century figures like Samuel Butler and Henry Lawes, the latter of which had his psalms printed by Moseley in 1648. 'Court of Venus' went from featuring 38 selections of poetry in 1645 to over 100 in 1658, giving the section a substantial portion of the space in the miscellany. By the end of Moseley's lifetime, the collection clearly reveals an interest in gathering beautiful and popular selections of verse, as well as gathering together the most eminent poets, many of whom he would go on to publish in single-author collections. Moseley's author-centric collections played a significant role in canonising major poets like Beaumont and Fletcher, Carew, Cowley, Crashaw, Milton, Shirley and John Suckling during the mid-seventeenth century, providing the source material for new and expanded editions in the late seventeenth into the eighteenth centuries.

Reception

Finally, one of the most crucial reasons to study *Academy* particularly is that it was clearly one of the most wide-reaching and enduring collections published in the mid-seventeenth century. Evidence of the *Academy*'s reach can be found in a variety of places. Moseley began to advertise his own works, including *Academy* in 'Courteous Reader' catalogues from 1650.[86] As Peter Lindenbaum has stated, these lists represent 'a more direct

[85] In this section I do not consider specific examples of verse from this collection in depth. While I argue that the content and design of *Academy* contribute to our understanding of ideas of canonicity in this period, the specific selections of verse are usually brief extracts from love poems and songs, which do not necessarily propose and analyse strong ideas significant to the formation of an English literary canon.

[86] For more on seventeenth-century publishers' booklists see Peter Lindenbaum, 'Publishers' Booklists in Late Seventeenth-Century London', *The Library*, 11:4 (December 2010), 381-404. Lindenbaum notes that Moseley may have been the publisher best known for his booklists and catalogues although he was certainly not the only publisher who made use of this trend, and possibly followed Francis Eglesfield's lead in titling such lists to the 'Courteous Reader' (Lindenbaum, 382, 384). The final catalogue published by Moseley in 1660 listed 363 items in duodecimo, octavo and folio, although several of Moseley's advertised works were either never issued or are no longer extant (Lindenbaum, 'Humphrey Moseley', pp.177-8).

line of communication between publisher and reader, on the assumption that the customer might seek other volumes of a similar sort.'[87] References to the text can also be found in a variety of other works throughout the seventeenth-century and into the eighteenth century. First, other miscellaneous compilations often mention *Academy* in a prefatory epistle. For example, *The Wits Academy: or, the Muses delight* (1677) mentions in its dedicatory epistle:

> *The Title of this Book, I must confess is little different from that piece of weather-beaten Antiquity, vulgarly known by that once famous Name of,* The Academy of complements ; *But turn aside the Frontispiece and read, beginning with the Dialogues, and so proceed till you have view'd all over, and the reason of your mistake will soon be unmasqu'd, for though* Sub sole nihil novum est [there is nothing new under the sun], *yet this you will find to be far different from any other tract.*[88]

Wits Academy makes a claim frequently made by verse collections, that this new text is unique and in no way like its forebears. Nonetheless, it specifically mentions Moseley's text by name, recognising that such a popular text, one which was still being printed in new and expanded editions, posed strong market competition. In all likelihood, this influenced the compiler of *Wits Academy* to attempt to differentiate between the two publications while simultaneously attempting to gain favour with audiences by assimilating itself with the popular title. Clearly readers and other publishers felt a link was meant to exist between the texts, as booklists throughout the late seventeenth-century tended to advertise *Wits Academy* as the new *Academy of Complements.* Other collections, such as *The Compleat English Secretary And Newest Academy of Complements* (1714), were more overt in their desire to attach their reputation to the more famous collection.[89] *Academy* was also referred to as an

[87] Lindenbaum, 'Publishers' Booklists in Late Seventeenth-Century London', 383.
[88] W.P, '*The Wits Academy: or, the Muses delight* (London: 1677), sigs.A4v-A5r.
[89] For example, a catalogue of the library of John Parson's which was to be auctioned in November of 1682 listed 'Wits Academy, being the newest Academy of Complements' (see *A Choice Catalogue of the Library of*

inspiration for dedicatory prefaces and other polite addresses. For instance, the epistle to the reader in *Maggots: or, Poems on Several Subjects* (1685), a collection of poetry by Samuel Wesley (b.1622-1735), father of Methodism founders John (1703-1791) and Charles Wesley (1707-1788), closes '*You're* very welcome Gentlemen! *And therefore to conclude, with the help of the* Academy of Complements, *and my Book-seller's Epistle*.'[90] The signoff to this preface implies, albeit facetiously, that the author has benefited from the *Academy* in crafting his own polite address.

Academy's reputation clearly endured throughout the seventeenth century; however, many references to the text were either comedic or censuring, such as that of Samuel Wesley. In *The Character of A Town-Gallant* (1680), a pamphlet sketching the personality of a town-gallant or 'man of fashion', and boasting the subtitle: 'Exposing the Extravagant Fopperies of some vain Self-conceited Pretenders to Gentility, and good Breeding' the author lists the reading selection of this mockable figure: 'His whole Library consists of the *Academy of Complements, Venus undress'd, Westminster Drollery*, half a dozen *Plays*, and a Bundle of Bawdy Songs in *Manuscript*.'[91] This suggests that despite pitching the text to a gentle readership the book was seen by some readers as fit only for foolish figures attempting to pretend at good breeding. Additionally, the text was not only mocked for catering to imposters pretending at good breeding, but criticised as a potentially dangerous influence. For instance, A Quaker pamphlet by Benjamin Furly, entitled *The Worlds Honour Detected* (1663), attempted to provide an account of why the Quakers 'do not use (but testifie against)

John Parsons, Esquire, (1682), p.18); *The Compleat English Secretary And Newest Academy of Complements* (London: Printed for C. Brown and T. Norris, 1714) appeared over 70 years after the first edition of *Academy* yet builds the association overtly into the title of the new publication.

[90] Samuel Wesley, *Maggots: or, Poems on Several Subjects* (London: Printed for John Dunton, 1685), sig.A9r.

[91] *The Character of A Town-Gallant* (London: Printed for Rowland Reynolds, 1680), sigs.A1v-A2r; see 'gallant, B.n.1' in *OED*.

the Customs of the World in their Salutations,' criticised the false manners associated with courtesy books.[92] About the *Academy* Furly protests:

> Yet, commonly, those that are so expert in this *mannerly trade*, do willingly receive again, what they give, with increase, and so do often give the more liberally, that they may receive their returns in more abundance…So it is not true *Humility*, nor *morigerosness* to be exact in the *Academy of Complements*.[93]

Furly argues that politeness is simply an instrument of self-interest and self-promotion, having nothing to do with true humility. His argument implies that books such as *Academy* are hypocritical and counterintuitive to their proclaimed objective of teaching good manners. This demonstrates how some readers, like Furly, viewed the text as dangerous rather than merely mockable. Nonetheless, his fervour contributes to the variety of conversation about *Academy* that continued throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth-century, keeping the text in public view for nearly two centuries.

The most abundant source of references to *Academy* throughout the seventeenth century was in plays, including Richard Brome's *A Joviall Crew: OR, The Merry Beggars* (1652), the anonymously authored *The Woman turn'd Bully* (1675), Crown's *The Country Wit* (1675) and *The Novelty: Every Act a Play* (1697).[94] As Smyth has noted, Brome's *Jovial Crew* 'was first performed in 1641…a year after *The Academy of Complements* first appeared. This miscellany seems to have swiftly established a reputation.'[95] However, references to verse collections within plays were often in comedies and tended to depict these texts as absurd. For example, the book is mentioned in Brome's play, the prologue for which

[92] Benjamin Furly, *The Worlds Honour Detected* (London: Printed for Robert Wilton, 1663), sig.A2r.
[93] Furly, sig.C4v. Morigerosness is not a term, but from context I would guess that Furly meant 'more rigorousness.'
[94] *The Woman turn'd Bully* has been attributed to Aphra Behn but this has not been definitively proven, there are also suggestions of collaborative authorship, see *The Encyclopedia of British Literature 1660-1789* Volume I A-El ed. by Gary Day and Jack Lynch (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).
[95] Smyth, *Profit and Delight*, p.191.

promises ‘Fortune-tellers, Damsels, *and their* Squires*, Expos’d to Strange Adventures…Of* Love *and* Fate’:[96]

> *Ra[chel]*. …they must tell us, Ladies, your lips are sweeter, and then fall into Courtship, one in a set speech taken out of old *Britains* Works, another with Verses out of the *Academy of Complements*, or some or other of the new Poetical Pamphletters, ambitious onely to spoile Paper, and publish their names in print. And then to be kist, and sometimes slaver’d--fagh.[97]

At the beginning of the second act, during a conversation between Meriel, Rachel (daughters of Oldrents, an ancient Esquire), Vincent and Hilliard (two young gentlemen), Rachel protests to the suitors who come proposing the sisters join them on an adventure to London. She mentions *Academy* scornfully, implying suitors who would make use of the text are absurd, that the book of compliments is little better than the newer poetical pamphlets eager only to appear in print. A similar exchange is found at the beginning of Act III, Scene I in *The Woman turn’d Bully*:

> *Good[field]*. …Didst thou observe yesterday, what havock the little Rogue made among the Plays?
>
> *Tru[man]*. Aye, like *Don Quixot* among the *Romances*, for all the world.
>
> *Good*. Why, his discourse was almost all Dramatick.
>
> *Tru*. True: but I perceived withal, he did it a purpose; and not through any want of Invention, or defect in his own Genius, as your Country-Squire uses *Wits Common Wealth*, and the *Academy of Complements*.[98]

[96] Richard Brome, *A Joviall Crew: OR, The Merry Beggars* (London: Printed for E.D. and N.E., 1652), sig.a2r.
[97] Brome, sig.D3r.
[98] *The Woman turn’d Bully. A Comedy* (London: Printed for T. Dring, 1675), sig.F1v.

The conversation takes place between the protagonist, Truman, a wealthy young gentleman, and his friend Goodfield. Their discussion reveals the opinion that readers of miscellanies like *Wits Common Wealth* and *Academy of Complements* are thought to be lacking in wit and original invention. As Smyth observes, 'Far from enabling grand social advances, printed miscellanies mark out their readers as unrefined, ignorant, absurd, and so enforce a sense of social hierarchy as something fixed and certain.'[99] These readings suggest that printed verse collections are mockable because they promised, but could not deliver, social mobility.

With the majority of contemporary references to *Academy* being scornful, sarcastic or disapproving one might imagine that modern scholars may have been right to avoid investigating these texts further. However, as Smyth has noted, while most seventeenth-century collections purported to address a gentle and educated audience, 'printed miscellanies were and are eminently mockable texts.' For this reason, suggesting a homogenous readership is misleading, and understanding the popularity and importance of the printed miscellany in this period requires a more nuanced examination of how these texts were read.[100] Indeed the wide variety of appropriations of and references to Moseley's *Academy*, in addition to how well it sold, suggests a diverse readership and a text that could not be ignored by subsequent compilers of verse collections. Moseley's *Academy* undoubtedly commanded a large readership, and both endured and influenced the structure and content of the printed verse collection in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Contemporary criticism implied that Moseley's endeavours to circulate the best selections of English poetry to a broad, rather than elite audience was viewed as contemptible. However, this perspective was already being challenged by the pervasiveness of print and publications like Moseley's that endeavoured to

[99] Smyth, p.31.
[100] Smyth, *Profit and Delight*, p.33. For evidence of the type of people reading miscellanies see Smyth's 'Readers and Readings', in *Profit and Delight*, pp.32-72.

present the best works and authors to a diverse group of readers.[101] Moseley's *Academy* was an influential and enduring work, which functioned not only as a courtesy book but as a collection of poetry celebrating eminent poets, playwrights and their works, clearly contributing to the development of a literary canon during the seventeenth-century.

John Cotgrave (1611? – d. in or after 1655)[102]

John Cotgrave is remembered as a compiler and editor of anthologies, though little is known about his early life and education. He was potentially the son of Randle Cotgrave, lexicographer and minor canon in Chester Cathedral, but the surname was not an uncommon one and the link has not been made conclusively. During the Interregnum he established a reputation as an anthologist working with publishers like Humphrey Moseley and Nathaniel Brooke (active 1646-1677). His works treated topics such as kingship, rebellion and tyranny and would suggest, if not definitively state, royalist sympathies.[103] In this section I examine two of the collections Cotgrave is known to have compiled. The first is a book of compliments entitled *Wits Interpreter, the English Parnassus* which was published by Brooke in 1655 and subsequently in a second edition in 1662 and a third in 1671. The second is a collection of commonplaces titled *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* which was published by Moseley in the same year.[104] In analysing the texts compiled by Cotgrave I am going to be specifically concentrating on his use of material extracted from plays. In this section I intend to demonstrate that Cotgrave's collections are significant in promoting the

[101] For further information on the reception of print in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see and Mark Bland, *A Guide to Early Printed Books and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010) and William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (London: CUP, 2004).
[102] Dates are taken from the *ODNB* although as Cotgrave is suggested as the compiler of *The Muses Mistress* (1660) it is likely he died sometime after 1660.
[103] W.H.Kelliher, 'John Cotgrave (bap. 1611?, d. in or after 1655), *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6388>
[104] Cotgrave's other known works include the French-language news-sheet *Le Mercure Anglois* which Cotrave edited between 1644 and 1648 and a volume of two royalist poems titled *The Muses Mistress* (1660) (see Kelliher, *ODNB* and Smyth, p.225).

popularity of English drama in print as well as influencing later anthologies of plays and dramatists.

The plays of early modern dramatists such as Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson loom large in twenty-first century thinking about canonical writing of the period. However, scholars of performance arts such as drama and music have long appreciated the difficulty of considering such art forms in relation to the concept of a literary canon. Commenting on opera, Joseph Kerman observes that a canon is 'an enduring exemplary collection of books, buildings, and paintings authorized in some way for contemplation, admiration, and the determination of value. Kerman points out that in music 'We speak of the repertory, or repertories, not of the canon. A canon is an idea; a repertory is a program of action.'[105] The same distinction, between canons and repertoires, may be extended to thinking about drama and its role in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the formation of the nascent English literary canon. As with all performative arts, many aspects of a play's performance such as gesture, movement and sound are not easily conveyed on the written page. Play-texts achieved some degree of an early printed literary life, often in single author editions like Richard Jones's 1590 octavo of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* or the 1623 Shakespeare Folio.[106] Brian Corman traces the eighteenth-century development of the dramatic anthology, referring to two 1776 collections, *New English Theatre* and *British Theatre*, as the 'earliest anthologies [which collected plays] largely out of print and effectively removed from the performance repertory.'[107] These anthologies might in fact have been some of the earliest collections of texts featuring complete plays. However, over a century before the publication of *New English Theatre* and *British Theatre*, John Cotgrave put together two collections

[105] Joseph Kerman, 'A Few Canonic Variations', *Critical Inquiry*, 10 (1983), 107-125 (p.107).
[106] On publishing and selling play-texts see Peter Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks', in *A New History of Early English Drama* ed. by John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp.383-422.
[107] Brian Corman, 'What is the Canon of English Drama?', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 26, 2 (1992-1993), 307-321 (p.310).

which include quotations and dialogues taken from a variety of English plays, one of these books being constituted entirely of play-texts. These two collections exhibit seventeenth-century recognition of the literary value of dramatic texts. Additionally, as will be discussed, Cotgrave showed a clear preference for including older, enduring dramatists alongside more contemporary playwrights. Analysis of the volumes compiled by Cotgrave, then, can add to our understanding of the ways in which early printed collections contributed to the creation and shaping of a canon of vernacular English literature, in this case, with specific regards to the role played by drama in that gradual process.

Cotgrave's first collection, *Wits Interpreter*, does not, however, advertise an overt interest in dramatic writing. Richard Gaywood's engraved frontispiece for *Wits Interpreter* features a number of eminent writers, including well-known dramatists like Jonson and Shakespeare; however, the plays of these two authors are not actually included in this volume.[108] The title page advertises that the second section of the book is devoted to 'Theatre of Courtship, Accurate Complements,' but this is overshadowed by the book's larger purpose to serve as 'A sure Guide to those Admirable Accomplishments that compleat our English *Gentry*, in the most acceptable Qualifications of *Discourse*, or *Writing*.'[109] Accordingly, the book promises to guide the reader through the most accomplished examples of English writing. Cotgrave's preface is dedicated first to highlighting the flaws of collections that previously attempted to do this, and then explaining why his collection is more successful in its aims. This success is demonstrated first by the volume's exclusive focus on works in the English tongue rather than on borrowing from other cultures. Moreover, Cotgrave made the best effort to ensure the originality of his collection; he 'crossed out whatsoever [he heard]

[108] See John H. Astington, 'Dramatic Extracts in the Interregnum', *RES* 54:217 (Nov 2003), 601-614. However, this only extends to the plays, as Jonson is included in the text in the section of *Love-Songs, Epigrams, Etc* which is discussed by Smyth (see *Profit and Delight*, p.89).
[109] John Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter* (London: Printed for N Brooke, 1655), Wing C6370, sig.A2r.

had been formerly publisht.'[110] Cotgrave presents his collection with the same claim as previous collections, to honour English writing; he merely maintains that his collection manages to succeed where previous projects have failed. The 1655 edition of *Wits Interpreter* includes 51 dialogues taken from printed professional, academic and closet plays.[111]

Wits Interpreter was not the first miscellany to feature extracts from plays within its collection. As the principal publisher of dramatic texts in the mid-seventeenth century, Moseley was certainly aware of the growing market for printed play-texts and excerpts from plays were included within many of the collections that he printed. The *Academy* included excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet* in its first edition in 1640 and an episode from William Cavendish's *The Country Captain* in the 1650 edition.[112] Additionally, Moseley printed Cotgrave's second text, *The English Treasury*, which is composed entirely of dramatic excerpts. However, there are several features of *Wits Interpreter* that reveals this specific collection intended to engage with the performative aspects of drama in ways that other collections did not. For example, *Wits Interpreter* collects all of its dramatic extracts into a section titled with the term 'theatre.' In comparison, the *Academy of Complements* included selections of verse extracted from play-texts, as discussed in the first section of this chapter, but they are dispersed throughout the collection and organised thematically as complements rather than advertised as selections of dramatic writing. Additionally, I concur with John Astington, who remarks that *Academy's* prose dialogues, 'while reasonably animated, do not read like adaptions of contemporary drama.'[113] The passages read, and are meant to be read, more conversationally than dramatically. Selections from *Academy* such as 'In admiration of her goodnesse' are intended to be spoken rather than performed: 'It is your goodnesse that

[110] *Wits Interpreter*, Wing C6370, sig.A5r.
[111] Astington notes that the second edition reduces this number to thirty without including any new dramatic material, however, it is unknown if Cotgrave would have been involved with this change as he's not known to be involved with any new works after 1660 and therefore may have died before the second edition was prepared (Astington, p.601).
[112] Astington, p.607.
[113] Astington, p.607.

hath supplied my small merit; which could not have durst to promise me the favours you afford me.'[114] The lines are neat and pleasing, suitable for their intended purpose of wooing but certainly not meant for performance. Cotgrave's selections, however, function as selections of drama, for example his 'The Resolved Ladie. *A Pleasant Dialogue*':

> *Mar[sica]*. Alas my dearest joy, I heare you are for travell, and for all your Vowes and Protestations will leave me.
>
> *Cos[mo]*. You heare true Lady I am come to take my leave.
>
> *Mar*. You shall not take your leave; I am prepar'd and will go with you.
>
> *Cos*. I am bound, for Italy?
>
> *Mar*. Tis nothing I can travell:
>
> *Cos*. I am going into Wales among the Mountaines:
>
> *Mar*. You are my best society, I'le keep with you:
>
> *Cos*. Are you so valiant, Ladie: it may be, I go to Sea.
>
> *Mar*. I love a Sea voyage and a blustring tempest, let all split, I can die with you.
>
> *Cos*. Tis true I lov'd in a humour, then I hated you, I think I shall love againe, she will tame me, can you ride Post?
>
> *Mar*. Excellently. I could never be weary of your presence.
>
> *Cos*. Ile travell under Ground.
>
> *Mar*. No danger Sir in that, I love to be under.
>
> *Cos*. I'le live in a baudy house.
>
> *Mar*. I dare come to you.
>
> *Cos*. But dost thou love me as thou sayst.
>
> *Mar*. Right well Sir.
>
> *Cos*. And will you be my woman:

[114] *Academy of Complements*, STC 19883.5, sig.C7r.

Mar. Tis sure, I'le never be my own else.

Cos: But will you not go away with me now, if I request you.

Mar. Any whither but to Bed before we are married.

Cos. Come then since you trust me so well, we will not part till we are lawfully made one.

Mar: Heaven bless the house you speak in, and all Saints be witnesses.[115]

The passage even on the printed page reads humorously, with Marsica resolved to follow Cosmo despite his protestations. The dialogue is originally taken from Act 4, Scene 6 of Fletcher's comedy *The Wild-Goose Chase* (1621), the manuscript for which had only been recently recovered and published in 1652.[116] The play is one of deception and intrigue, centred on the goose chase played by several characters attempting to secure a lover. In Fletcher's original play the scene is split amongst a group of hopeful couples, Belleur and Rosalura, Pinac and Lillia-Bianca. Cotgrave's version of the dialogue reduces the speakers to one romantic couple, Marsica as the female voice and Cosmo as the male voice. Cotgrave presents the extract as a dialogue, and the witty exchange between Marsica and Cosmo offers an animated conversation reminiscent of a dramatic text. *Wits Interpreter* strives to popularise drama as a genre for reading, but this collection of play extracts could potentially have been used for performance. As Astington notes, the collection contains dialogues which can thus be read aloud by family members at home or at an intimate social gathering.[117] *Wits Interpreter* endeavours to popularise drama's suitability as a literary genre, but does not

[115] John Cotgrave, Wing C6370, sig.E7v-E8r.
[116] Moseley registered the play in 1641 but it was lost until 1652. In the Beaumont and Fletcher folio Moseley reveals that the play was borrowed and through negligence not returned, but he hoped that it would be recovered in the future and promised to print it in the event it was recovered. (See Moseley, 'The Stationer to the Readers', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beavmont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley), sig.A4r, and Taylor and Lavagnino (eds.), *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture*, 268-270).
[117] Astington, p.609.

divorce the texts from their original performance contexts. This was in all probability a desirable aspect of the collection, published during the near two decades (1642-1660) in which theatres were closed by the Puritan regime. However, the fact that the text caters to an audience in this particular circumstance does not imply the text was meant to vanish in the event that the theatres reopened. As Cotgrave observes in his preface, 'the *English Tongue* was never honoured with a larger or more *Accurate Collection*…I am confident this *Volume* will live.'[118]

The ways in which compilers of printed collections of verse and prose edited and altered the extracts from their original sources has resulted in many scholars ignoring these texts on the basis of poor craftsmanship, arguing that they could have had little impact on the development of the English literary canon. Yet, I contend that an analysis of Cotgrave's extracts demonstrate a clear interest in how he presents his source material, and that his emendations and changes are not the result of laziness, but of the constraints posed by publishing extracts rather than whole texts. For example, in the above dialogue from *Wild-Goose Chase*, Cotgrave was able to achieve a more poignant effect in characterising a single romantic couple. This conversation originally takes place near the end of Fletcher's play, but removed from the context of the whole work, Lillia and Rosalura's lines seem almost interchangeable and do not have the same impact. Combing their lines into the single character, Marsica, enables Cotgrave to flesh out a single, better developed character rather than two fragmentary voices. Astington identifies these changes as simplifications, and that 'preservation of the strengths of written style was not one of Cotgrave's primary purposes,' although, he displays 'interest in dramatic character and situation…prepared to conflate material from distinct plays when doing so might lead to a more extended or suitably shaped

[118] *Wits Interpreter*, sig.A5r-v.

episode.'[119] However, I would argue that Cotgrave's version of the dialogue is simpler only in regards to having fewer characters, rather than an intentional disfigurement of Fletcher's writing style. I agree with Astington that Cotgrave's primary concern was unlikely to be the preservation of an author's style, but I would suggest that this is a consequence of the need to shape a complete dialogue that can stand separately from its original source. Cotgrave's dialogue is introduced by Marsica exclaiming: 'Alas my dearest joy, I heare you are for travell, and for all your Vowes and Protestations will leave me.'[120] Its counterpart in Fletcher takes place several lines into the scene, where Rosalura greets Pinac and Belleur with 'Ye are well met Gentlemen, we heare ye are for Travell?'[121] Exempting the alteration of the plural pronoun 'we' with a singular 'I', Cotgrave transcribes the line almost verbatim, adding dialogue to set the scene that is absent without the context of the play. In general most of the lines retain Fletcher's style, and most of the alterations are the product of the reduction of the number of speakers, or a change in to whom lines are given (the male or female voice). The most significant changes to writing style are, therefore, more reflective of Cotgrave adding several lines of dialogue in his own style, rather than intentionally altering the playwrights from which he borrows. I argue that Cotgrave's dialogue displays an attempt to present the text as faithfully as possible, and thereby both honour Fletcher as well as help promote the rediscovered text. In the mid-seventeenth century it was not viewed as counterintuitive to adapt a particular source for use in a new context, which is crucial to understand in order to trace the contribution of a printed collection like *Wits Interpreter* to shaping the nascent vernacular literary canon.

Cotgrave's adaption of *The Wild-Goose Chase* might, however, reflect an exception to rather than the rule of his usual practice. For instance, Smyth uses Cotgrave's treatment of one of Jonson's epigram to exemplify unstable readings that 'conveyed to their reading

[119] Astington, pp.604, 606.
[120] *Wits Interpreter*, Wing C6370, sig.E7v.
[121] John Fletcher, *The Wild-Goose Chase* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1652), sig.P2v.

public a notion of literature that placed little emphasis on stability or closure.'[122] Another excerpt, one of the first in *Wits Interpreter*, Cotgrave's *Platonick Dialogue*, is taken from William Davenant's *The Platonick Lovers* (1636). Davenant's play is centred on the platonic romance between Theander and Eurithea. Cotgrave chooses to transcribe a passage between Theander's sister Ariola and Eurithea's brother Phylomont. With Clarinda standing in for Ariola and Polidorus for Phylomont, the first two lines of the excerpt read:

> *Pol[idorus]*. Let me contain thee within my arms my dear *Clarinda* the force of greatest wind that shakes the aged oak, from his root, shall not divide us now.
>
> *Cla[rinda]*. Here am I willing to stay, my beloved *Polydorus* till death shall wave his cold dart and becken us to follow him to the dark shades, and by his angry power, make my embraces cold.[123]

These lines can be compared with the original lines in Davenant's play which read:

> *Phyl[omont]*. Let mee a while containe thee in mine armes
> (Belov'd *Ariola*) the force of Indian winds
> That shake the aged Cedar from his root
> Shall not divide us now.
> *Ariol[a]*. Here I would stay
> (My valiant *Phylomont*) till death should wave
> His dart, and becken us to follow him
> Vnto the hidden shades, till hee should make
> By angry power these kind embraces cold.[124]

[122] Smyth, p.89.
[123] *Wits Interpreter*, Wing C6370, sig.C8r.
[124] William Davenant, *The Platonick Lovers* (London: 1636), sig.H2v.

The first notable change is Cotgrave rendering Davenant's verse in prose. This may potentially be a personal preference on Cotgrave's part or, more likely, enables Cotgrave to add to the scene without having to match Davenant's verse style which he might not have been capable of achieving, suggesting that Cotgrave did have some interest in not destroying authorial style needlessly. Additionally, prose is more often used in comedy than verse, and Cotgrave could be trying to highlight the comedic elements of the play in presenting the extract in prose. The first few lines of this dialogue also reflect some changes in vocabulary: 'beloved Ariola' becomes 'dear Clarinda', 'valiant Phylomont' becomes 'beloved Polidorus', 'Indian winds' are represented more abstractly as 'greatest winds' and the 'oak tree' becomes a 'cedar'. Additionally, some punctuation, verb tenses and pronouns are changed. Cotgrave's Clarinda refers to his (Death's) power and her embraces. In Davenant's original play the two speakers represent the physical rather than platonic love and are thus implored to remain chaste until after marriage precisely to restrain their physical desires. Here the contrast between platonic and physical is lost, and instead Clarinda and Polidorus represent the platonic lovers, who are less tempted by physical pleasures, allowing Cotgrave to remove their restraint from the dialogue.

Subverting the play's original roles and characterisations is potentially more noteworthy and of more interest than the changes to language and verse style. However, I would not necessarily argue that Cotgrave does subvert or misinterpret the roles from their original source but adapts them for his context in an extract. In Cotgrave's version Clarinda says: 'I confess my Brother doth restrain me with a hard restraint, but I desire he may be forgiven, and do not call it cruelty.'[125] In Davenant's play, Ariola's line reads: 'My Brother I request may be forgiven, and call not my/Restraint his cruelty, t'hath mended me/Within, and fil'd mee with such bless'd designes,/As will deserve your wonder and thanks./Forgive him,

[125] Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter*, sig.C8r.

Phylomont.'[126] Cotgrave shortens Clarinda's speech about forgiving her brother, who is not a present character in the extract. In Davenant's play the passage occurs near the end of the fourth act, but this is only Clarinda's third line in Cotgrave's dialogue. The dialogue flows more appropriately because Cotgrave focuses the conversation on Clarinda and Phylomont, and does not over-emphasise the elements and relationships from the play (e.g. Clarinda's brother's/Theander's role) that are not present in the dialogue. Overall, I suggest that Cotgrave's primary concern in altering the dialogues was to enable them to stand alone, removed from their original sources.[127] As with the passage from *Wild-Goose Chase*, the changes between Cotgrave's text and Davenant's original material can be viewed positively, demonstrating how compilers during the mid-seventeenth century engaged with audiences in a different fashion than editors and publishers do today. The popularity of printed miscellanies and anthologies in the period suggests that readers did not view edited extracts as an inappropriate editorial practice to be shunned. Concentrating heavily on the failure of emendations, which as I have endeavoured to demonstrate, can be viewed in a number of different ways, detracts from what insight we can obtain about how these texts were able to influence literary tastes during the mid-seventeenth century.

Ultimately I would argue that Cotgrave does have an interest in faithfully representing English dramatists, even if his alterations and borrowings are not considered acceptable practice by modern scholars. All the extracts in *Wits Interpreter* are taken from English language plays written by English authors. The authors might not be named in the collection but they certainly would have been easy enough to uncover, if not immediately recognised, in

[126] Davenant, *The Platonick Lovers*, sig.H2r.
[127] Smyth, like Astington, suggests carelessness and lack of interest in source material motivate editorial invention. While I would not necessarily disagree, I would suggest that Cotgrave's emendations suggest a different kind of engagement with source material; one that is necessitated by the need to shape a dialogue, and one that in practice is quite similar to many examples of manuscript miscellanies in this same period (examples of which Smyth notes in relation to *The English Treasury*, see *Profit and Delight*, p.46). The seemingly fixed nature of print in combination with the lack of scholarly rigour, with original sources not named on the page, are primarily what make Cotgrave's revisions intolerable for scholars like Smyth and Astington.

the numerous printed editions of most of these plays available in the second half of the seventeenth century. Cotgrave's own style might be a bit heavy handed in the text, but the original style and character are still present throughout most of the dialogues. They reflect more editorial shaping, an unavoidable element when producing a collection of excerpts rather than full texts. Excerpts were a common approach to dealing with longer plays and poems by multiple authors in the seventeenth century, and the texts were popular with readers. Cotgrave sheds further light on the benefits of extract collections in his next printed verse collection. Given this, in combination with the fact that the text dedicates an entire section to dialogues from plays, I surmise that *Wits Interpreter* is an important forerunner to anthologies dedicated to immortalising dramatic texts and their playwrights, such as Gerard Langbaine's catalogues published at the end of the century, or the previously mentioned eighteenth-century collections *New English Theatre* and *British Theatre*.

Wits Interpreter went through three editions in roughly fifteen years suggesting that the collection probably sold well and was a popular text. While evidence of its reach is not as abundant as that of *Academy*, advertisements for the text, including booklists, catalogues and auction lists ensured that the collection was visible to seventeenth-century readers and into the following century.[128] Of particular interest is the collection's inclusion in *A Catalogue of the most vendible Books in England* (1657), a catalogue of books organised topically (e.g. divinity, history, law) and prefaced by 'An Introduction to the Use of Books: In A Short Essay upon the Value and Benefits of *Learning* and *Knowledge*.' *Wits interpreter* is included in the section 'History With other Pieces of Humane Learning Intermixed' along with similar verse collections including *Academy of Complements* and *Wits Recreations*. This suggests that readers potentially viewed verse collections as reference works, providing readers with a

[128] Examples include booklists in Nathaniel Brookes subsequent publications as well as lists compiled by Obadiah Blagrave, Robert Clavell's catalogue (1673) of all the books printed in England between 1666 and 1672, and catalogues of libraries up for auction including those of Sir David Nairne Knt. (1735) and Mr. William Chilwell (1741).

selection of both popular contemporary verses intermixed with more enduring favourites and from these, readers could then decide which complete texts to seek out. Over a century later *Wits Interpreter* is cited in another historical context, in a 1787 publication by Richard Twiss that offers anecdotal evidence about the history of chess:

> In "Wits Interpreter, 1662," sixteen pages contain an account of Chess, in which stale-mate is thus defined. "A stale may be termed a monstrous mate, mate and no mate, an end of play, yet no end of game, because this game should end in check-mate."[129]

While it seems a rather abstract reference, and the text is cited as a source of a definition rather than as a literary collection, it demonstrates that the collection endured for over a century after it was first published. While modern scholars often dismiss these verse collections as inadequate sources in which to read English poetry, denying that they could have successfully participated in influencing the shape of the English literary canon due to poor editorial practices, it is clear that contemporary readers not only bought, read and enjoyed these texts, they also found them useful compendia of knowledge.

There is at least one instance of *Wits Interpreter* being cited as a source text for which to consult a particular playwright. This is in Gerard Langbaine's *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691) in his life of William Cartwright:

> *Ordinary*, a Comedy: I know not where this Play was acted, but I remember part of the second Scene of the first Act, between the Widow *Pot-luck*, *Slicer*, and *Hear-say*, is transcrib'd by the Composer of *Wits Interpreter*, in his Love-Dialogues, under the Title of the *Old Widow*, pag.81.[130]

[129] Richard Twiss, *Chess*, vol.2 (London: printed for G.G. J & J. Robinson, and T. & J. Egerton, 1787), p.56.
[130] Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (London: Printed for George West and Henry Clements, 1691), sig.D3r.

Langbaine directs his readers to *Wits Interpreter* and provides as much detail about Cartwright's inclusion in the text as possible. Langbaine, who will be discussed further in my chapter about life writing, had a particular interest in using the best sources in order to discourage plagiarism and encourage originality. It is unlikely he would have used *Wits Interpreter* as a literary source if he felt the text to be either corrupt or a substandard example of an author's writing.

Published by Moseley in the same year as *Wits Interpreter*, Cotgrave's *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* is composed entirely of quotations extracted from dramatic texts. The title page boasts the compilation as 'collected Out of the most, and best of our English Drammatick Poems' and as advertised, Cotgrave's maxims are derived exclusively from plays, and most notably, only from English poets.[131] Cotgrave's 'To the Courteous Reader' fulfils many of the standard requirements of an introductory preface; he claims that the collection will stand up against even the most critical judgement, and that collections have been worthy and useful works since ancient times. Cotgrave declares himself the 'Herald' of the authors featured within his collection, 'conscious [he has] not wronged them in Transcription.'[132] There is a sense of a dramatic touch in appointing himself the herald, yet the compiler presenting himself as a guide is hardly an original trope. However, two of his statements are worthy of note. Cotgrave declares 'the Drammatick Poem seems to me (and many of my friends, better able to judge then I) to have been lately too much slighted' and that through their neglect readers have 'lost the benefit of many rich and useful Observations.'[133] Cotgrave affirms his personal observation that drama most certainly deserves more recognition, and yet seems to lack it. More interesting, is Cotgrave's

[131] John Cotgrave, *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1655), sig.A1r.
[132] *English Treasury*, sig.A2r.
[133] *English Treasury*, sig.A3r.

justification for a book of 'extractions', a common feature of collections in both print and manuscript, but one rarely, if ever, discussed in the prefatory material:

> Collections have not been the most unprofitable or unsavorie workes of the latter times, and if the Ancients had that saying in frequent use, that nothing is said which has not been formerly spoken: sure it is far truer now, for many Arts have beene much improved and so many more invented since then…the reading of many Bookes is wearinesse to the flesh, when there were none but Manuscripts in the world: How much is that wearinesse increased since the art of Printing has so infinitely multiplied large and vast volumes in every place, that the longest life of man is not sufficient to explore so much as the substance of them, which (in many) is but slender? Extractions therefore are the best conservers of knowledge, if not the readiest way to it.[134]

Cotgrave argues that reading has become cumbersome with the advent of print; moreover, that a great deal of what has been published offers little of use or interest to most readers. He therefore asserts that books of 'extractions' are the only way for readers to remain knowledgeable about the most worthwhile literature. This further suggests the idea that printed collections were meant to perform a historicising and referential function alongside gathering together selections of the best works and authors. Currently, the literary canon can be viewed as useful in regards to organising either leisure or academic reading around a manageable set of texts. Cotgrave makes a similar claim for what he is doing, revealing that these compilation projects are what identify the works, and at times authors that should be read and preserved. Cotgrave and other anthologists might not cite or transcribe sources with the accuracy required of present-day scholarly publications. Yet, it is evident that these compilers, publishers and editors were engaging in a recognisable canon-forming activity:

[134] *English Treasury*, sig.A2v.

including some texts and excluding others. Individuals like Cotgrave compile particular groups and types of texts in order to shape reading habits; understanding this is crucial to appreciating seventeenth-century ideas about preserving English prose and poetry.

What stands out most about *The English Treasury* is the very innovative and contemporary seventeenth-century character of the collection. In drawing exclusively from plays, the book, as Gerald Bentley observes, displays a rise in the 'popularity, prestige, and dignity' of drama.[135] More importantly, the collection reflects drama's rise as a literary form worth printing and disseminating to a wide reading public, rather than a merely ephemeral performance piece. Cotgrave's *English Treasury* is one of the first printed collections to compile multiple playwrights in order explicitly to honour English dramatic writing. Bentley's essay offers several useful comparisons between earlier texts, particularly the Elizabethan miscellanies, and Cotgrave's text that shed light on the unique quality of this publication. For example, only six to eight percent of the content in Allott's *Englands Parnassus* was taken from dramatic texts, and no reference is made within the miscellany to the fact that even a small sampling of these quotations were extracted from plays. One hundred percent of Cotgrave's collection is extracted from plays; more importantly, he used almost exclusively contemporary source material. Only four of the 246 plays that Cotgrave consulted were printed before 1600; even then, Bentley is certain that seventeenth-century printings of these plays were his source. Although the collection is attentive to the most famous playwrights such as Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson and Shakespeare, absent are many of the major sixteenth-century dramatists such as Thomas Kyd and John Lyly. Instead, Cotgrave chooses to feature more dramatists who were exclusively Caroline, with more than 30 of the plays published in the 1640s.[136] While Cotgrave does not cite the source or authors of the quotations in *English Treasury*, there is a British Library annotated copy featuring

[135] Gerald Bentley, 'John Cotgrave's "English Treasury of Wit and Language" and the Elizabethan Drama', *Studies in Philology*, 40:2 (1943), 186-203 (p.198).
[136] Bentley, pp.198-199.

contemporary manuscript ascriptions accompanying almost all of the excerpts, glossing the text with both the author and the original work.[137] Bentley's two most prominent examples of Cotgrave's attention to honouring his near contemporaries are George Chapman and Fulke Greville, both whom were writing around 1600 and neither of whom received as much attention in the period as many of the other dramatists cited. Greville, for instance, was more often read for his poetry than his dramas.

The English Treasury, like many texts featuring short extracts in this period, is organised alphabetically by topical themes.[138] Most of these reflect themes common to printed collections that scholars like Smyth and Hobbs have highlighted in discussing seventeenth-century miscellanies. There is an interest in morality and virtue, themes also common in the earlier Elizabethan miscellanies, with subject heads such as 'Church', 'Cuckolds', 'Fidelity', 'Gratitude', 'Heaven', 'Marriage' and 'Prudence'. King and court is another major theme celebrated in seventeenth-century printed collections, indicating the royalist sympathies of several compilers and readers.[139] This topic can be found in sections such as 'Court', 'Kings/Princes', 'Knighthood' and 'Rebellion'. While *English Treasury* does not include authors' names with passages, Cotgrave frequently groups verses by the same author within a particular category. Several maxims taken from Ben Jonson can be found together under Cotgrave's 'Of Kings, Princes', all taken from the tragedy *Sejanus His Fall*. Similarly, George Chapman, Fulke Greville, Phillip Massinger and John Webster also have at least five passages dedicated to kings and princes in the text, all of which are uniformly arranged by author. Cotgrave prioritises arranging the dramatic extracts by theme, but within each theme evidence of attention to author and source can clearly be detected, even if he does not share this information with his reader. This demonstrates an interest in selecting and

[137] *English Treasury of Wit and Language*, BL G.16385.
[138] A fully searchable database of this miscellany, organised by both subject and authors, can be found here: <http://shakespeareauthorship.com/cotgrave/index.htm>.
[139] Smyth, pp.133-144.

honouring eminent authors in addition to gathering texts that are the 'best conservers of knowledge.' As Cotgrave states in his preface, extracts are intended to preserve the choicest pieces of the best works. Grouping extracts by their authors assists readers in uncovering the best works as well as the authors whose axioms Cotgrave has selected in order to preserve knowledge.

Unlike *Wits Interpreter*, *English Treasury* is only known to have had a single edition and was never reprinted. However, there is evidence that the text was not only available but read well into the eighteenth century. It is advertised on Moseley's booklists and catalogues just like *Academy*, as well as on numerous auction lists such as *A Choice Catalogue of English books on divinity, history, physic and a variety of subjects* (1686), which indicate that copies of this collection, like many other texts in this period, passed between a number of diverse readers. However, one of the most fascinating aspects of the afterlife of *English Treasury* particularly is that it was discussed in two different eighteenth-century prefaces that suggest that this text had a significant impact on readers and subsequent collections.

The first of these was likely written by Thomas Hayward (d.1779) and was prefixed to two different eighteenth-century verse collections, *The Quintessence of English Poetry: Or, a Collection of all the Beautiful Passages in our Poems and Play: From the Celebrated Spencer to 1688* (1711, 1740) and *The British muse: or, a collection of thoughts moral, and natural, and sublime, of our English poets: who flourished in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1738), both of which were compiled by Hayward. The preface reads:

> The next publication of this kind, as it did not labour under a scarcity of good dramatick poems, and confined itself to extracts from plays, might have been expected to have been free from this last defect,[140] and to have abounded with the fine

[140] Hayward criticised previous collections for their use of obscure authors and lack of dramatic sources (see Thomas Hayward, *The Quintessence of English Poetry: Or, a Collection of all the Beautiful Passages in our Poems and Play: From the Celebrated Spencer to 1688*, 3 vols (London: Printed for Olive Payne, 1711), Vol.1, sigs.A5r-A6r).

> thoughts that enrich such collections. It is called, The English Treasury of Wit and Language…But this is a more injudicious performance than the last. In the first place, the author has annexed not one poet's name to his extracts throughout his book, nor even given a lift of his authors in front of it…next, as he has made some use, such as it is, of many noted dramatick poets, from the beginning of King *James*'s reign to his own time, he has evidently allowed himself too little room for the number of playes he undertakes to extract: in consequence of which, he has not only given us a very superficial taste of them, but has omitted many better thoughts than he has used…he has quoted them very imperfectly and by halves in some places, officiously corrupted them in others, and frequently misplaced them under heads foreign to their subjects, out of a laziness, which, he confesses, induced him to content himself with a first copy.[141]

Hayward lists a number of the collection's defects; the first accusation is the lack of authorship attribution, a prevalent feature in both Elizabethan and mid-seventeenth-century verse collections and not something unique to Cotgrave. The second, and perhaps more serious charge, is that the extracts are not of a sufficient length to produce a book capable of making the claim of preserving the best works or authors.

Hayward particularly accuses Cotgrave of misinterpreting or altering source material because of laziness, which he claims Cotgrave confesses to doing as he hoped to expand the collection at a later date: 'I may be encouraged to enlarge my paines in this kind, if my leasure serve me as it hath done.'[142] As Smyth has discussed, and has been previously mentioned, the production of seventeenth-century printed collections had a number of motives, but most can be seen to have some semblance of sharing particular political themes

[141] *Quintessence of English Poetry*, Vol.1, sigs.A6r-A7r.
[142] *English Treasury*, sig.A3r.

and interests.[143] To that end, while in *Wits Interpreter* Cotgrave was very deliberate in how he shaped his dramatic dialogues, in the *English Treasury* Cotgrave used shorter extracts arranged into topical themes that may not always have offered the best representation of either the author or work cited, or more likely, offered a very general overview of the material or a scene. For example, Cotgrave includes only a single passage from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597):

> These violent delights have violent ends,
> And in their triumph dye, like fire and powder
> Which as they kisse consume: the sweetest honey
> Is loathsome in its own deliciousness,
> And in the tast confounds the appetite.
> Therefore love moderately, long love doth so,
> Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.[144]

Cotgrave includes the passage under the topical heading *Of Extreames*, and while it certainly fits it in no way engages with the deeper themes or nuances of one of Shakespeare's most famous plays. Before further discussing the significance of *English Treasury* in Hayward's preface I want to introduce the second preface in which the collection is mentioned in order to make comparisons between these two prefatory analyses.

The second preface was affixed to an edition of Edward Phillips *Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum*, first published in 1675, that appeared in 1800. It was edited by baronet, writer and genealogist Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges (1762-1837) and reprinted, as advertised on the title page, with additions from subsequent biographers and critics.[145] These additions extend

[143] Smyth, *Profit and Delight*, pp.132-72
[144] Cotgrave, *English Treasury*, sig.H1v.
[145] Samuel Egerton Brydges probably wrote the expanded preface when revising the collection. See K.A. Manley's *ODNB* article for further biographical information about Brydges.

to the preface, which, while still only bearing Phillips's name, has been significantly altered and expanded, and includes references to publications long after the death of the original author. The new preface gives an account of select printed collections alongside critical essays about poetry, beginning with Tottel's *Songes and Sonnettes* and including Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586) and George Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie* (1589). The forward reveals that 'in the latter end of [Queen Elizabeth's reign] they were thought to abound with such elegancies, that no less than two collections, principally from the poems of her time, were published in one year.'[146] Of *English Treasury* the following is written:

> The next publication of this kind is called "The English Treasury of Wit and Language, collected out of all the most and best dramatic poets, methodically digested into commonplaces for general use. By John Cotgrave, Gent." 8vo. 1655. But this is a more injudicious performance than the last.[147]

Collections of poetry such as *English Treasury* were not discussed in Phillips' original preface. Unlike in Hayward's more detailed account, there is no further analysis about what makes the collection 'injudicious' in this case, although the use of that specific term to sum up the collection may reveal that Brydges was reliant on Hayward in his summary who similarly described *English Treasury* as an 'injudicious performance'. It is of interest to consider the texts that these prefaces examine when recalling earlier poetic collections. After Tottel, Brydges names only two prior collections before discussing *English Treasury*, *Belvedere, or the Garden of Muses* and *England's Parnassus, or the choicest flowers of our modern poets*, both of which were published in 1600. After *English Treasury* the only other seventeenth-century verse compilation discussed, before the focus shifts to eighteenth-century collections, is Joshua Poole's *The English Parnassus, or an Help to English Poesy*

[146] Edward Phillips,*Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum* (Canterbury: Printed by Simmons and Kirkby, 1800, first 1675), pp.lxiii-lxiv.
[147] Phillips, p.lxv.

(1657, 1677), which is also censured as 'pompous insignificance and empty swell of pedantry and bombast.'[148]

Hayward did not discuss Tottel's miscellany, but he similarly discussed only *Belvedere* and *England's Parnassus* ahead of *English Treasury*, following with Poole's *English Parnassus* before moving onto eighteenth-century collections. Hayward did mention another collection, *Academy*, not as an example of a poetic collection but rather as a source for Poole's style: 'He ascribes few of these quotations to their authors, and concludes his work with some general modes or formalities of expression upon several trite topicks, much in the manner of *The Academy of Compliments*.'[149] Neither Hayward nor Brydge are favourable in their assessment of seventeenth-century poetic compilations, reflecting the more stringent editorial standards of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, these prefaces demonstrate that *English Treasury* was, nonetheless, seen as a clear lynch pin in the evolution of English verse collections. It was recognised as one of the first collections of English drama, and while criticised as collecting tastes and standards evolved in the eighteenth century, was nonetheless viewed as a platform that future publications would need to improve upon and build on. Despite Cotgrave's willingness to abridge and amend his texts, his verse collections demonstrate a clear interest in preserving and promoting English literature, specifically dramatic texts. They clearly played a role in influencing later printed verse collections as well as the catalogues of plays that began to appear in the eighteenth century, and are important texts to analyse when thinking about the development of a literary canon in the seventeenth century, as well as the place of plays in the canonical repertoire.

Conclusion

[148] Phillips (1800), p.lxv.
[149] Hayward (1711), p.xiii.

In this chapter I examined three mid-seventeenth century printed collections, *Academy, Wits Interpreter* and *English Treasury* in order to show that seventeenth-century verse collections are capable of informing our understanding of English literary tastes and the development of the literary canon. *Academy* was one of the first mid-seventeenth century texts and established a model which almost every subsequent collection in the period would endeavour either to emulate or surpass. Analysis of the structure and content of this text helps us uncover more about the motives behind the compilation of verse collections and the impact these texts had on seventeenth-century readers. These motives include the political and royalist sympathies of Moseley and his compiler, as well as Moseley's interest in publishing author-centric collections of poetry, both of which influenced which works and authors were included in *Academy*. *Wits Interpreter* offers one of the first, if not the first, example of a collection emphasising the material that it has taken from English drama, and addresses a distinct way in which these texts could particularly cater to the needs of a readership in a time of political, cultural and social upheaval, namely, by providing access to drama during a period in which the theatre was closed. This contributed to the mid-seventeenth century impetus to publish more dramatic writing, demonstrated by Cotgrave, Moseley and others, as well as encouraged the promotion and celebration of contemporary playwrights. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, *English Treasury* was one of the first collections to focus exclusively on dramatic writing. Although modern readers and scholars currently do not often consult *English Treasury* as a source of dramatic verse and prose, late seventeenth-century-and eighteenth-century compilers nonetheless saw it as a forerunner to canonising dramatic writing, and felt the need to acknowledge and improve upon it rather than completely dismiss it.

In this chapter I selected *Academy*, *Wits Interpreter* and *English Treasury* as representative examples of the contribution printed verse collections made to celebrating

English poetry and drama in the seventeenth-century. This includes attention to particular cultural and political ideas such as royalist agendas, concentrating on honouring the work of both eminent and contemporary seventeenth-century authors, and striving to promote select genres of English writing such as drama and lyric poems. Not all verse collections published during the mid-seventeenth century, of course, were particularly important in the gradual process of the formation of an English-literary canon. Some verse collections just recycled material from earlier miscellanies and anthologies, assembled with little care for which works or authors were included in the publications. Other texts were moralistic without an interest in aesthetic or literary considerations, offering moral maxims that had no stake in preserving selections of poetry or promoting renowned authors. However, there are examples like Moseley's *Academy* and Cotgrave's compilations that do demonstrate that that was not always the case, and in which the seeds of modern literary anthologies can be found. Printed verse collections played an important role in demonstrating inclusion and exclusion criteria in the mid-seventeenth century, which is a key aspect to informing the shape and content of a literary canon. This is also an important genre for uncovering insight into the influence of stationers, anthologists and so forth on the emergence of a literary canon. While the majority of this study concentrates on how English writers created, shaped and critiqued the nascent canon of acclaimed English authors and literature in this period, there are a number of other groups of people with considerable influence on the development of the canon. I argue that one of the most influential groups, heavily controlling which works and authors were printed and read, are those directly involved in the process of compiling, printing and selling books. Printed collections offer significant insight into the commercial as well as literary aspects of canon-formation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERARY CRITICISM

Many modern scholars generally take a dim view of the intellectual and cultural contribution of early modern English literary criticism. When evaluating literary theory written before the final few decades of the seventeenth century, current scholarship often denies English authors the praise awarded to their European counterparts. For example, Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) and Julius Caesar Scaliger (1540-1609) in Italy, or Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585) and Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) in France, are all acclaimed for their early contributions to vernacular literary criticism.[150] By contrast, as Colin Burrow observes, 'English literary criticism between 1580 and 1670 is often regarded as the poor relation of Europe.'[151] A number of critical assumptions underpin this perspective. For instance, the simplification of classical and European theory is one of the most common charges modern scholars levy against English authors; writers are often accused of misunderstanding classical models, like Aristotle and Horace, and proposing simplified observations rather than demonstrating a more penetrating or applied knowledge.[152] Other perceived deficiencies include the failure of English poet-critics to practise what they preach and their greater interest in rhetoric rather

[150] This includes Tasso's *Discorsi* (1587) on epic poetry, dialogues and letters; Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem* (1561); Ronsard's *Abrégé de l'Art poétique français* (1565); and Montaigne's *Essais* (1580) which have influenced critics and scholars in both the realms of literature and philosophy. J.E. Spingarn discusses the criticism of Italian and French scholars, as well as their influence on English criticism in both *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (1899) and *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, 3 vols (1908, 1909). Additionally see A.H. Gilbert (ed.), *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (1940), Glyn P Norton (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol 3: *The Renaissance* (1999), E.W. Tayler (ed.), *Literary Criticism of Seventeenth-Century England* (1967, 2000), and W. K. Wimsatt Jr and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (1957).

[151] Colin Burrow 'Combative criticism: Jonson, Milton, and classical literary criticism in England', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism III: The Renaissance* ed. by Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p.487.

[152] Burrow's comments demonstrates the modern opinion that early English authors had an incomplete understanding of classical sources. His examples include (1) Harrington's conflation of Aristotle's anagnorisis (theatrical moment of critical discovery) and peripetia (reversal of fortune) in defending Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516), (2) Spenser not implementing the neoclassical principles he espouses in his Letter to Ralegh in *The Faerie Queene* (1590), and (3) Puttenham favouring rhetoric over narrative structure in his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), p.487.

than poetics per se.[153] Examples of these alleged faults can be found in English criticism throughout the late sixteenth and through most of the seventeenth century.[154] However, focusing exclusively on the perceived deficiencies of English literary criticism tends to obscure the distinct benefits of studying English theoretical writing, which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appeared in a variety of forms, such as treatises or essays, prefaces, poems, dialogues and letters, to name a few. Not only do such works have the potential to shed light on literary tastes, judgments and values in the period, but they also offer insight into English authors' increasing confidence, or lack thereof, in their own culture and language. Research into these texts, then, provides crucial evidence of early modern English critical thinking and literary tastes which contributes in turn to our understanding of the development of the emerging concept of the English literary canon.

A handful of modern scholars have considered the value of early English literary criticism when discussing early vernacular canons. For example, Trevor Ross briefly examines seventeenth-century essays such as those by John Dryden as well as Samuel Daniel's *A Defence of Ryme*.[155] However, in most cases Ross considers extracts from these works to demonstrate another idea, such as neoclassicism, rather than to discuss the specific contribution of early modern literary theory to the conception, formation and development of a literary canon. Moreover, Ross's work takes a broad diachronic view from the middle ages through the late eighteenth century; with such an expansive project he cannot delve in depth

[153] To the latter point Burrow argues that too great a focus on rhetoric results in '[minimizing] the importance of narrative structure', p.487.

[154] For example, Floyd Gray argues that the essays of Francis Bacon are simplified versions of Montaigne's essays, technically accurate but lacking in literary flair (see 'The essay as criticism', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism III: The Renaissance* ed. by Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp.273-77). Similarly, E.W. Tayler argues that until the middle of the seventeenth century English theory was occupied with polemics (uses and abuses of poetry), general principles and classical controversies (e.g. rhyme and metre) without illuminating technique. Unlike their European counterparts, such as Balthasar Gracián and Emanuele Tesauro, they offer isolated comments and not a unified theory (see *Literary Criticism of Seventeenth-Century England* (1967, 2000), pp.7-8).

[155] Ross discusses Dryden's *A Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1669), *Defence of the Epilogue* and *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) alongside other critical and poetic works, particularly examining Dryden's criticism of prestigious authors, literary predecessors such as Shakespeare, the value of literature and modernity.

into any single period or genre. By contrast, Kelsey Williams uses Thomas Pope Blount as a specific example of how an individual seventeenth-century essay writer might shape the development of an English literary canon.[156] Williams argues that studies of canonicity currently neglect 'systems of textual categorization and valorization' that predate the more recognisable English literary canon that emerges in the eighteenth century, resulting in a misunderstanding of the early modern cultural and intellectual landscape. However, while Williams' essay endeavours to provide corrective scholarship that moves past projecting modern notions of canonicity onto the early modern period, his focus is on a single author at the very end of the seventeenth-century, a period often considered in the context of eighteenth-century literary canon theory.[157] In this chapter, therefore, my study aims to find a balance between these two approaches, one diachronic and historicising, the other centred on a single author, and examine early literary criticism and its contribution to developing an English literary canon prior to the eighteenth century, examining a selection of three case studies across the mid-seventeenth century. In doing so, I aim to historicise and reconstruct the process by which thinking about an English literary canon in the mid-seventeenth century gradually evolved, beginning the process of encouraging scholars to consider earlier English critical writing as contributory to the conception and development of a literary canon. My study endeavours to offer the depth that works like Williams' achieves while maintaining the historical and diachronic perspective necessary to propose that mid-seventeenth-century literary criticism plays a more important role than often thought in contributing to early thinking about an English literary canon.

I have chosen three texts that I believe are representative of some of the key critical ideas and methodologies in the middle of the century, published between 1650 and 1668,

[156] Kelsey Williams, 'Canon before Canon, Literature before Literature: Thomas Pope Blount and the Scope of Early Modern Learning', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 77:2 (2014): 177-199. Williams uses Blount's bibliographical works *Censura celebriorum authorum* (1690) and *De re poetica* (1694) to propose conclusions about the differences between early modern and modern canons.
[157] Williams, 179.

examining the arguments of each author, as well as the approaches they take to proposing conclusions about contemporary English literature. These essays underpin a number of ideas relevant to the formation of and theory behind a literary canon, such as the promotion of fame, the ranking of eminent authors and the preservation and dissemination of influential works. The first is Sir William Davenant's 'The Author's Preface to His Much Honor'D Friend, M. Hobbes' (1650) prefacing his then forthcoming heroic poem *Gondibert* (1651). The second is Margaret Cavendish's preface to the biography of her husband, *The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince William Cavendishe* (1667). The final text is John Dryden's *Of Dramatick Poesie: An Essay* (1668). My case studies for this chapter are all published in the two decades prior to 1670, the date from which, as Burrow reports, English literary criticism begins to resemble something more familiar to modern expectations. These essays each explore a different literary genre – the epic, life writing and drama – and each takes a different approach to discussing and engaging with their contemporaries, as well as their English, continental and classical predecessors. Dryden is commonly viewed as the principal literary critic of the seventeenth century, initiating a literary critical tradition that has continued uninterrupted through to the present day, while Cavendish and especially Davenant are less frequently thought to have influenced English literary critical thinking in any meaningful way.[158] Nonetheless, I argue that these three authors all exemplify contemporary seventeenth-century ideas about the emergence of an English literary canon, as well as offer unique and innovative approaches to thinking about and shaping the reception of English writing in the middle of the century. Literary criticism in this period is often overshadowed by initial Renaissance attempts at theorising about poetry, and of course by

[158] Dryden is hailed by Samuel Johnson as the father of English criticism, and George Watson professes that Dryden is the first genuine English literary critic after the 'false rhetoricians' of the Elizabethan period. While I don't agree with Watson's assertion that Dryden's criticism emerged in isolation, he does express a fairly standard assertion among many scholars of Dryden and seventeenth-and eighteenth-century literary criticism that the author is a pioneering neoclassical theorist and the principal seventeenth-century influence on eighteenth-century critical thinking (John Dryden, *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays, vol.1*, ed. by George Watson vol.1 (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1962), p.v).

late seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century literary critical efforts, such as Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism* (1711), David Hume's *Of the Standard of Taste* (1757) or Samuel Johnson's *The Lives of the English Poets and a Criticism On Their Works* (1779-81), often viewed as more significant to the establishment of the English literary canon.

Most studies of early modern English literary criticism concentrate on the manner in which sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century critics analysed classical models and rhetorical features.[159] For example, until he reaches Dryden chronologically, J.E. Spingarn focuses almost exclusively on the contributions of early modern English writers first to rhetorical and later to neoclassical arguments. Similarly A.H. Gilbert evaluates English critics on the basis of their classical knowledge and W.K. Wimsatt arranges his study around the adaptation of Aristotle and Horace into European theory, concentrating on the rise of neoclassicism from the late sixteenth century until the late seventeenth century. Brian Vickers offers a more positive perspective concerning the importance of vernacular criticism from the Renaissance, but he still maintains that literary critics writing during the Renaissance were preoccupied by classical sources and rhetoric. More recently, Michael Gavin has acknowledged that from the seventeenth century 'the material basis for critical judgement was shifting,' due in large part to the availability of cheap printed texts and marketplace diversity. While he argues that English literary criticism during the seventeenth century 'was undisciplined…[appearing] in the contentious world of the London theatre…this unruly discourse laid the groundwork both for modern literary criticism and for the discipline of literary studies.'[160] I certainly take such studies into account, but my focus is less on the English reception of classical poetry and rhetorical theory, and more on how English authors built on these earlier models to praise, analyse and distinguish English poetry from both ancient and continental precursors. While one cannot analyse early modern criticism without

[159] Brian Vickers, *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (Oxford: OUP, 1999).
[160] Michael Gavin, *The Invention of English Criticism 1650-1760* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), pp.i, 1.

at least acknowledging these classical influences and contexts, I argue in this chapter that more can be done to tip the balance from viewing early authors as exclusively interested in rhetoric to understanding their gestures in shaping a wider range of literary conventions, identifying the formal, stylistic and thematic characteristics and conventions of different literary genres that would influence the development of the English literary canon. It hardly needs to be said that sixteenth-and seventeenth-century English literary criticism, and indeed criticism and theory in other European vernacular languages, was influenced by preceding classical traditions. As Richard Waswo observes, 'Western Europe decolonized itself culturally from ancient Rome only to imitate it; it contested the model only by becoming it, by imposing on others the cultural alienation it had so long known.'[161] Many pre-eighteenth century literary critics referred to classical precedent in order to justify the production, dissemination and at times preservation of vernacular literature.[162] Vickers notes that England was deprived of a meaningful literary tradition due to significant linguistic changes during the sixteenth century.[163] Related to this, as Burrow reports, 'classical criticism had such relatively shallow roots in England [due to] an acute shortage of words in which to praise literature, let alone analyse its form.'[164] Yet, despite the differences in terminology and style of writing between early modern and modern literary critics, I argue that these texts display an awareness of literary value, theory and the enduring potential of English poetry and prose, which I illustrate in this chapter through a discussion of the critical work of Davenant, Cavendish and Dryden.

[161] Richard Waswo, 'The rise of vernaculars' in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism III: The Renaissance* ed. by Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p.416.
[162] For a useful summary of poetics, rhetoric, humanism and imitation at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries see the introduction to Gavin Alexander (ed.), *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and selected Renaissance Literary criticism* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp.xvii-lxxix.
[163] In addition to changes of language, Vickers also notes that there is a disconnection between medieval and renaissance authors, with the latter more familiar with Plutarch/Virgil than their own early history (Vickers, p.4).
[164] Burrow, p.487.

William Davenant's epic ambitions

Sir William Davenant (1606-1668) was a poet, dramatist and theatre manager, the son of a vintner and tavern keeper, and a loyal royalist supporter. By the 1630s he had earned the patronage of Henry Jermyn, favourite of Queen Henrietta Maria, and went into exile with the royal court in 1643.[165] It was while in exile that Davenant attempted his foray into the epic genre, publishing a critical preface for his forthcoming epic *Gondibert* (1650) while living abroad in Paris, followed by the first few books of the poem in 1651.[166] The plot of the poem is a romance, with the protagonist torn between his love for Bintha and an arranged marriage with Rhodalind, the princess of Lombardy. Several English authors were living in France during and after the Civil War, most of them royal supporters like Davenant attached to Queen Henrietta Maria's retinue; due in large part to this transition of the court, French literary theory and practice were introduced to English readers, including the metaphysical school of literary criticism and the linking of imagination with wit.[167] In spite of the clear French influence on Davenant's writing and thinking, Davenant intended the poem to be an English accomplishment.[168] The preface was written in English despite being initially published in Paris, and when the first two cantos were published Davenant sent them to London to be printed by Thomas Newcomb for John Holden. Additionally, the preface praises Davenant's kinsmen, no 'Nation hath in representment of great actions (either by *Heroicks* or *Dramaticks*) digested Story into so pleasant and instructive a method as the

[165] On Davenant's life and early patronage see Mary Edmond, 'Sir William Davenant (1606-1668)', *ODNB* (October 2009) and Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), pp.206-8.

[166] The preface was originally published in 1650 without the poem, with the first three of five planned books appearing in 1651. The seventh and final canto from the third book appeared posthumously in 1685, and Davenant never wrote the last two books (see David F. Gladish, *Sir William Davenant's Gondibert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.ix).

[167] For further background on French influence in England during the mid-seventeenth century see Spingarn (1899), pp.255-259; Spingarn I (1908), pp.xxi-xxxvi; and Catherine Martin and Hassan Melehy, *French Connections in the English Renaissance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). For more on French literary theory see Michael Moriarty, 'French criticism in the seventeenth century', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. by Glyn P Norton, vol 3: The Renaissance (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp.555-565.

[168] William McCarthy, Richard Helgerson and other critics and historians have all observed *Gondibert* to be heavily influenced by French heroic romance, including Honoré d'Urfé (1568-1625) and Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701).

English.'[169] Davenant, writing the preface while exiled in Paris, praised the English particularly for their treatment of action. Davenant and Dryden, along with Thomas Hobbes, Abraham Cowley, Edmund Waller, Sir John Denham and others were working in the same literary circles and often discussed literary theory with one another and in their works. Two decades later, in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* (1668), Dryden would refine Davenant's general praise for English action in his discussion of the dramatic unities.

Gondibert specifically praised the achievements of Davenant and his contemporaries, revealed in his treatment of Spenser, who is regarded as one of the eminent epic poets although his 'obsolete language we are constrain'd to mention.'[170] As Richard Helgerson observes, the royalist cavalier poets writing during the Civil War and ensuing Cromwellian Protectorate were motivated by defeat, a prevalent theme in the works produced in this period.[171] Yet Davenant's preface is hopeful, promising that the best of drama can be found among his English contemporaries, himself included, and that the ultimate epic is still to be written, and indeed, Davenant promises his own epic will hopefully fit into this mould.

Gondibert is one of Davenant's most famous works currently, if perhaps only for the detailed prefatory essays supplied by Davenant and his close friend Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). However, *Gondibert* and its preface are viewed by modern scholars as somewhat of an anomaly in his career. Davenant himself takes pains to distance himself from his earlier poetic and dramatic work in introducing *Gondibert*.

> 'Tis now fit, after I have given you so long a survey of the Building, to render you some accompt of the Builder…and in this I shall take occasion to accuse, and

[169]For Dryden, English drama benefits from taking more liberty with action than classical and French traditions would have allowed. See W.P. Ker (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden* (Oxford, OUP, 1926), pp.xxxix-xli.
[170] William Davenant, *A Discourse upon Gondibert An Heroick Poem* (Paris: Chez Matthiev Gvillemot, 1650), Wing D322, sig.A9v.
[171] Helgerson examines the works of Davenant, Edward Benlowes' *Theophila* (1652), Sir Richard Fanshawe's translations of *The Lusiads* (1655), Cowley's *Davideis* (1656) and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) in discussing epics produced in moments of political defeat, pp.236-38.

> condemn, as Papers unworthy of light, all those hasty digestions of thought which were publish'd in my Youth.[172]

The epic was written during his time in exile and prison, during a period of royalist defeat and the closure of the theatre on which Davenant relied for his livelihood.[173] Moreover, Davenant abandoned *Gondibert* and never again attempted to write a heroic poem after the Restoration when he resumed his role as playwright and undertook the management of The Duke's Theatre (1660). Yet, everything about the project suggested that Davenant expected *Gondibert* and its preface to be his magnum opus, to secure his own place in the English literary canon as well as influence the shape, theme and style of future epic poets.

In this first section I reveal and analyse the manner in which Davenant intended his preface to *Gondibert* to contribute to the emerging idea of an English literary canon, both in critiquing his predecessors in the epic genre and laying out his instructions for writing a heroic poem. The central argument of Davenant's essay is that prior epic poems all reveal various flaws in the genre, and that Davenant will use his preface to demonstrate the structural and thematic requirements of the ideal epic, before providing his readers with an epic demonstrating his prescribed ideal model. Davenant endeavours not just to critique and influence the shape and reception of the genre, but aims actively to place himself within the canon of epic poets. He addresses his preface to Hobbes, and after briefly acknowledging and praising his friend, immediately sets out with a critique of, and observations on, the most eminent epic poets:

> I will (according as all times have applied their reverence) begin with *Homer*, who though he seems to me standing upon the Poets famous hill…and though he ought not be removed from that eminence, lest Posterity should presumptuously mistake their

[172] *Gondibert*, sigs.C4v-C5r.
[173] Helgerson, p.211.

> course; yet some (sharply observing how his Successours have proceeded no farther than a perfection of imitating him) say…he hath rather proved a Guide for those, whose satisf'd wit will not venture beyond the track of others…Some there are that object that even in the likelyhoods of Story…he doth too frequently intermixe such Fables.[174]

Davenant reveals that readers promote Homer to a literary peak which no other poet has since managed to surpass. Renaissance literary criticism earlier in the century focused heavily on lauding the merits of *imitatio*, the rules of imitation. The concept's roots can be found in Plato's *The Sophist* (219a–c, 360BC). The text defines two principle types of imitation in art: *Icastic* imitation which perfectly replicates its model without introducing imaginative changes, and *Fantastic* imitation which can create anew or provide an inexact representation of the original subject.[175] Earlier critics such as Sidney and Jonson advocated that writers must imitate classical precept and models in order to produce great works. However, from the mid-seventeenth century, English poets and critics began to advocate that great poetry needed to do more than imitate those authors in the past deemed to be the most talented and influential. Davenant declares that poets who never 'venture beyond the track of others' can never surpass those who came before them. This is one of the key ways in which Davenant endeavours to shape the English literary canon, arguing for originality and innovation, that for authors to truly deserve a place among the greats they must produce work that will make their oeuvre stand out as unique, otherwise they may just be replaced by the next imitator.

[174] *Gondibert*, sigs.A4v-A5r.
[175] From the 14th century authors were influenced by other models of imitation including Aristotle, Cicero and Virgil (Roland Greene, editor in chief, *The New Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics: Fourth Edition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp.1160-1161). For further background on Platonic criticism and its influence and English critical writing see A.H. Gilbert (ed.) *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (1940) and W. K. Wimsatt Jr, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (1957). Katherine Duncan-Jones specifically discusses the influence of Plato, Horace, Aristotle and others on Sidney (see Katherine Duncan-Jones (ed.), *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works* (Oxford: OUP, 2002)).

Davenant reveals that achieving a place within the literary canon, or, in his words, a position atop the 'Poets famous hill,' is in part a competition; in order to be included writers must surpass their predecessors or risk being overshadowed by them.

Davenant does not argue for originality for the sake of originality, but because, in his view, poetry is constantly evolving and improving. Homer is a great poet, but like all the great heroic authors that Davenant considers, Homer is not completely free of imperfection, leaving room for future poets to exceed his prevailing legacy and reputation. For example, Davenant criticises Homer for the manner in which he presents his story: 'he often interrogates his Muse, not as his rational Spirit but as a *Familiar*...whilst supernaturally he doth often advance his men to the quality of Gods, and depose his Gods to the condition of men.'[176] Paul Salzman discusses *Gondibert* from a political perspective, suggesting that Davenant argues for wit as the central inspiration for poetry rather than classical mythology, defending against the religious zealotry that royalist supporters viewed as one of the instigators of the revolution.[177] Additionally, from a literary perspective we see Davenant beginning an argument developed further by Cowley, with whom Davenant discussed his epic ambitions and ideas, in the preface to his *Davideis* as well as in his poem praising Davenant's epic, '*To Sir* William Davenant.'[178] Davenant argues that the focus of poetry should move away from supernatural imagery and toward the concerns of mortal men, hoping to encourage English poets to expand the breadth of subjects and styles which can be incorporated into the epic genre. This enabled Davenant to mix heroic poetry conventions with elements of French romance, which was a more flexible genre in the mid-seventeenth century, as well as cater to the tastes of his contemporary, Christian readership.[179] In

[176] *Gondibert*, sig.A5r.
[177] Paul Salzman, 'Royalist epic and romance', in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing the English Revolution*, ed. by N. H. Keeble (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), p.220.
[178] I discuss Cowley's poem in detail in my fourth chapter on commendatory poetry and his epic in my final chapter on Cowley's self-canonisation.
[179] Salzman notes that this flexibility enabled poets to better engage with political events, p.221.

challenging the tradition of incorporating mythological elements into the epic genre, Davenant is challenging the parameters of the canon of heroic poetry established by the classical literary canon and epic poets like Homer, Virgil and Ovid. Davenant's preface analyses and defines the epic genre within the context of the vernacular literary canon in the mid-seventeenth century, not to eradicate what came before, but to encourage readers, and other writers of epic poems, to expand their literary ambitions and tastes and to incorporate modern as well as ancient themes into the genre.

After Davenant analyses the merits and flaws of the Greek and Latin epic poets, he examines Tasso, 'who reviv'd the Heroick flame after it was many ages quenched.'[180] Davenant pinpoints Tasso as the bridge between classical and vernacular poets, Italian, French and English. However, Davenant is restrained in his praise of Tasso's position as the first modern heroic poet:

> *Tasso*…the first of the Moderns; an honour by which he gains not much; because the number he excells must be few, which affords but one fit to succeed him [Spenser]; for I will yield to their opinion, who permit not *Ariosto*, no nor *Du Bartas*, in this eminent ranke of Heroicks; rather than to make way by their admission for *Dante, Marino,* and others. *Tasso's* honour too is chiefly allow'd him, where he most endeavours to make *Virgil* his Pattern: And again, when we consider from whom *Virgil*'s spirit is deriv'd [Homer], we may observe how rarely humane excellence is found; for Heroick Poesie…flow'd but in few, and even those Streams descended but from one Grecian Spring.[181]

He argues that Tasso's position as first of the modern poets is not overly meaningful because he is one of such a small number of writers to even attempt to write an epic. Nonetheless,

[180] *Gondibert*, sig.A8r
[181] *Gondibert*, sig.A8r. See also Kenneth Sills, 'References to Dante in Seventeenth-Century English Literature', *Modern Philology* 3:1 (June 1905), 106.

Davenant also insists that simply writing an epic does not merit a poet recognition among heroic authors, denying both Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) and his *Orlando Furioso* (1516) and Guillaume de Saluste Du Bartas (1544-1590) and his *La Sepmaine* (1578) a position in this 'eminent ranke,' claiming that this is not only his own opinion but one shared by his contemporaries. Davenant then returns to considering the prevalence of *imitatio* in English and continental poetry, arguing that it is Tasso's imitation of Virgil, who himself imitated Homer, that is the poet's chief strength. Yet this debt to Virgil is also revealed as a weakness. The best poets, he claims, do no more than emulate the original Grecian model, which can lead to good poetry, poetry worth honouring and regarding as eminent. However, it does not encourage that rare human excellence that elevates a poet from inclusion, like Tasso, to the original eminence that would enable a poet to stand highest atop 'the Poets famous hill,' his earlier allusion to Parnassus which from the fourteenth century, and possibly earlier, was viewed by authors as both the source of poetic inspiration and the home of eminent authors and significant literary works.

Davenant takes his argument for originality further, suggesting that *imitatio* can only carry poetry through so many iterations before it loses impact:

> But *Tasso* though he came late into the world must have his share in that Criticall Warre which never ceases amongst the Learned; and he seems most unfortunate, because his errors which are deriv'd from the Ancients, when examin'd, grow in a great degree excusable in them, and by being his, admit no pardon.[182]

Davenant contends that while the weaknesses found in earlier poets like Homer and Virgil were excusable, and even expected, later poets like Tasso, having had the benefit of learning from their earlier example, were expected to have profited from this critical knowledge and

[182] Davenant, *Gondibert*, sig.A8v.

thus avoid repeating the same mistakes. This is the primary reason that Davenant stresses the importance of prioritising originality over imitation in order to create the best epic poem. Poetry, according to Davenant, must always strive to surpass previous works. William McCarthy has suggested Davenant's preface is too focused on claiming originality, making him a forerunner to the modern and contemporary anxiety about competing with past examples.[183] McCarthy argues that if imitating Virgil, who followed Homer's model, brought Tasso success then imitation is clearly the pathway to epic success, yet Davenant laments imitation for fear of being lost among his predecessors.[184] While I agree this is an element of Davenant's argument I do not think that it is the whole of it. Davenant is introducing an epic which includes themes, characters and structural features derived from English drama and French romance, but these elements are not common elements of the heroic poetry Davenant endeavours to produce. Davenant defends originality not just to compete with his predecessors, but to argue for innovation and revitalisation in the genre that at this point relied heavily on the imitation of classical precepts. Davenant's theory intends to create a place for *Gondibert* in the pantheon of canonical epic poetry, but also to expand and influence contemporary genre conventions and tastes. As previously mentioned, Cowley, who was writing his own epic poem *Davideis*, was a friend of Davenant in exile, lending his support to Davenant's *Gondibert* and probably discussing his own epic ambitions at the same time.[185] Davenant's preface endeavours to secure his own place alongside the literary greats, potentially supports the forthcoming work of at least one of his contemporaries and seeks to

[183] William McCarthy, 'Davenant's Prefatory Rhetoric', *Criticism* 20:2 (Spring 1978), 128; See also Harold Bloom (*The Western Canon* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994), pp.7-11), although it is worth noting that current criticism about literary canons is moving away, or at least focusing less intently on the anxiety of influence in this period, in for example the studies of Trevor Ross, Richard Terry, William St Clair and Kelsey Williams.
[184] McCarthy, 135.
[185] According to those close to Cowley, including Thomas Sprat who penned his biography, which will be discussed in my third chapter, Cowley had already begun *Davideis* in his youth prior to the war and exile and so it is possible that he discussed his own poem in encouraging Davenant. See also Arthur H. Nethercot, *Abraham Cowley: The Muse's Hannibal* (London: Humphrey Milford, OUP, 1931), pp.94-95, 122.

encourage other English poets to contribute English epics to the existing pantheon of heroic verse that up until this point had been dominated by ancient and continental writers.

Davenant concludes his list of poetic greats with Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), the most recent and only English inclusion in his list of epic poets:

> *Spencer* may stand here as the last of this short File of Heroick Poets; Men, whose intellectuals were of so great a making, (though some have thought them lyable to those few censures we have mention'd) as perhaps they will in worthy memory out-last even Makers of Laws, and Founders of Empire, and all but such as must therefore live equally with them, because they have recorded their Names; and consequently with their own hands led them to the Temple of Fame.[186]

Now obsolete, the term 'file' prior to the nineteenth century was used to mean catalogue, list or rollcall.[187] Davenant suggests that the file of heroic poets is short, a sentiment Dryden reiterates near the end of the century in his *Discourses on Satire and Epic Poetry* (1697). Davenant's short file, his list of heroic poets, suggests a finite collection, previously making exclusions such as Ariosto and Du Bartas, but he still suggests that the catalogue is not complete, and he is certainly trying to enter this collective of eminent epic poets in presenting his *Gondibert*.[188] Davenant demonstrates a recognised tradition of classical and European epic poets, writers who may have their flaws but who have still earned their place in the 'Temple of Fame.' In critiquing his predecessors, he also demonstrates where the genre might progress in the future, a symbolic 'promise for the future rather than a regrettable loss of the

[186] *Gondibert*, sig.A9r.
[187] 'file, n.2', *OED Online* (OUP) <www.oed.com> [accessed 2016].
[188] Davenant lists the reasons why an author would be motivated to write an epic, claiming the achievement of fame as his personal motivator. This will be discussed further shortly.

past.'[189] Davenant proposes that in order to inscribe one's name within the 'Temple of Fame' a poet must surpass existing genre conventions and models in order to produce an original work, rather than simply imitate the efforts of their predecessors.

Davenant turns from author to work in the next section of his preface by discussing the structure most desirable for writing an English epic:

> I cannot discern by any help from reading, or learned men, (who have been to me the best and briefest Indexes of Books) that any Nation hath in representment of great actions (either by *Heroicks* or *Dramaticks*) digested Story into so pleasant and instructive a method as the English by their *Drama*: and by that regular species (though narratively and not in Dialogue) I have drawn the body of an Heroick Poem: In which I did not only observe the Symmetry (proportioning five Books to five *Acts*, and *Canto*'s to *Scenes*…but all the *shadowings*, *happy strokes*, s*ecret graces*, and even the *drapery* (which together make the second beauty).'[190]

As discussed at the beginning of this section, Davenant presents *Gondibert* as both his own pinnacle achievement and as a particularly English accomplishment. He compliments English drama both for its ability to please and to instruct, recalling Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* which argued for poetry's supremacy over history and philosophy as only poetry is capable of simultaneously instructing (docere), delighting (delectare) and moving emotions (movere).[191] Here, Davenant informs his reader of the supremacy of the English dramatic form, and argues for its suitability in the epic genre, only replacing the dialogue with narrative storytelling. Davenant endeavours both to modernise the epic form, as well as applaud the literary talents of his own nation. David Gladish observes that Davenant's argument for applying the

[189] Gladish uses this phrase to describe Davenant's poem, but it does also nicely summarise the aims of Davenant's literary theory (David F. Gladish, *Sir William Davenant's Gondibert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.ix).
[190] *Gondibert*, sig.B10r.
[191] Vickers, pp.15-17

symmetry and structure of dramatic texts to other genres can be seen in practice in earlier English works such as Thomas May's narrative poem *The Reign of King Henry the Second* (1633) and Sir Francis Kynaston's romance *Leoline and Sydanis* (1642).[192] Davenant's preface argues that the ideal shape of the English epic poem synthesises the ideas expressed in the earlier Renaissance arguments of writers like Sidney, in combination with the stylistic features of dramatic verse. Davenant's analysis of English playwriting, and its unparalleled representation of action, promotes his argument that achieving docere, delectare and movere within the epic genre requires the adoption of the dramatic structure.

Davenant's *Preface* reveals ideas relevant to the formation of a literary canon in ranking and critiquing eminent epic poets, as well as prescribing his own formal rules for the genre. He takes this further by specifically discussing the process of writing, outlining the reasons an author creates and publishes a particular type of work. In particular, he examines the concept of fame, that poets write to be immortalised, and that this is not just a by-product of authorship but something to strive for. Davenant relates this to his own defence and promotion of *Gondibert*, claiming that there are only two reasons to attempt an epic:[193]

> Men are chiefly provok'd to the toil of compiling Books, by love of Fame, and often by officiousnesse of Conscience, but seldome with expectation of Riches: for those that spend time in writing to instruct others, may find leasure to inform themselvs…[Learned men] have the same foolish affection in nourishing other minds…'Tis then apparent they proceed by the instigation of Fame or Conscience; and I believe many are perswaded by the first (of which I am One) and some are commanded by the second.[194]

[192] Gladish *Gondibert* (1971), p.x.
[193] Davenant claims in his postscript to have written the preface in order to encourage himself to write the poem (William McCarthy, 'Davenant's Prefatory Rhetoric', *Criticism* 20:2 (Spring 1978), 130).
[194] *Gondibert*, sigs.C11r-v.

Davenant offers personal fame and moral conscience as the two principal reasons to write generally, but especially to attempt the much lauded heroic poem. Moreover, he admits that it is his own quest for fame that encouraged him to compose *Gondibert*. Yet Davenant is quite careful in how he justifies this seeming conceit, demonstrating that a desire for fame is equally, if not more noble, than writing for conscience alone. He specifically refers to labours of conscience as 'officiousness,' a term that in this period implies a readiness to do good works, but also suggests over-eagerness to the point of forwardness and self-importance.[195] He also defends fame as an endeavour of godliness rather than vanity.

> Nor is the desire of Fame so vain as divers have rigidly imagin'd; Fame being (when belonging to the Living) that which is more gravely call'd a steddy and necessary reputation…'Tis of the Dead a musical glory, in which God, the author of excellent goodnesse, vouchsafes to take a continuall share.[196]

Davenant highlights the distinction between a respectable living reputation and a memorable, glorious afterlife, as it is this eternal fame that best represents goodness and showcases a dedication to glorifying God through excellent works. Davenant concludes that the writer of conscience is less admirable, because those with no talent to write will feel compelled to authorship and 'be often so unskilfull and timorous, that it seldome gives a wise and steddy accompt of God.'[197] Terry argues that regardless of 'the practical problems of achieving fame, it was assumed that writing was an activity almost uniquely driven by the desire for its attainment.'[198] He uses Davenant as a prime example of this, although only mentioning that Davenant defines fame as a motive to authorship rather than his own personal reason to write. In discussing the 'cult of fame,' Terry touches on the conflict between desiring fame and

[195] 'officiousness, n.', *OED Online*, (OUP) <www.oed.com> [accessed 2016].
[196] *Gondibert*, sigs.C11v-C12r.
[197] *Gondibert*, sig.D1r.
[198] Terry, 71.

religious thinking, but Davenant addresses the issue, and in doing so demonstrates the path by which an author can both write for fame and be unashamed, even encouraged, to do so. In short, Davenant supports authors striving for fame, and simultaneously promotes the idea of honouring and remembering particular authors in addition to praising great works.

Davenant ends his preface averring the success of his argument and returning to Thomas Hobbes to whom he addressed the epistolary essay.

> Thus having taken measure (though hastily) of the extent of those great Professions that in Government contribute to the necessities, ease, and lawfull pleasures of Men; and finding Poesie as useful now as the Antients found it towards perfection and happiness…I delay the publication of any part of the Poem, till I can send it you from *America*.[199]

Davenant concludes by arguing that in spite of the flaws found in past texts, poetry is still a worthwhile endeavour. He then justifies to his reader why the preface appears ahead of the poem. Davenant claims he does not want the poem to appear until Hobbes has given the work his approval. Yet, the preface is published in 1650 alongside Hobbes' answer, as well as featuring commendatory verse from Cowley and Waller, but lacking the promised poem.[200] Davenant's publication of the preface prior to the publication of his epic, which still was not complete when it finally appeared the following year, resulted in mixed critical responses, primarily negative, from his contemporaries. Yet it was a decision that I argue Davenant made hoping it would contribute to the success of his poem, despite the fact that it did not end up doing so. I conclude this section, therefore, with a discussion of the publication history of the poem and its preface, and an analysis of how Davenant's miscalculation can nonetheless be seen as his pitch for literary canonisation.

[199] *Gondibert*, sigs.F1r-v.
[200] The commendatory work of Cowley and Waller is discussed in my fourth chapter.

A discourse upon Gondibert, when it was first published in 1650, was accompanied by the two dedicatory odes written by Cowley and Waller, as well as Hobbes' essay *The Answer of Mr. Hobbs to Sr. William D'Avenant's Preface before Gondibert*. The epic was reprinted twice in 1651 and was never completed, although it was included in the 1673 posthumous collection of the author's works.[201] The seventh and last canto of the third book appeared on its own in 1685, printed for William Miller and Joseph Watts.[202] The editorial note to this canto claims: 'That this only Remain of that unparallel'd Heroick Poem might not be lost, it was thought fit to be published.' While Davenant did not publish the seventh canto of the third book during his lifetime, or write the final two books of the poem, there was clearly contemporary interest in the epic, demonstrating that despite the criticism *Gondibert* obtained enough of a readership to encourage at least a small print circulation.

Davenant wrote *Gondibert* during the Civil War, after the closure of the theatres and while living in exile from his native country. In addition to being an outlet for certain political and religious opinions, the author probably envisioned the project as a way to make his literary mark during changed fortunes. With the re-opening of the theatres, Davenant once again returned to the stage and abandoned the epic, most likely disheartened by the poor reception of the text, mocked primarily for the ostentatious standalone preface that preceded an incomplete book. In 1653, a satirical edition of *Certain Verses Written By severall of the Authors Friends* appeared, featuring the mock poem *The Loves of Hero and Leander* and prefaced by several dedicatory poems offering insults disguised as praise for Davenant, his book and the preface.[203] The first poem in the collection mocks the preface appearing

[201] According to Gladish there are three editions '51a, '51b and '73, with '51b being a reprint of the '51a making only two substantive editions (Gladish, *Gondibert* (1971), p.xxviii).
[202] For more about this specific canto, in particular its presentation alongside the commendatory verse from Charles Cotton, see Alvin I. Dust, 'The "Seventh and Last Canto of Gondibert" and Two Dedicatory Poems', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 60:2 (April 1961) 292-285.
[203] This was followed by another satirical publication *The Incomparable Poem GONDIBERT vindicated From the Wit-Combats of Four Esquires'* in 1655. D'Israeli identified the authors of *Certain Verses* as John Denham, Jack Donne, Will Crofts and Alan Brodrick, although Gosse instead suggested Cleveland and Jasper Mayne. See

separately from the epic poem itself, using the comparison 'a Porch to no house,' and takes issue with Davenant's arguments about the ancient poets:

> Room for the best of Poets heroick,
> If you'l believe two Wits and a Stoick;
> Down go the *Iliads*, down go the *Æneidos*,
> All must give place to the *Gondiberteiados*.
> For to *Homer* and *Virgil* he has a just Pique,
> Because ones writ in Latin, the other in Greek.[204]

This poem sums up the two main charges levied against *Gondibert*: the standalone preface and Davenant's treatment of ancient authors. The anonymous poet argues that Davenant's preface makes the claim that the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* should be removed from the epic canon, to make way for *Gondibert* simply because the latter epic is written in English while the other two are in Greek and Latin. Yet that was not quite Davenant's argument, which contended that poets should not imitate only for the sake of imitation and at the expense of originality. Davenant was neither the first nor last in the period to propose the question of to what extent English authors should rely on classical models. The argument was later refined by Dryden, who offered a succinct analysis of both the merits and weaknesses of classical literature, as well as of vernacular imitations.[205] Davenant's preface concentrated heavily on denigration rather than praise and acknowledgment of what had been done well. Though it was ultimately to the disadvantage of *Gondibert*'s reception, nonetheless, in his preface to *Gondibert* Davenant clearly attempted to shape literary tastes and contribute new ideas about writing

---

ESTC note on the Pforzheimer Catalogue and Brendan O Hehir, *Harmony from Discords: A Life of Sir John Denham* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp.91-92.

[204] *Certain Verses Written By severall of the Authors Friends* (London: 1653), sig.A2r.

[205] For example, in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* which will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

epic poetry. Some of which clearly did land, for a few decades later Dryden would borrow and refine some of Davenant's earlier arguments.

To an extent *Gondibert* and the prefatory discourse did achieve some of the status and influence that Davenant desired. The book appeared in lists of library collections and catalogues of vendible books well into the eighteenth century, and was regularly advertised in the advertisement catalogues of Brookes, Moseley and Herringman.[206] Cowley and Waller's prefatory odes persisted as part of their own collections of works, both re-appearing into the mid-eighteenth century. The preface and epic are also mentioned in a number of other places, many with a much more favourable outlook than the satirical *Certain Verses*. In his *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691) Langbaine observes that his epic *Gondibert* 'made the greatest noise.' Langbaine appears impartial in his analysis of the reception of the poem, comparing the commendation provided by 'our best Poets' Waller and Cowley with the discrediting verse by 'Four Eminent Wits of that Age, (two of which were Sr. *John Denham*, and Mr. *Donne*,).'[207] Although Langbaine reveals a mixture of praise and condemnation, he also exposes the fact that all the best poets, the most eminent wits, are reading and discussing Davenant's poem.[208]

Edward Phillips, in his *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675), concludes his summary of works with *Gondibert* 'the Crown of all,' an opinion he attributes to Hobbes, while acknowledging the poem has its detractors.[209] Similarly, William Winstanley echoes this sentiment in his *Lives of the most Famous English Poets* (1687): '*Davenant*, may be accounted one of the Chiefest of *Apollo*'s Sons, for the great Fluency of his Wit and Fancy: Especially his

[206] These catalogues were discussed in more detail in my first chapter.
[207] Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (Oxford: Printed by L.L. for George West and Henry Clements, 1691), sig.G8v.
[208] He additionally discusses Davenant's own defense of *Gondibert* in *The Incomparable Poem* Gondibert *vindicated from the Wit-Combats of Four Esquires* (1655), however, this poem has since been attributed to Robert Wild, a nonconformist minster and satiric poet. See Richard L. Greaves, 'Wild, Robert (1615/16-1679)', *ODNB* (OUP, 2004: Online, Jan 2008).
[209] Edward Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum* (London: Printed for Charles Smith, 1675), sig.Hh12r.

Gondibert, the Crown of all his other Writings.'[210] In addition to signifying that *Gondibert* is viewed as the highest ranking achievement in Davenant's repertoire, the term 'Crown' potentially alludes to Davenant's laureateship and pension for service to the King as a poet.[211] The epic is mentioned alongside other English epics, such as Samuel Wesley's heroic poem about the life of Jesus (1693) which mentions *Gondibert* alongside *Orlando Furioso* (1516) and *Faerie Queene* (1596). In the preface to his heroic poem *Annvs Mirabilis* (1667), Dryden refers to Davenant when defending his choice of stanza, claiming that his reader 'may remember [it] is much better defended in the Preface to *Gondibert*.' This demonstrates that Dryden approved of the preface and its arguments on the form of an epic poem, referring to the work in writing his own epic, which reveals that Davenant's discourse on English heroic writing did influence future epic works as he had envisioned.[212] Davenant's influence on Dryden is still clear near the end of the eighteenth century, when Johnson discusses what Dryden learns from Davenant, and specifically *Gondibert*, in his life of Dryden.[213] Despite mixed opinions, Davenant's *Gondibert* and *Discourse* remained alive throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and still continues to attract the interests of modern scholars such as Gladish and Woodward.

Finally, Davenant's lone preface for *Gondibert* might possibly be attributed to the length of time the author spent revising the main text. As D.H. Woodward showed when discussing the revision history of the text, Davenant's *Gondibert* 'contains more manuscript corrections than any other mid-century book,' save for Benlowe's *Theophila* (1652).[214] Although intensive revisions do not necessarily equate quality, it suggests that *Gondibert* was

[210] William Winstanley, *The Lives of the most Famous English Poets* (London: Printed by H. Clark for Samuel Manship1687), sig.N5r.
[211] Dryden is viewed as the first official poet laureate, which I discuss further in my third section on Dryden.
[212] John Dryden, *Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders 1666 An Historical Poem* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1667) sig.A6r.
[213] Samuel Johnson, 'Dryden', *The lives of the English poets; and a criticism of their works* vol. 1(Dublin: printed for Messrs. Whitestone et al, 1779) p.255.
[214] D.H. Woodward 'The Manuscript Corrections and Printed Variants in the Quatro Edition of *Gondibert* (1651)', *The Library*, 5:20 (1965), 298.

a project to which Davenant dedicated a great deal of time and energy.[215] I contend that Davenant published the preface not only to encourage interest in his poem, but also to demonstrate the already substantial support of popular and influential mid-seventeenth-century writers like Cowley, Hobbes and Waller. Where stationers in the period often used title pages and lists of similar texts to advertise forthcoming works, Davenant penned an essay intending to set the stage for his poem, to encourage his readers' appetite for an epic that in structure, style and content mirrored his *Gondibert*. That it did not prove as successful as Davenant may have hoped does not remove the fact that his preface, both in argument and presentation, were designed to promote fame, to critique and shape genre conventions, to engage with an audience seeking reading material with dramatic flavour during the theatre closure, and to secure Davenant's position in the 'Temple of Fame' alongside Homer, Virgil, Tasso and Spenser. In the next section I turn from epic to biographical writing, to examine Margaret Cavendish's critical preface that framed her account of William Cavendish's life.

Margaret Cavendish humbly requests eternal literary fame

Margaret Cavendish (1623-73), born into a gentry family in Essex, was a writer of poetry, drama and prose, with a particular interest in philosophy and the natural sciences. In 1645 she married widower William Cavendish (1593-1676), who was awarded the title Duke of Newcastle in 1665 as repayment for years of unwavering loyalty to the royalist cause during the Civil War and after.[216] In recent years, Margaret Cavendish has been of particular interest to scholars of early modern sex and gender, as well as scholars of politics, drama and

[215] Discussion of the manuscript revision history is outside of the scope of this thesis, but for more information about the revision history of the text see Gladish, Woodward, and Cornell March Dowlin, 'The First Edition of *Gondibert*: Quarto or Octavo?', *The Library*, 4:20 (1939-40), 167-79.
[216] In this chapter I refer to William Cavendish as Newcastle and Margaret Cavendish as Cavendish to differentiate the two in place of full names.

science in the mid-seventeenth century.[217] When discussing her reputation today, James Fitzmaurice reveals that 'she is seen as a good writer who overcame the impediments of patriarchy to produce books that are ironic, suggestive, and discursive.'[218] Cavendish was not always so well received in her own day. Sara Mendelson argues that she was frequently dismissed by contemporaries as 'Mad Madge,' a fact that has led to a critical tendency to see Cavendish's writing as standing somehow in isolation from that of her peers, who were unable or unwilling to appreciate her work.[219] Cavendish herself may have contributed to this perception through her own self-presentation as an isolated thinker, but it is also true that she made many friends and associates while living abroad in the 1650s and 60s including Hobbes, René Descartes (1596-1650) and Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687), a patron of Spinoza (1632-1677), all of whom influenced her philosophical and literary work.[220] Moreover, Cavendish's numerous prefatory essays suggest that the author did not just want her work to endure, she wished also to influence her contemporaries' literary tastes, modes of thinking and kinds of writing in both the scientific and literary arenas. In this section I take as a case study Cavendish's preface to her *Life of the Thrice Noble, High, and Puissant Prince William Cavendishe* (1667) in order to analyse her contribution to an evolving theory of life writing in the mid-seventeenth century.

The first edition of Cavendish's life of her husband, the Duke of Newcastle, appeared in folio in 1667, and was immediately followed by a Latin version in 1668. A second quarto edition appeared in 1675, posthumously of the author although during the lifetime of the book's subject. Coming within less than a decade after the initial publication, the appearance

[217] Studies include Sara H. Mendelson, editor, *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700*: Volume 7 Margaret Cavendish (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Elizabeth Scott Baumann, *Forms of Engagement: Women, Poetry and Culture, 1640-1680* (Oxford: OUP, 2013); Lara Dodds, *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2013).
[218] James Fitzmaurice, 'Margaret Cavendish', *ODNB* (2004).
[219] Mendelson, p.xi.
[220] Mendelson discusses Cavendish's visitors while in exile and their shared philosophic and scientific interests (see pp.xvii-xix).

of a second edition suggests that the text was favourably received. The prefatory material includes two dedications, the first to King Charles II and the second to her husband, the Duke of Newcastle. Following the dedications Cavendish included a preface to the text, followed by a final dedicatory address to the author by John Rolleston, Newcastle's secretary and Cavendish's source for information regarding her husband's exploits in war. In writing the life of her husband, Cavendish consulted existing models of life writing for templates and precedents, and was particularly influenced by Plutarch, encountered through *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (1579), translated into English by Thomas North (1535-1601?).[221]

Cavendish's *Life* begins by arguing her suitability for the task, affirming her husband's confidence in her ability to provide the most suitable account of his life.

> When I first Intended to write this History, knowing my self to be no Scholar, and as ignorant of the Rules of writing Histories, as I have in my other Works acknowledg'd my self to be of the Names and Terms of Art; I desired my Lord, That he would be pleased to let me have some Elegant and Learned Historian to assist me; which request his Grace would not grant me…I humbly answer'd, that without a learned Assistant, the History would be defective: But he replied, That Truth could not be defective. I said again That Rhetorick did adorn Truth: And he answered that Rhetorick was fitter for Falsehoods than Truths.[222]

Cavendish admits that she was hesitant to write the life, suggesting that perhaps this should be a project for someone more learned. However, she reveals, in part by providing

[221] The text was first translated by North from Jacques Amyot French translation *Les Vies des hommes illustres Grecs et Romains* (1559). Lara Dodds traces Cavendish's familiarity and interaction with Plutarch's works within her *Sociable Letters* (1664) in *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2013), pp.23-56.
[222] Margaret Cavendish, *Life of the Thrice Noble, High, and Puissant Prince William Cavendishe* (London: Printed by A. Maxwell, 1667), sigs.b2r-v.

Newcastle's testimony, that the best personal biography is one focused on being truthful about its subject; it requires familiarity, something Cavendish expanded on further in offering genre rules for 'writing Histories.' She refers to her husband's rejection of rhetoric as 'fitter for Falsehoods than Truths.' In this way Cavendish argues that a plain and factual style of writing is best for writing a historical account. She further promises that '[she] will neither endeavour to make show of Eloquence, making Speeches that never was spoken, nor pretend to great skill in War, by making Mountains of Mole-hills, and telling Romansical Falsehoods for Historical Truths.'[223] If speeches in her *Life* lack literary flavour and embellishment it is because the focus of the life must be on what was actually done and said; she will not dramatise Newcastle's warlike pursuits in order to create a character suited for a romantic novel.

Cavendish never suggests that Newcastle should write his own life. In part this may reflect the sentiment expressed by Izaak Walton: 'it is not the fashion of the times' to provide a detailed account of one's own life.[224] However, I also think this allows Cavendish the opportunity to emphasise her position as the predominant writer in the family. As scholars like Mendelson agree, Newcastle was the biggest supporter of Cavendish's literary endeavours, and she in turn fervently supported his political ambitions.[225] This is a significant point: during the time in which Cavendish was writing her *Life*, Newcastle was a well-regarded writer in his own right, with a number of plays and other works to his name, such as *The Country Captain* (1649). C.H. Firth, editing an edition of *Life* in the early twentieth century, pointed out that Cavendish omits or plays down much of Newcastle's literary life in her biography of her husband.[226] I argue, however, that Cavendish did not omit these details

[223] Cavendish, *Life*, sig.c2r.
[224] This statement of Walton's in application to the biographical genre will be discussed further in my third chapter on life writing (see Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Dr John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr Richard Hooker, Mr George Herbert* (London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb for Richard Marriott, 1670), sig.A7v).
[225] Mendelson, p.xii.
[226] C.H. Firth, pp.xvi-xxv.

from lack of familiarity with her husband's works or even because they did not fit with the portrait of the exiled martyr painted in *Life*. Rather, I propose that Cavendish did not want to portray Newcastle as a writer because this was her domain, and glossing over his literary achievements enabled Cavendish to keep literature as her own area of mastery.

Cavendish's preface depicts her life writing as a historian's endeavour, reflecting the importance she places on factual accuracy in life writing. She reveals the different types of histories that may be written, who benefits most from the reading of each type of history, and who has the authority to write a particular history:

> Many Learned Men, I know, have published Rules and Directions concerning the Method and Style of Histories…Although there be many sorts of Histories, yet these three are the chiefest: 1. a General History. 2. A National History. 3. A Particular History…The first is the History of the known parts and people of the World; The second is the History of a particular Nation, Kingdom, or Commonwealth. The third is the History of the life and actions of some particular Person. The first is profitable for Travellers, Navigators and Merchants; The second is pernicious, by reason it teaches subtle Policies, begets Factions, not only between particular Families and Persons, but also between whole Nations, and great Princes, rubbing old sores, and renewing old Quarrels that would otherwise have been forgotten. The last is the most secure; because it goes not out of its own Circle, but turns on its own Axis, and for the most part, keeps within the Circumference of Truth. The first is Mechanical, the second Political, and the third Heroical. The first should only be written by Travellers and Navigators; the second by Statesmen; the third by the Prime Actors, or the Spectators of those Affairs and Actions of which they write.[227]

[227] Cavendish, *Life*, sig.b2v-c1v.

Cavendish focuses her rules for histories on their instructive value and the manner in which the audience profits most from the reading of each type of history. The first type of history is entirely factual and both the audience and writers tend to fall into the same category, i.e. travellers, navigators and merchants. It is the national, or political, history that can be most dangerous as they touch on subjects better left buried. Cavendish places her own writing into her third type, and reveals it to be the purest and most elevated of histories, lauding it as heroic in comparison to the mechanical and political, despite her earlier argument against romanticism. What she does not discuss is the potential for crossover between historical categories, because Cavendish's *Life* was certainly meant to be as political as it is heroic. The *Life* appeared half a decade into the Restoration, and displayed Newcastle as the perfect royal supporter: sacrificing, struggling and yet never losing confidence in his King or cause. The couple had returned to England where Newcastle had recently been appointed Duke as a reward for his loyalty, and yet he did not receive the higher government office they might have hoped for, relegated almost into a second exile rebuilding estates and living a more private country life.[228] Nonetheless, Cavendish's *Life* is at paints to present the life of the heroic man rather than tread too far into the realm of politics, arguing politics are about nations and not individual people. In drawing hard lines between the types of historical writing, Cavendish is both able to make the political and social comments about the royalist cause and the triumph of the Restoration, while simultaneously enabling her work to transcend the passing squabbles, factions and current affairs of her own time. This ornaments her literary career and supports her ambition to be remembered as a celebrated, timeless author.

Cavendish's life of her husband does not name the learned men who had previously written rules for writing lives. However, she uses her preface to shape what she takes to be

[228] Mendelson, p.xx.

the best and most useful understanding of the purpose of life writing; to provide a truthful and instructive account of the subject. Her preface does not just designate the different types of histories, but who is qualified to write within each particular category and who the target audience might be in each case, something rarely discussed in detail by her contemporaries. Cavendish aimed to synthesise two of the biggest influences on the still developing genre of life writing during the seventeenth-century: Plutarch's life writing model and the exemplar tradition used in writing the lives of saints and respected clerical figures. These two sources enable Cavendish to create a model for English biographical writing.[229] In addition to offering instruction on how to write a life, her preface also justifies her right to write the life of Newcastle as she both confers with, and herself is, an intimate spectator to the events she is retelling.[230] Indeed, other life writers in the period similarly claim that the best life is produced by someone near the subject.[231] Cavendish also participates in the debate about who decides which texts and which authors are fit to be written, read and emulated. Like Davenant, Cavendish prescribes the rules for a genre to reflect her own writing style, establishing herself as a critic while simultaneously advertising her historical writing, in this case the *Life of William*. Cavendish's preface offers insight into early modern ideas about authorship, as well as guidance on how to write effectively bearing in mind a specific genre's conventions and its readers' expectation.

Cavendish's preface thus sheds light on the development of the early modern English biographical genre.[232] James Fitzmaurice uses Cavendish's *Life of William* in an attempt to argue against claims made by scholars like Paul Hunter, that we cannot judge early modern

[229] Biographical models will be discussed in further detail in my third chapter.
[230] Specifically she consults Newcastle's secretary Rolleston, as previously mentioned.
[231] As previously mentioned, Izaak Walton suggested that an autobiography would be the best life, but as that was not as fashionable in the seventeenth-century it should be written by 'their friends…before delayes make it too difficult', Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Dr John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr Richard Hooker, Mr George Herbert* (London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb for Richard Marriott, 1670), sig.A7v.
[232] While a chapter of this thesis is dedicated to biography, I am not examining this work in that context as Cavendish primarily records William Cavendish's life in relation to his military and political prowess rather than his literary achievements.

texts by modern standards. However, Fitzmaurice declares Cavendish's *Life* to be a mixture of genres, and notes that it does not reveal Newcastle's intimate feelings, something a modern reader might expect to find in a biographical work. Fitzmaurice observes that Cavendish styled herself as a 'literary descendent of Plutarch…[but that] she only occasionally engages with him directly as a writer, and makes no attempt to follow his or anyone else's model in her life writing.'[233] Fitzmaurice's argument suggests that both the *Life* and the genre critique offered in her preface are not representative examples of seventeenth-century biography or life writing theory, partly because they deviate from the classical models familiar to seventeenth-century life writers. Scholars like Fitzmaurice claim that in a modern biography much of the material in Cavendish's *Life of William* would be found in an appendix, and that the various tables and lists included in the *Life* are 'a kind of life writing [similar to] letters or diaries in that they situate their subject's life.'[234] This argument is based entirely on a comparison of Cavendish with modern biography and Plutarch.[235] However, I contend that Cavendish's style is far more representative of life writing in the seventeenth-century than is commonly understood and that her preface offers an understanding of English tastes rather than ignorance or disregard for classical models like Plutarch. Cavendish often alludes to an awareness of the tastes and expectations of her English audience. For example, in her preface, where she considers her suitability as a life writer, she claims:

> Nor is it inconsistent with my being a Woman, to write of Wars, that was neither between *Medes* and *Persians*, *Greeks* and *Trojans*, *Christians* and *Turks*; but among

[233] James Fitzmaurice, 'Margaret Cavendish's *Life of William*, Plutarch, and Mixed Genre' in *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish* ed. by Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz (Massachusetts: Rosemont Publishing, 2003), p.80.
[234] While not irrelevant to the life, it is not an example of life writing as a single genre, in James Fitzmaurice, 'Margaret Cavendish's *Life of William*, Plutarch, and Mixed Genre' in *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish* ed. by Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz (Massachusetts: Rosemont Publishing, 2003), p.94.
[235] Only at the end of the discussion does Fitzmaurice consider, briefly, her English contemporaries, like Aubrey, Wood and Walton. Figures who are also guilty of incorporating 'mixed genre' elements.

> my own Countrymen, whose Customs and Inclinations, and most of the Persons that held any considerable Place in the Armies, was well known to me.[236]

Cavendish frequently refers to her classical training throughout her works.[237] However, she contends that for a particular history of, in this case, a person, it is 'most secure; because it goes not out of its own Circle […and] keeps within the circumference of truth.'[238] Although influenced by Plutarch and classical sources, Cavendish boasts that she participates in the traditions of her countrymen, writing the life in a plain, English prose. From the 1640s, with a massive increase in the production of printed texts, prose works began to emerge as the dominant written form.[239]Cavendish cites her classical training as validation of her qualification for writing, evidenced by her *Conceptions and Fancies*. Nonetheless, she argues for an English prose style for life writing, which both assists in her broader goal of painting Newcastle as an English hero, while simultaneously, and more broadly, enables her to contribute to shaping the style and content of English vernacular historical writing.

Cavendish concludes the preface by acknowledging the potential weaknesses in her work, pre-empting criticism:

> I must also acknowledge, That I have committed great Errors in taking no notice of Times as I should have done in many places in this History…No body can certainly be more ready to find faults in this Work, then I am to confess them; being very conscious that I have…committed many for want of Learning, and chiefly of skill in

[236] Cavendish, *Life*, sig.c1v.
[237] In addition to the previously mentioned *Sociable Letters*, in her dedication to her subject she comments on her learning '*in terms of Art, and Scholastical Expressions*' including a subtle reference to her familiarity with Aesop, p.xxxvi.
[238] Cavendish, *Life*, sig.c1r.
[239] Andrew Hadfield, 'Introduction', *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose* 1500-1640 (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp.1-2.

> writing Histories. […But] I have reason to expect, that whatsoever else shall be found amiss, will be favourably pardoned by the candid Readers.[240]

Cavendish identifies her most notable fault, her inaccuracies with regard to chronology, offering a few examples and explaining that she cannot recall all particular dates at times. In justifying that she has understandably not memorised dates and times in detail, she also implies that it is more favourable to omit details than to provide false ones, echoing her arguments at the beginning of the preface advocating factual accuracy and not utilising ornament for the sake of ornament. This is a good example of the modesty or inadequacy trope: Cavendish reveals her limitations, forgotten details and a lack of experience in writing histories, and thereby, underplays her own literary talents in order to encourage a sympathetic reader, ingratiating herself to her audience as a simple, humble, female writer.[241] This is an inverted form of self-promotion: shaping readers' expectations and explaining why a writer, in addition to her work, deserves an audience. In this case Cavendish argues for her own stylistic choices in suggesting that English life writing is best suited by clear, accurate reporting rather than dramatic embellishments.

Like Davenant, Cavendish's prefaces reveal an ambition for fame. In the preface to her *Natures Pictvres* (1656) Cavendish is forthright about her intention to pursue renown:

> I confess my Ambition is restless, and not ordinary; because it would have an extraordinary fame…[it] is the cause I write so much, for my ambition being restless…yet it hath made that little wit I have to run upon every subject I can think of.[242]

[240] Cavendish, *Life*, sig.e1r-v.
[241] The modesty or inadequacy topos is explored in greater detail in my fourth chapter on commendatory poetry.
[242] Margaret Cavendish, 'An Epistle To my Readers', in *Natures Pictvres* (London: Printed for Martin and Allestyre, 1656), sigs.c1r-c1v.

She touches on a variety of subjects hoping to find the genre where she will make her mark, as Davenant attempted similarly to find his place in the pantheon through the epic genre. Firth argued Cavendish's aim was popular rather than canonical fame, because Cavendish claimed she would rather 'please the readers, though not the learned' because fame is part of the multitude.[243] Yet I argue that for all of Cavendish's pleas of modesty, limited ability, and protestations that she is only writing for the common reader, Cavendish aspired to achieve both a wide reach and an enduring posterity.

Finally, I conclude this section with an examination of the reception of Cavendish's work during the seventeenth century and after. In 1676, three years after the death of Cavendish, a catalogue was printed with letters sent to the author praising her various literary works. Included in the collection is a letter from the University of Cambridge, dated 16 December 1667. The letter praises Cavendish as an incomparable writer, but especially for her achievements in writing the *Life*:

> That incomparable and most desired Book of your Grace's, containing the History of his Grace's Actions, in the late War, we have not only readily received but also perused and read over, as we are wont to do with whatsoever you write; yet in reading it we must acknowledge that we stop'd often, because we could not but admire, every where, but the loftiness of the argument, and elegancy, and spruceness of the Stile, and Composition.[244]

Cavendish sent copies of the *Life* to several important literary figures, including the University of Cambridge library, because she envisioned her work being enshrined amongst the most famous and well-regarded writers, past, present and future. In the mid-seventeenth century an author seeking fame and posterity, wanting to be immortalised among the best and

[243] Firth, pp.xxxi-xxxii.
[244] *Letters and Poems In Honour of the Incomparable Princess, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle* (London: Printed by Thomas Newcombe, 1676), pp.23-24.

most learned writers, would most certainly want to find their works preserved in this prestigious library. The letter demonstrates Cavendish's desire for inclusion in an institution that during her lifetime represented a physical enclosure of literary excellence, a distinctly English muse's garden. It also reveals that the University of Cambridge library was similarly interested in Cavendish, praising her skills as an author, particularly for her composition and style in the *Life*.

The *Life* was advertised in book catalogues, and garnered praise from several of Cavendish's contemporaries and near contemporaries. Richard Flecknoe's epigram for William Cavendish in *Euterpe Revived* (1675) praised the Duke, but also his wife, specifically for her *Life of William*:

> Whilst with your Noble Actions you *Indite*
> Unto your Ladies Pen what she shud *Write*,
> 'T may well be said, as 'twas of *Thetis* son,
> That you are doubly happie, both to have done
> Such famous deeds, and to have had agen
> A Pen so famous for the writing them
> …
> So whilst you live I'th' *Life* that she does give,
> And she in writing of your Life will live;
> Betwixt you both, your *Fame* will never die,
> But t'on give t'other *Immortality*.[245]

In the epigram Flecknoe praises Cavendish in equal measure to his subject, Newcastle. He applauds Cavendish's famous pen, alluding to her high reputation as a writer. Flecknoe

[245] Richard Flecknoe, 'To the Duke of *Newcastle*; On my Lady-Dutchess writing of his LIFE', *Euterpe Revived. or, Epigrams Made at Several Times* (London: 1675), sig.C1r.

promises that both Newcastle and Cavendish will enjoy everlasting fame and immortality precisely because of Cavendish's *Life*. Flecknoe's epigram suggests a favourable, contemporary audience for the work. Nearer to the end of the century, Langbaine addresses the work again in his entry for Margaret Duchess of Newcastle in his *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1694). He praised the author for her myriad dramatic texts, and at the end of his account he surveys her other works stating that 'I shall begin with the Crown of her Labours, *The Life of the Duke of* Newcastle.'[246] Out of Cavendish's diverse body of writing, Langbaine highlights the *Life* as the best, the crown of her works. In part this could reflect Langbaine's self-interest in promoting life writing more generally, given his own compilation of literary lives. Langbaine's comment nonetheless echoes his contemporaries' opinions and seems to be largely representative in the period. I would therefore argue that Cavendish's *Life* was viewed in her lifetime at least as favourably as her philosophical and scientific writing.[247]

Cavendish's *Life* endured into the eighteenth century, mentioned in vendible book catalogues as well as in biographical accounts of the Cavendish herself, included in works such as Robert Shiells' *The lives of the poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1753) and Horace Walpole's *A catalogue of the royal and noble authors of England* (1758).[248] In his account of Cavendish's life, Shiells emphasises her social standing and role as William Cavendish's wife, but he also reveals that she was considered the most prolific female author of her age, noted for her wit, and receiving commendation from Langbaine and Jacobs. In cataloguing her work, Shiells states that the *Life* 'is thought to be the best performance of this lady.'[249] Like Langbaine 60 years earlier, Shiells identified the *Life* as the pinnacle of her writing

[246] Langbaine, *An Account*, sig.Bb5r-Bb5v.
[247] Firth, p.xxviii.
[248] *The lives of the poets of Great Britain and Ireland* was primarily compiled by Shiells with some additions and revisions by Cibber. See *ESTC*.
[249] Robert Shiells, *The lives of the poets of Great Britain and Ireland* II (London: Printed for R. Griffiths, 1753), pp.162-169 (p.167).

career; it is the only work in his account for which he offers an evaluative comment on the quality and reception of the publication. As Fitzmaurice observed, Cavendish wrote intending to be printed, hoping to win a place as one of the literary greats. In examining Cavendish's revisions of her own writing, Fitzmaurice observes that the *Life* is one of the works in which her corrections are most evident, primarily in the form of deletions and revisions to the preface for the copies she presented to specific people, focusing on historicity and accuracy in life writing, reflecting how carefully and seriously she treated such aspects of her craft.[250] In recent years, there has been a revival of interest in Cavendish's writing, and the *Life*, as Mendelson observes, has done much to help the author find her place as both a life writer and critic within what is now termed the English literary canon.[251] Cavendish's preface offers insight into seventeenth-century thinking about biographical writing in the period, and in both argument and presentation demonstrates a clear interest in influencing the manner in which life writing was meant to be written and read.

John Dryden: apex of seventeenth-century literary criticism

John Dryden (1631-1700) is remembered today as a dramatist, a translator and the principal literary critic of the mid-to-late seventeenth century.[252] He received his BA from Cambridge in 1654, wrote his first play, *The Wild Gallant: A Comedy* for performance in 1663 (first published 1669), and was the first officially recognised Poet Laureate holding the title from 1668-89.[253] As Trevor Ross discusses, the role of Poet Laureate evolved over the seventeenth century to suggest a steadfast system of obtaining both a literary livelihood and

[250] James Fitzmaurice, 'Margaret Cavendish on Her Own Writing: Evidence from Revision and Handmade Correction', in *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700: Volume 7 Margaret Cavendish*, ed. by Sarah H. Mendelson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.21-34.
[251] Mendelson specifically discusses Cavendish's revival from the 1980s, p.xi.
[252] The first application of the term 'criticism' is attributed to Dryden, see Gavin, p.2.
[253] Dryden's appointment was the first time the laureateship was recognised as an official royal office (see 'poet laureate', in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2016) [accessed 27 May 2016] <http://www.britannica.com/art/poet-laureate>.)

honourable recognition for poetry.[254] Dryden was esteemed by his contemporaries for the title, and recognised the importance of the honour in promoting his own literary fame and reputation.[255] He died on the first of May in 1700 and was interred in Westminster Abbey, which in the seventeenth century would symbolise Dryden as one of the most eminent English poets, with the Abbey representing a physical literary canon housing the greatest authors including Chaucer and Spenser.

Dryden's first foray into literary criticism is his *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay* (1668), which discusses contemporary English drama and the influence of classical and continental poetic models.[256] It is considered to be the first critical work in English to offer a sustained close reading in its examination of Jonson's *Epicœne, or The silent woman* (first performed 1609). *Of Dramatick Poesie* has been analysed in a number of ways. It has been evaluated as the first significant example of English literary criticism, influencing critical thinking into the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The essay has also been analysed in the context of both Dryden's literary career and political outlook. Additionally, the essay sheds light on seventeenth-century thinking about the quality and reputation of Restoration drama, and is an example of the debates and dialogues he engaged in with his own contemporaries.[257] However, it has not previously been thought to contribute in any significant way to seventeenth-century ideas about canonicity or to discuss ideas about literary preservation, authorship and enduring fame. While the essay is considered part of

[254] Ross, pp.175-6.
[255] I discuss Dryden's view on his status as a Poet Laureate in my fourth chapter, alongside his dedicatory ode for Congreve.
[256] The dialogue is either Socratic or Platonic in arrangement in that it begins first with an account of circumstances before gradually confining itself to the description and definition of one subject, in this case, drama (W.P. Ker (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden* (Oxford, OUP, 1926)).
[257] For a selection of criticism along these lines see Yuji Kaneko's 1996 edition of the essay in which he sees Dryden as a forerunner of the Collier Controversy, initiated by Jeremy Collier's 1698 attack on the stage *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*; Paul Hammond's *John Dryden A Literary Life* (London: Macmillan, 1991); *The Works of John Dryden* Vol.XVII ed. by Samuel Holt Monk (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971); James Kinsley and George Parfitt (eds) *John Dryden Selected Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); and James T. Boulton (ed.) *Dryden of Dramatick Poesie An Essay* (Oxford: OUP, 1964).

Dryden's canon, minimal attention has been paid to how the essay discusses and informs the idea of an emerging canon in this period. In this section I analyse parts of the essay that I argue touch directly upon ideas about canonicity.

Dryden structures the essay as a dialogue between four voices, modelled on four of his friends and literary contemporaries. These are generally agreed to be Charles Sackville, to whom the essay is dedicated, as Eugenius (well born), Sir Charles Sedley as Lisideius (a Latinised anagram of Sedley), Dryden's brother-in-law Sir Robert Howard as Crites (critical) and Neander (the new man) as Dryden.[258] Throughout the dialogue the reader may feel the author's stronger connection to Neander; nonetheless, he offers four distinct perspectives and opinions, arguing multiple sides of each question, theory or opinion raised.

> *Eugenius*, *Crites*, *Lisideius* and *Neander*, to be in company together: three of them persons whom their witt and Quality have made them known to all the Town: and whom I have chose to hide under these borrowed names, that they may not suffer by so ill a relation as I am going to make of their discourse.[259]

At face value Dryden reveals that he has modelled the opinions in this essay after three esteemed and well-known wits, hidden under pseudonyms because Dryden cannot promise to portray them in the discourse as accurately as he should. However, Dryden's borrowed wits enable the author to increase the strength of his argument as well as his own prestige. In bringing these other authors into the fold, Dryden is implying that he has both contemporary support for his essay, without having to demonstrate that this is truly the case by having these authors speak for him. Moreover, *Of Dramatick Poesie* reveals the critical opinions of several

[258] Paul Hammond, *John Dryden: A Literary Life* (London: Macmillian, 1991), pp.67-8. While modern scholars have primarily accepted these figures as the identities of the four voices, there have been dissenting opinions since Edmund Malone's 1800 edition of Dryden's works in which he provides an account identifying the speakers. For the purpose of this study my arguments are not reliant on the correct identification of the speakers, but for more background on possible other voices in *Of Dramatick Poesie* see Frank Livingstone Huntley, 'On the Persons in Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy', *Modern Language Notes* 63:2 (Feb 1948), 88-95.
[259] John Dryden, *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1668), sig.B1v.

distinguished writers and thinkers about a number of topics of literary interest during the mid-seventeenth century, including the role of continental and ancient influences, as well as determining the rules for English dramatic writing.

Additionally, the anonymity allows Dryden both to enter himself in competition with the other three authors and rise above them. In the mid-twentieth century, Frank Huntley raised an argument about the voices in *Of Dramatick Poesie* that has received little critical traction lately, but is helpful to think about when discussing *Of Dramatick Poesie* as a text actively participating in literary canon-formation. Huntley argues that scholars have misguidedly focused more on Dryden's 'persons of quality' than on the fact that he chose to 'hide [them] under these borrowed names.'[260] Huntley's principal interest in making this argument is to suggest that Crites, Lisideius, Eugenius and even Neander could potentially suggest models besides those confirmed by Edmund Malone in 1800.[261] What is of greater interest to my argument, however, is the idea that the invention of fictional personae enabled Dryden both to imply contemporary support while simultaneously leaving his name as the only one attached to the essay. Additionally, it enables readers to postulate that there are more than four critical voices represented, with each voice potentially modelled on more than one person. This would also solve Huntley's chief concern that the theory offered by each voice does not always accurately correspond with the views held by the particular people thought to have inspired the personae. Dryden uses and debates the theory of his English literary contemporaries, but in the end all conclusions proposed are Dryden's alone, consistently giving the author the final word regardless of which voice he is speaking with. The essay concludes with the four speakers departing on amicable terms, even if they never

[260] Huntley, p.89.
[261] Huntley in particular makes a case for Crites as Lord Roscommon, initially considered by Malone, on the basis that Crites literary theory differs in many ways from Howard's. Huntley also presents a compelling argument for Corneille as Lisideius, as the voice in the essay supporting French interests, pp.89-94.

fully come to an accord on all the issues proposed in the essay.[262] Part of what makes Dryden's work such an important contribution to literary criticism in the period is that it leaves many of its arguments open-ended, offering a number of approaches to reading and analysing literature. Two decades earlier Davenant was mocked for so definitively suggesting that English drama exceeded all classical and continental examples, making it the ideal form on which to model the English epic. Dryden achieves a better argument, and more success as a literary critic, which will be discussed at the end of this section, because he offers a balanced analysis of the merits and deficiencies found in classical, continental and English writing.

One of the most obvious of Dryden's attempts to promote the idea of a pantheon of great English authors can be found in the list of English luminaries offered near the beginning of the essay. Arguing for English greatness, Eugenius insists that:

> I never jud'g the Plays of the Greek or Roman Poets comparable to ours; yet on the other side those we now see acted, come short of many which were written in the last Age: but my comfort is if we are orecome, it will be onely by our own Countrey-men…it will be hard for them to show us one such amongst them, as we have many now living, or who lately were. They can produce nothing so courtly writ, or which expresses so much the Conversation of a Gentleman, as Sir *John Suckling*; nothing so even, sweet, and flowing as Mr. *Waller*; nothing so Majestique, so correct as Sir *John Denham*; nothing so elevated, so copious, and full of spirit, as Mr *Cowley*; as for the Italian, French, and Spanish Plays, I can make it evident, that those who now write, surpass them; and that the *Drama* is wholly ours.[263]

[262] W. K. Wimsatt Jr, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (1957), p.192.
[263] Dryden, *Of Dramatick Poesie*, sig.B4r.

Eugenius reveals the mid-seventeenth century contemporary concern that dramatic authors are not only in competition with classical and continental models, but struggle also to compete with their own Renaissance predecessors prior to the Civil War. As Hammond observes, Dryden depicts the 'Restoration as a new period set apart from the miseries of Civil War, but also remote now from the supposedly golden age of Elizabethan and early Stuart culture.'[264] Dryden chooses to praise English literary greatness by offering a list of some of the most renowned English authors that, exempting Suckling, wrote on both sides of the Civil War. It eliminates the hard line between previous and prior ages, and allows Dryden and his contemporaries to share in the triumph of their English predecessors.

Dryden argues the position that English literature should be appreciated for more than its fidelity to classical precursors, that it can even surpass these ancient models. Where Davenant focused on avoiding imitation because of his general insinuations that these texts were either flawed in their subject matter or language, Dryden's criticism is specific, selecting a particular rule or example of dramatic verse to critique in detail, weighing both sides of the arguments for and against each position. One of the central themes throughout the essay is the comparison between modern vs ancient, and English vs continental drama. Part of this discussion turns to the Aristotelian rules concerning the unities of time, place and action within a dramatic work. Dryden enumerates the rules and their translation onto the French stage before turning to English drama and Crites' assertion that:

> If by these Rules…we should judge our modern Playes; 'tis probable, that few of them would endure the tryal: that which should be the business of a day, takes up in some of them an age; instead of one action they are the Epitomes of a mans life; and for one spot of ground (which the Stage should represent) we are sometimes in more

[264] Hammond discusses in further detail the feeling of separation authors felt in the 1660s , both politically and culturally, from earlier English poets, pp.67-74 (70).

> Countries than the map can show us…if we will allow the Ancients to have contriv'd well, we must acknowledge them to have writ better.[265]

This position suggests that English plays are rarely successful in adhering to any of the three unities of time, place and action, and that modern writing can never compare with the Menanders and Terences of the ancient world.[266] However, *Eugenius* redirects the argument in favour of the English:

> I have observ'd in your Speech that the former part of it is convincing as to what the Moderns have profited by the rules of the Ancients, but in the latter you are careful to conceal how much they have excell'd them…to overcome them we must make use of the advantages we have receiv'd from them; but to these assistances we have joyned our own industry.[267]

Eugenius respects the ancients, and acknowledges that they have profited in borrowing from them, but also suggests that this is a very limited way of approaching English playwriting. English plays take their instruction from nature and 'if Natural Causes be more known now then in the time of *Aristotle*, because more studied, it follows that Poesie and other Arts…arrive still neerer to perfection.'[268] A common idea among Dryden and his contemporaries is the idea of nature as both a source for and test of art.[269] They suggest that contemporary English poetry cannot help but surpass what came before, because of their increased learning, that art will go hand in hand with the development of other sciences and

[265] Dryden, *Of Dramatick Poesie* (1668), sig.C3r.
[266] For a further discussion of the unities of action, time and place, as well as Dryden's personal opinion on each category, see Ker (1926), pp.xxxix-xlix.
[267] Dryden, sig.C4r.
[268] Dryden, sig.C4r.
[269] As to defining nature, Dryden leaves room for the discretion of the author in determining what works best for their work. He allows greater licence within English drama, for example, then he would in French equivalents. For more on the role of nature in Dryden, see Ker's introduction to *Essays of John Dryden* (Oxford: OUP, 1926), pp.xxiv-xxvi.

philosophies. Most importantly, through Eugenius, Dryden argues that English poetry must be judged on its own merits, but still allows and encourages borrowing from past models. Dryden as an English author would clearly want to promote the pre-eminence of English poetry, yet his work is notably influenced by a variety of ancient and continental sources, including introducing the text with a Horatian motto on the title page of the essay.[270] It is in Dryden's own self-interest to champion English writing and writers, and to seek inspiration from both classical and continental models. This contributes to the argument in the Restoration that rather than revisiting the time-honoured debate of ancients vs moderns, what is needed is a synthesis between different ages and styles, enabling a canon of classical and modern, including English, poets.

In Dryden's conclusion to this particular argument we find him specifically addressing the issue of canon-formation, and more importantly, trying to cement his own canonical status without specifically stating this. On this occasion Crites has the final word, although he presents no new or counter argument to Eugenius:

> I will grant thus much to *Eugenius*, that perhaps one of their Poets, had he liv'd in our Age…he had alter'd many things; not that they were not natural before, but that he might accommodate himself to the Age in which he liv'd in: yet in the meantime we are not to conclude any thing rashly against those great men; but preserve to them the dignity of Masters and give that honour to their memories…This moderation of *Crites*, as it was pleasing to all the company, so it put an end to that dispute; which *Eugenius*, who seem'd to have the better of the Argument, would urge no farther.[271]

[270] Fungar vice cotis, acutum Reddere que ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi (Horace, *Ars Poetica*): I'll play a whetstone's part, which makes steel sharp, but of itself cannot cut (James T. Boulton, 'Introduction', in *Dryden Of Dramatick Poesie* (Oxford: OUP, 1964) p.7).
[271] Dryden, *Of Dramatick Poesie* (1668), sig.E1v.

Crites declares that they will have to agree to disagree, but insists that whatever else they may differ on everyone must agree that the ancient greats must be preserved as masters, preeminent authors, who must be honoured and remembered – precisely the functions a literary canon performs. All the speakers in the dialogue agree that this must be the case, despite the essay insisting on a final comment that Eugenius presented the better argument. Yet, agreeing the classical poets must be given their due also suggests support for Dryden's own claim for literary greatness. Earlier in the argument Eugenius insisted that it is the passing of time and increase in knowledge that contributes to the current success of English poets. However, Dryden does not want to leave the argument there, as that might imply that at some future point when Dryden himself is part of a past age he might no longer have a claim to retain his position among the greatest English writers. For this reason, Dryden's essay advocates both the progress of literature alongside the canonisation of the best of each age, which enables Dryden to claim a position as one of the most celebrated English poets in both the present and future.

The influence *Of Dramatick Poesie* on later writers and critics has been far-reaching. The standalone essay was re-printed a number of times into the mid-eighteenth century, and was also included in collections of Dryden's works.[272] References to the work persist throughout the seventeenth century, such as the preface to Edward Sherburne's translation of Seneca's *Troades* (1679), where he notes that Dryden, 'one of the most Eminent Modern Masters' positively assessed the work in *Of Dramatick Poesie*.[273] Some of the most notable seventeenth-century responses are critical, such as Robert Howard's preface to *The Great Favourite, or, the Duke of Lerma* (1668), which argued against Dryden's favourable opinion

[272] Gavin discusses that the essay is unique as most criticism at this time generally took the form of a preface or postscript. While a bit of an anomaly in comparison to other critical works, Dryden's essay was clearly meant to debate and engage with contemporary prefatory debates (for example, with Sir Robert Howard). See Gavin, *Invention of English Literary Criticism*, p.38.
[273] Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Troades* trans. by Edward Sherburne (London: Printed by Anne Godbid and John Playford for Samuel Carr, 1679), sig.A3v.

of rhyme in dramatic writing, and is part of an ongoing dispute between the two authors on critical theory in dramatic writing.[274] Howard argues that Dryden 'has taken, to prove Rhime as natural in a serious Play, and more effectual than blank Verse…[but] 'tis not the question, whether Rhime or not Rhime, be best, or most Natural for a grave and serious Subject; but what is nearest the nature of that which it presents.'[275] However, despite his disagreement with Dryden, Howard demonstrates an understanding of Dryden's argument and engages with him in a critical fashion. This demonstrates a modicum of respect for Dryden's critical work when compared with several of the critical responses Davenant's preface received, in which he was mocked and disregarded rather than debated. Even Langbaine, who was particularly critical of Dryden's treatment of the Renaissance dramatists, could not help but acknowledge the poet at length, recognising his influence and high-regard among many of his contemporaries.[276]

By the end of the century Dryden had published a number of critical prefaces and essays including *Of Heroique Playes, An Essay* (1672), his preface to Ovid's *Epistles* (1680) and *A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of SATIRE* (1693), cementing his position as the preeminent critical figure of the seventeenth century and inspiring writers and critics like Pope, Addison and Johnson in the eighteenth century.[277] According to Samuel Johnson 'DRYDEN may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition.'[278] On *Of Dramatick Poesie* Johnson asserted that it was 'an elegant and instructive dialogue…the work

[274] See James Kinsley and George Parfitt, p.viii
[275] Robert Howard, *The Great Favourite, or, the Duke of Lerma* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1668), sig.A3r-A3v.
[276] Langbaine's opinions on Dryden are discussed in more detail in my third chapter on life writing.
[277] Dryden's criticism, influence on and engagement with other literary critics during his lifetime and after has been studied extensively by a number of scholars. For further reading see *Literary Transmission and authority: Dryden and other writers* ed. by Jennifer Brady and Early Roy Miner (Cambridge: CUP, 1993); Marcie Frank, '"Equal to ourselves": John Dryden's national literary history', in *Gender, Theatre and the Origins of Criticism From Dryden to Manley* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp.15-41; Richard Terry, 'Dryden and the Idea of a Literary Tradition', in *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), pp.142-168.
[278] Samuel Johnson, 'Dryden', in *The Lives of the English Poets*, 3 volumes (Dublin: Printed for Messrs. Whitestone, et al), vol.1, sig.Y1v.

seems to have given Addison a model for his Dialogues upon Medals.'[279] Addison and Johnson were two of the most prominent critical voices in the eighteenth century, playing a defining role in shaping critical writing and tastes which still influence literary criticism today. It is clear, then, that in inspiring eighteenth-century writers and critics like Addison, Johnson and Pope at the beginning of the century, Dryden's *Of Dramatick Poesie* contributed in previously unexpected ways to the development of thinking about an English vernacular literary canon, both in his own day and after.

Conclusion

Michael Gavin's *The Invention of English Criticism 1650-1760* (2015), Brian Vickers's *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (1999) and *The Cambridge Histories of Literary Criticism* are some of the only major recent works to explore pre-1800 English literary criticism as a distinct genre.[280] Major authors and critical works, like Sidney's *Defence* and Dryden's *Of Dramatick Poesie*, will from time to time appear in modern scholarly editions offering new commentary and the perspective of a new generation, but rarely in the company of their contemporaries' criticism, and rarely, if ever, with a view to how these texts might contribute to the idea of an emerging English literary canon. Otherwise, sixteenth and seventeenth-century authors of literary criticism are generally mentioned in articles or monographs driven by a specific critical agenda. For example, Margaret Cavendish is most often examined in a feminist context, or as a significant figure in the history of natural philosophy. In spite of this, it is clear that the literary critical prefaces and essays considered in this chapter, and others like them, played an important role in defining the genre conventions that shaped mid-seventeenth century literature, promoting specific English authors and works, and thereby participated in determining the shape and

[279] Johnson, sig.S1v.
[280] The first three volumes of *The Cambridge Histories of Literary Criticism* examine classical criticism (1990), the middle ages (2005) and the Renaissance (1999).

content of the emerging English literary canon. In the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries authors were concerned primarily with defending English literature and language in a general sense, as in the earlier works of Sidney, George Puttenham, Thomas Campion, Samuel Daniel, Ben Jonson and Thomas Heywood. By the middle of the seventeenth century, English writers and critics sought to adapt, revise and challenge these earlier forbears in order to develop existing theories about and arguments for specifically English treatments of literary genres such as the epic, life writing and drama.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, modern scholars interested in the development and origins of the English literary canon do not rate very highly most literary criticism written prior to the eighteenth century, particularly texts written before the Restoration. For example, Richard Terry acknowledges that canon-formation began prior to the eighteenth century, but generally pays only the briefest attention to early writers, mentioned most often in order to point out the deficiencies in authors like Dryden when compared to later critics.[281] He claims that 'only in the post-Restoration era, especially with the advent of descriptive criticism, do commentators begin to fashion judgments about literary works that are clearly divorced from being adjudications on the language in which they are written.'[282] Such adjudications on the English language are certainly a prominent feature of early English literary criticism, even in the mid-seventeenth century, yet such dismissals of pre-Restoration literary criticism overlooks entirely the importance of earlier critical writing to the seventeenth-century evolution of the concept of the English literary canon. It is certainly true that seventeenth-century criticism, particularly prior to the Restoration, focuses heavily on defining and instructing readers on the rhetorical features of the English language. Yet such criticism also contains a great deal of nuanced thought about both the criteria for and evaluation of literary merit, and about the development of critical

[281] Terry, pp.41-47.
[282] Terry, p.59.

language and methods. These literary critical texts also help shape the conventions of and boundaries between literary genres, and the expectations and standards by which writing in different genres might be judged. More importantly, the mid-seventeenth century is when English literary criticism moves from defending and apologising for poetry, drama and other forms of 'fiction,' to adopt a stance more confident of literary writing's intrinsic worth, aside from or at least wholly dependent upon its moral or instructive value. The developing notion of a pantheon of great English writers is both a product of this increasing cultural confidence, and an incentive to its growth. It is vital, then, to examine seventeenth-century literary criticism in its own right – not merely as an inferior and nascent version of eighteenth-and nineteenth-century criticism, but as a key component and causal factor in the origins and development of an emerging English literary canon.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERARY LIVES

Biographical writing, or the lives of eminent authors, currently plays a significant role in shaping which authors are viewed as canonical in both academic and broader reading circles. Each year, new biographies are published about major literary figures, such as, in recent years: *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (2012), *Ben Jonson: A Life* (2011) or *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (2008).[283] Yet, most of these modern biographies reflect only briefly, or not at all, on the tradition they inherit: the subgenre of specifically literary lives or biographies where the subject of the life is a writer. Modern biographical works that refer to examples of early modern life writing do so almost exclusively to mine these early sources for factual details about their subjects. They do not, however, turn to seventeenth-century life writing because of any intrinsic literary merit it may possess, nor out of interest in the ways in which such lives participated in shaping the reception of eminent authors.

Examples of early modern life writing being used as source works can be seen in modern scholarly biographies of writers. Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns, for example, introduce their biography of Milton with a survey of early modern afterlives, even concluding their work with a chapter dedicated to his 'Posthumous Life and *Nachlass*.'[284] Yet, this final chapter is not concerned with Milton's posthumous reputation; rather, it considers what remained of his financial and familial legacy. Throughout the book information is taken from the life writing of Milton's nephew Edward Phillips and friend Cyriack Skinner. Campbell and Corns reveal information about Milton's financial and legal quandaries from Skinner, and note that Skinner's Trinity Manuscript contains transcriptions of sonnets Milton dictated to him. In examining the life writing of Phillips, Campbell and Corns identify which material

[283] Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011) and Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).
[284] Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p.1.

from *Paradise Lost* had originally been intended for a verse drama.[285] However, these titbits of information are offered as anecdotal evidence of Milton's life; anything of literary interest about these early biographies themselves and what role they might have played in cementing Milton's reputation are set aside by Campbell and Corns in favour of piecing together an accurate history. Similarly, Ian Donaldson's biography of Jonson pulls facts and titbits from life writers such as Thomas Fuller and Jonson's friends, including the poet William Drummond (1585-1649).[286] Quotations are taken from both Fuller and Drummond chiefly to supply evidence of the events of Jonson's life, but not to analyse the aesthetic or other merits of these early biographies in any meaningful way. In short, then, modern scholarly biographies of literary figures pay scant attention to the manner in which these early lives shaped the reception and reputation of early modern writers. This chapter argues that life writing about poets evolved over the seventeenth century; it participated in the cultural process of assigning value to certain writers for their particular literary achievements, as well as defined the criteria by which a poet might be deemed worthy of fame and the preservation criteria which in this period included a mix of aesthetic and moral qualities.

Defining what biography, or autobiography, meant to an early modern audience is a problematic task. As Danielle Clarke puts it, '"Life writing", at least in any of the forms familiar to a modern readership, did not exist in 1550, but manifests in multiple and plural ways by 1700…there are few – if any – forms *specifically* devoted to the exploration of individual lives.'[287] The scarcity of life writing at the end of the sixteenth century did not pass by unnoticed. In 1605, in his essay on *The Advancement of Learning*, Francis Bacon questioned the distinct lack of 'lives' in contemporary writing:

[285] Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, pp.193, 266, 313-317.
[286] For example, in Donaldson's work plausible details about Jonson's birth and education are taken from Fuller, and Drummond is frequently cited to supplement this information.
[287] Danielle Clarke, 'Life Writing' in *The Oxford Handbook to English Prose 1500-1640* ed by. Andrew Hadfield (Oxford: OUP, 2013), p.453.

> For LIVES, I doe finde strange that these times haue so little esteemed the vertues of the times, as that of the Writing of liues should not be more frequent. For although there be not many soueraigne Princes or absolute commanders, and that States are most collected into Monarchies; yet are there many worthy personages, that deserue better than dispersed report, or barren Elegies.[288]

Apart from collections such as the lives of saints or chronicles of political figures, which I discuss in more detail shortly, lives, as Bacon observes, were not produced with great frequency prior to the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, Bacon's remarks reflect a growing interest in lives of other types of individuals or, in Bacon's words, 'worthy personages.' As Roger Pooley observes, the century began with Bacon commenting on the lack of biography and ended with John Phillips prefacing 'his *Life of Milton* with a survey of ancient and modern biography…fit to stand with Machiavelli and the classics.'[289] Examining the development of the biographical genre is a crucial component to understanding the process of English literary canon-formation in the second half of the seventeenth century; this includes notions of authorial and generic hierarchies, authorial reputation and the elevation of English vernacular publications and writers.

Biography: A History

Biographical writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was modelled initially on medieval hagiography and Greek and Roman life writing. 'The impulse to celebrate individuals finds its earliest expression in the dirge and funeral oration. Organisation of literary works around the experiences of an individual goes all the way back to Homer. Moreover, from the fifth century BC onwards, all Greek historians tended to insert

[288] Francis Bacon, *The Twoo Bookes of Francis Bacon of the proficience and aduancement of Learning, diuine and humane* (London: Printed for Henrie Tomes, 1605), sig.Ddv.
[289] Roger Pooley, *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century 1590-1700* (London: Longman, 1992), p.63.

biographical sketches into accounts of wars, and so on.'[290] From Aristotle, historians can trace the emergence of an interest in organising lives into socio-cultural clusters, such as the lives of philosophers, military leaders and poets. The Latin life writing of Plutarch and Suetonius provided early modern biographers with two models that often influenced the shape of their own 'lives': either the chronological portrait method utilised by Plutarch, or the thematic organisation around ancestry, wars, and so forth used by Suetonius.[291]

In Ancient Greece and Rome lives were written about all sorts of important people, though often concentrating on political or military figures. From the second century AD one of the most prominent forms of life writing was the Christian hagiography, lives of saints and martyrs.[292] These were written in Greek and Latin, as well as vernacular languages, and ranged from simple accounts of a particular saint's life to featuring visions, miracles and other events of religious significance.[293] The lives were general in many ways, offering accounts of how good Christians should live rather than specific details about an individual's early life. This can seem unusual when compared with biographical writing today. Scholars like Clarke and Meredith Skura observe that life writing at present requires the relation of personal experiences and opinions; in the early modern period early examples of life writing often served other purposes, such as the moral exemplar and allegory that were prominent features of saints' lives. Databases such as *EEBO* and the *ESTC* reveal that most collections titled or categorised as biographies or lives in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were primarily religious lives (including those of pious women), classical lives, chronicles of monarchs and the lives of nobility or soldiers. Most seventeenth-century collections of an

[290] Irene Backus, *Life Writing in Reformation Europe* (Ashgate: Hampshire, 2008), pp.vii-ix. Backus focuses primarily on continental life writing, but her introduction offers a useful succinct history of ancient and medieval life writing and their influence during the Reformation. See also C.B.R. Pelling, 'Biography, Greek and Roman', in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilzation* ed by. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2004), pp.116-18.
[291] Backus does note that the portrait method does not originate with Plutarch, but is established by him and his work had the greatest influence on early modern European writers, pp.ix-xi.
[292] See 'hagiography', in *OED*.
[293] Backus, p.xv.

individual author's works did not include a detailed life, or included this only towards the end of the seventeenth century, such as editions of the works of Spenser and Milton which added lives in 1679 and 1698 respectively.[294]

In the early seventeenth century and previously, posthumous volumes of an author's complete works were more likely to include commendatory poems rather than a full-dress biography. Clarke observes that the 'moral exemplar is a key genre development in this period, and what is notable is the gradual broadening of the social base of who may count as exemplary…[life writing] constitutes the first truly vernacular and properly demotic mode of written expression in the early modern period.'[295] While I concur with her observation, I suggest, however, that biography offers more insight into seventeenth century ideas about authorship and literature than merely suggesting that worthiness is determined by moral behaviour, particularly by the end of this period. Gerard Langbaine was motivated by more than moral exemplar when cataloguing and exemplifying the originality of English dramatists (1691); similarly, while clearly influenced by the exemplar tradition, Thomas Sprat dedicated the majority of his *Account* of Cowley's life (1668) to discussing the author's works, literary influences and writing habits. These actions reflect an interest in two key ideas. First, Sprat, as well as Langbaine, had a hand in influencing the genre conventions for life writing – for instance, determining how to present the life and what facts and anecdotes to omit and include. Second, these early biographers helped to determine how a broader audience would view the life of the author in relation to his or her works, revealing which elements of a particular work or moments in an author's life were worth highlighting. In Sprat's case this included praising an author for obtaining the respect and admiration of his peers. For Langbaine, an author's originality was crucial. Both of these key ideas became of great

[294] Edmund Spenser, *The Works of that Famous English Poet Mr. Edmund Spenser* (London, Printed by Henry Hills for Jonathan Edwin, 1679) and John Milton, *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton* (Amsterdam: 1698).
[295] Danielle Clarke, 'Life Writing' in *The Oxford Handbook to English Prose 1500-1640* ed by. Andrew Hadfield (Oxford: OUP, 2013), p.453.

importance in shaping how lives were written in the eighteenth century and on through to the present day.

This chapter concentrates on the emergence of the biography as a distinct literary genre and how this contributed to the early development of the concept of an English literary canon. In the seventeenth century, as observed by Allan Pritchard, new types of biography emerge that are distinct from earlier examples of English life writing; of these, the two forms most often associated with the life of the poet are the prefatory life and the brief life.[296] That is not to say there were no antecedents for either model, with both continental as well as ancient models including Plutarch and the Protestant reformers.[297] However, it is clear that the life of the poet progresses over time, slowly moving beyond the exemplar portrait that was a defining characteristic of medieval hagiography and Reformation era life writing. From the mid-seventeenth century the prefatory life and the brief life both demonstrate a strong interest in highlighting and analysing the literary careers of their subjects. This attention to authorship becomes a key component of life writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, evident in the works of Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, influencing both the content and structure of the biographical genre through to the present day.

For this chapter I have selected two case studies that I think exemplify the most important aspects of seventeenth-century life writing about authors, but which have also been neglected in most studies about early modern biography and the English literary canon. The first is Thomas Sprat's *Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Abraham Cowley Written to Mr M. Clifford,* which was included as a preface to the 1668 edition of *The Works of Mr Abraham Cowley,* printed in the year after the author's death. Pritchard is one of the few scholars to have discussed Sprat's *Account* at length, but he still focuses heavily on the

[296] Allan Pritchard, *English Biography in the Seventeenth Century* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2005), p.10

[297] See Pritchard's brief summary of form development in his introduction pp.19-24, and again see Backus's study on the continental reformers.

perceived failings of the work, declaring it 'valuable primarily as a contemporary estimate, rather than as an assessment of more enduring worth.'[298] Yet even Pritchard credits Sprat for the prominence he gives to Cowley's writings in the *Account*, even if he does no more than note that Sprat offers a survey and critical analysis of the poet in his biography. Sprat's *Account* served as Cowley's official biography for about a century, reprinted alongside the numerous editions of his works that appeared well into the eighteenth century, and was a source and influence for later biographers writing about the poet including Anthony Wood, Gerard Langbaine and Samuel Johnson. Additionally, Sprat's account of Cowley is one of the first examples of life writing for an individual author that specifically justifies commemorating the subject because he is an author, rather than for other aspects of his life, such as clerical or military service. This is relevant to understanding the development of the idea of an English literary canon in this period because Sprat's *Account* aimed to influence how audiences read, commemorated and remembered Cowley. Additionally, his biography offered a model for other life writers wanting specifically to honour poets. It is for these reasons that I have chosen Sprat's life as the focal point for the first half of this study, in which I discuss the prefatory life.

The second half of this study will focuses on the brief life. While there are several notable seventeenth-century examples of collections of 'brief lives,' including Thomas Fuller's *History of the Worthies of England* (1662), Anthony Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses* (1691-2) and John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* (1679-80), I have selected Gerard Langbaine's *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691) as my case study. First, it is one of the only works entirely dedicated to literary subjects, and the first work concentrating exclusively on English dramatists. Fuller's study is organised around places, Wood's around institutions, and Aubrey's around a diverse selection of professions, and though all three authors include

[298] Pritchard, p.135.

biographies of poets, this is not the primary focus of any of these collections.[299] Second, Langbaine uses his biographical works to treat a subject not often considered by many seventeenth-century writers and scholars, plagiarism. In doing so, Langbaine's collection endeavours to offer a more accurate and unbiased account of poets than previously published.[300] The collection aims to provide accurate accounts of English literary lives, making selections between the best and inferior poets, an activity that suggests Langbaine's intention to gather and promote distinguished English authors, what might be recognised today as an authorial literary canon. Like Sprat, Langbaine's biographical work has received minimal critical attention, despite being an important contribution to the seventeenth-century life of the poet, and it is for this reason I have decided to use it as the focal point in which to discuss the development of the brief life.

In this chapter I examine the emergence of the poet during the second half of the seventeenth century as a worthwhile subject for life writing. Moreover, the two case studies demonstrate how the seventeenth-century biography evolved into a distinct literary genre, establishing literary conventions that have shaped biographical writing since. In addition, the early modern life sheds light on characteristics, such as originality or a respectable personal reputation, that make an author worthy of preservation and imitation. Sprat's interest in critical analysis and Langbaine's dedication to factual accuracy are examples of how the life of the poet began to emerge as a form recognisably similar to modern biographies, including the *National Dictionary of Biography* that culminated in in the 1880s and 90s. Moreover, their lives also championed particular writers and their literary works and endeavoured to influence the manner in which their contemporary and future readers engaged with these

[299] Fuller's *Worthies* discuss all classes of people from England and Wales arranged by county. Wood's work discusses bishops and writers who attended Oxford University although he does find ways to include other figures such as scholars associated with Cambridge. Aubrey's lives were primarily composed 1679-80 but remained largely unprinted until the nineteenth century. For more on these lives see Pritchard, pp.145-198, and David Tylden-Wright, *John Aubrey: A Life* (London: HarperCollins, 1991).

[300] Langbaine is not entirely able to leave out his own character judgements, and was clearly a staunch royalist, which I discuss later in this chapter.

authors and their texts. The seventeenth-century life of the poet thus contributed to the development of the concept of an English literary canon by participating in debates about inclusion criteria and literary merit, endeavouring to select the authors and works which should be preserved and disseminated within a national literary culture.

The Prefatory Life

Prefatory lives for literary figures were almost non-existent until the mid-seventeenth century. As Pritchard has observed, Thomas Speght's brief biography of Chaucer prefacing *The Workes of our Antient and Lerned English Poet Geffrey Chaucer* (1598) was more of an exception than a rule, and early lives of writers such as John Donne and Sir Philip Sidney still used the exemplar model of presenting Protestant heroes rather than eminent authors.[301] Pooley, commenting on Walton's lives of Donne and Herbert, observed that 'these are not the lives of poets, then, so much as of saintly clergy who happened to be poets.'[302] However, Walton's prefatory lives of Donne and Herbert, while very much part of the clerical life tradition, do also constitute early examples of biographical writing about poets. For instance, in his life of Herbert, Walton fully transcribes the poem 'Affliction' and comments frequently on the merits and reception of *The Temple*: '*enrich[ing] the World with pleasure and piety*…it appears to have done so, for there have been Ten thousand of them sold since the first Impression.'[303] With his life of Donne prefacing *LXXX Sermons Preached by that Learned and Reverend Divine, John Donne* in 1640, Walton provided one of the first models of a clerical life that served a secondary role as a literary life.

In this section I discuss how Sprat's life of Cowley modified the exemplary life used by Walton and other writers of clerical lives to produce a biography that had the primary

[301] Pritchard, p.128.
[302] Roger Pooley, *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century 1590-1700* (London: Longman, 1992), p.69.
[303] Izaak Walton, 'The Life of Mr. George Herbert', in *The Lives of Dr John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr Richard Hooker, Mr George Herbert* (London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb for Richard Marriott, 1670), sig.E6r.

objective of promoting Cowley as a gifted poet. I argue that Sprat's life played a key role in shaping Cowley's posthumous reputation. It was an account of a well-known, well-read contemporary poet, and was frequently republished well into the next century alongside Cowley's works, which resulted in Sprat's prefatory life inevitably influencing the shape and content of the life writing genre more generally. Unique in the mid-seventeenth century for offering a biographical account with a heavy focus on analysing and chronicling an author's works, Sprat's innovative contribution to biographical writing shaped the development of the genre on into the eighteenth century and later. Early eighteenth-century biographies like those of Johnson and Boswell, up through the modern scholarly biographies such as those mentioned in this chapter's introduction, and in the entries in the *ODNB*, now often include substantial information about and an analysis of an author's works as part of their biographical record.

Sprat's Account of Cowley

In 1668, the year after the death of Abraham Cowley, Henry Herringman, who had taken over printing both Cowley's works as well as the works of several other poets previously published by Humphrey Moseley, published an edition of Cowley's works which included the poetry previously printed in the collection *Poems* (1656) as well as additional poems and essays. At the beginning of the collection is *An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Abraham Cowley*, written by Cowley's friend and literary executor Thomas Sprat (1635-1713). Sprat was a bishop and historical writer, perhaps best remembered for his involvement with the Royal Society, of which he was a fellow. He was commissioned to write a history of the society which is one of his most notable works, alongside his *Account of Cowley* and his sermons, although John Morgan stresses that it cannot be entirely relied upon

as an accurate account of the society and its views.[304] Upon Cowley's death Sprat composed the epitaph on Cowley's grave in Westminster Abbey and a Latin panegyric commemorating the author, the latter of which was expanded into the English life published alongside Cowley's *Works* from 1668 onward.

Sprat's *Account* was structured as a letter to Martin Clifford (1624-1677), master of the Charterhouse and writer of *A Treatise of Humane Reason*; he was a lifelong friend and correspondent of Cowley.[305] The life begins by explaining Sprat's connection to Cowley:

> Mr. *Cowley* in his Will recommended to my care the reviving of all his Works that were formerly printed, and collecting of those Papers which he had design'd for the Press. And he did it with this particular Obligation *That I should be sure to let nothing pass, that might seem the least offence to Religion or good Manners*. A caution which you will judge to have been altogether needless…According to his desire and his own intention, I have now set forth his Latin and English Writings…I have thus, Sir, performed the Will of the Dead.[306]

Sprat reveals his involvement in the publication of Cowley's completed works as a task put to him by the author, and completed to what he promises are the author's specifications. Writers of biographies, particularly those writing the lives of their contemporaries, felt compelled to justify their life writing. As Walton said of his own life writing, he desired that his subjects 'had also writ their own lives: and since it is not the fashion of the times; that their friends would do it for them before delayes make it too difficult. And I desire this more: because 'tis

[304] For more on Sprat's life, including his time with the Royal Society, his education, family and clerical career see John Morgan, 'Thomas Sprat', *ODNB*.
[305] Giovanni Tarantino, 'Martin Clifford (c.1624-1677)', *ODNB*.
[306] Thomas Sprat, 'An Account of the Life of Mr. Abraham Cowley', in *The Works of Mr Abraham Cowley* (London: Printed for Herringman, 1668), sigs.A2r-v.

an honour due to the dead, and a debt due to those that shall live, and succeed us.'[307] Although life writing was, in Walton's estimation, honourable, it was not necessarily fashionable. This prompted writers like Sprat to justify both the subject of the biography, and the biographer's fitness to write the life. In Sprat's case, he was qualified not only because of his close friendship with the author but because he was Cowley's choice to shape the poet's posthumous reputation. Life writers like Sprat and Walton reveal that during the seventeenth century it was expected that the recently deceased should be commemorated by those closest to them. This ensures that particular details about important people, in this case poets, would not be lost or misrepresented. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, an author's *personal* reputation was tied to his *literary* reputation, and it was the interplay between these two things that influenced the shape and content of English life writing from the mid-seventeenth century onwards.

Sprat began by explaining why he was best suited to write Cowley's life, but he also addressed the issue of life writing's intrinsic value: 'But I doubt I shall not satisfie the expectation of the Living unless some Account be here premis'd concering this excellent Man. I know very well, that he has given the World the best Image of his own mind in these immortal Monuments of his Wit.'[308] Sprat reveals that he is catering to the expectations of his reader who would better appreciate Cowley's works in the context of the biographical information Sprat provides. While lives were included in some works, they were not necessarily at this point a common addition to an author's oeuvre, with elegies or epitaphs being the more typical method by which to honour a posthumous poet. Sprat had several reasons for penning Cowley's life, but his consideration for the concerns of his readers suggests that this account was not just written for present audiences, many of whom would have been more knowledgeable about the recently departed author, but also for future

[307] Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Dr John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr Richard Hooker, Mr George Herbert* (London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb for Richard Marriott, 1670), sig.A7v.
[308] Sprat, sig.A1v.

audiences, the readers further removed from Cowley's lifetime that would have a greater interest in his biography and reputation as an accompaniment to his works. Sprat is not explicit about Cowley's enduring reputation and greatness, but obviously 'immortal Monuments' implies a lasting literary legacy rather than a transient reception.

In memorialising Cowley, Sprat suggested that Clifford, to whom the life is addressed, may have been the better person to write the account: 'This [biography], Sir, were an Argument most proper for you to manage, in respect of your great abilities, and the long friendship you maintain'd with him. But you have an obstinate aversion from publishing any of your Writings…I only therefore intreat you to give me leave to make you a party in this Relation, by using your Name and your Testimony.'[309] As Clifford generally avoids publishing his own works, Sprat only asks Clifford to lend his name and testimony in the hopes that Cowley's 'praise will be strengthen'd by the consent of your [Clifford's] judgment, and the authority of your approbation.'[310] Throughout the life Sprat often refers to the reputation and testimonial of other writers and associates of the author, demonstrating that part of promoting an author in this period meant to connect him with similarly influential and respected people. In life writing, as in other categories of writing such as commendatory verse and literary criticism, elevating a poet and discussing notions of fame and literary prestige rarely discussed a poet in isolation. Sprat honours Cowley by putting him in the company of other great literary figures; similarly, he promotes his own life writing project by attaching to it the names of important people like Clifford.

Sprat begins his life of Cowley with the general background information a reader in this period would expect to find in the life of most subjects, literary or otherwise, including a record of his birth, parentage and schooling. Yet Sprat's *Account* is shaped from the

[309] Sprat, sig.A1v.
[310] Sprat, sigs.A1v-A2r.

beginning to emphasise the life of the poet, providing choice details about Cowley's first literary inclinations:

> The occasion of his first inclination to Poetry, was his casual lighting on *Spencer's Fairy Queen*, when he was but just able to read. That indeed is a Poem fitter for the examination of men, than the consideration of a Child. But in him it met with a Fancy, whose strength was not to be judged by the number of his years.[311]

Cowley himself wrote of his discovery of Spenser in his 'Essay of Myself,' which was first published posthumously within the 1668 collection of his works. At a cursory glance, Sprat's inclusion of this anecdote may seem merely colourful; however, this brief narrative at the beginning of Cowley's life serves as the poet's inspiration story. Here Sprat takes a crucial component of the exemplar tradition used in saint's lives; in that context, a life writer would reveal early acts of piety and virtue to demonstrate that the subject was always meant to be the exemplary figure depicted in the commendatory text.[312] Sprat uses a similar model to demonstrate that Cowley was born to be an exemplary writer: according to Sprat, Cowley conceived of the majority of his greatest works before he was twenty, only finishing and refining them in later years.[313] Throughout the seventeenth century authors often praised writers as innately talented, like Shakespeare, or as having worked diligently to hone and craft their gifts and skill, like Jonson. In life writing this is often portrayed through a Theophrastan character sketch, which as Richard Terry demonstrates usually relies on portraying the subject as 'shaped by a single, ascendant "ruling passion" or psychological compulsion.'[314] Sprat appears to be demonstrating that Cowley is similarly a poet of nature,

[311] There are some factual errors and misrepresentations in Sprat's life, such as Cowley's age when *Poetical Blossoms* was first published. For an account of some of these see Nethercot, pp.22, 41.
[312] On the exemplary tradition in life writing from Plutarch through to Walton see Jessica Martin, in *Walton's Lives* (Oxford: OUP, 2001).
[313] Sprat particularly notes his elegy for Hervey, one of the most highly regarded of Cowley's works, sig.A2v.
[314] Richard Terry, *Poetry and the making of the English literary past, 1660-1781* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), p.238.

incredibly gifted from a very young age; however, by including this anecdote in the section on his education he also proves that his subject is a man of learning. In this way Sprat shows that the two highest forms of praise in this period, to possess natural poetic talent and to be made a poet through study and industry, both apply to Cowley which, thereby, elevates his prestige as a writer.

Between describing Cowley's education and analysing his literary achievements Sprat provides the reader with a sketch of Cowley's life during the Civil War. This is not, however, to focus on Cowley the royalist at the expense of Cowley the poet. Many of Cowley's works were written or revised during the Civil War and the decade-long Interregnum that followed. This includes much of his love poetry published in *Mistresse* (1647) and the incomplete epic *Civil War* (written 1643).[315] At the same time, however, by attending in his *Account* to Cowley's service and arrest, Sprat was able to give powerful testimony to the character of his subject, depicting him as loyal and dedicated to the royal cause. This is crucial because a great deal of the criticism levied against Cowley during his lifetime was in response to a controversial passage written by Cowley in the preface to *Poems* (1656). In this passage Cowley revealed his own despair regarding the royalist plight, and justified his decision to omit politics, and political poetry from the collection. In response to this Sprat argued:

> The Objection [to Cowley's character, raised by his original preface] I must not pass by in silence, because it was the only part of his life, that was lyable to mis-interpretation, even by the confession of those that envied his Fame. In this case perhaps it were enough, to alledge for him to men of moderate minds, that what he there said was published before a Book of Poetry, and so ought rather to be esteemed as a Probleme of his Fancy and Invention, than as the real Image of his Judgment.[316]

[315] In this study I use the spelling 'Mistresse' when referring to the 1647 collection of Cowley's poems printed by Moseley as that is the spelling used in the book. I use the spelling 'Mistress' when referring to the section of poetry in Cowley's *Poems* (1656) and *Works* (1668) as that spelling is used in these later publications.
[316] Sprat, sig.a1v.

Sprat defends Cowley on the basis that some readers had simply misinterpreted Cowley's meaning. Cowley was not attempting to shirk his allegiance, but to separate politics from poetry. Yet, Sprat further suggests Cowley's motives ran deeper than this:

> But his defence in this matter may be laid on a surer Foundation…Upon his coming over he found the state of the Royal Party very desperate…the strength of their Enemies so united […that] all endeavours against it were like to prove unsuccessful. On the other side he beheld their zeal for his Majesties Cause, to be still so active, that it often hurryed them into inevitable ruine…He therefore believed that it would be a meritorious service to the King, if any man who was known to have followed his interest, could insinuate into the Usurpers minds.[317]

Essentially, Sprat argues that overt loyalty would have been unwise at the time, and actually a disservice to the royal cause which needed its sympathisers to be able to ingratiate themselves with their enemies. Clearly, Cowley was not successful in this, having been in prison at the time of compiling his *Poems* and thus undoubtedly known as a loyal supporter of the royalist cause. Sprat concludes this point by offering Cowley's own testimony, naming witnesses to the conversation where Cowley suggested that as 'his good intentions were so ill interpreted, he told me [Sprat], that last time that ever I saw him, that he would have omitted [these words] in the next Impression.'[318] By publishing this conversation, Sprat bolstered his defence of Cowley's unimpeachable character, while also justifying the changes he made to the Cowley's original preface. This is important, because in the seventeenth century a poet's worth was judged not just on the basis of literary talent but also on moral reputation. These two characteristics of a writer were not mutually exclusive, and make Sprat's focus on

[317] Sprat, sig.a1v.
[318] Sprat, sig.a2r.

Cowley's life during the Civil War as imperative to writing his life as a poet as the lengthy attention he pays to his works in the second half of the life.

Having established Cowley's unimpeachable character, Sprat turns from what he termed a 'digression' back to discussing Cowley the author. He begins by discussing Cowley's retreat into retirement and solitude, how he turned from public life to country isolation, with a 'few friends and books, a cheerful heart, and innocent conscience [as] his constant Companions. His Poetry indeed he took with him, but he made that an Anchorite, as well as himself; he only dedicated it to the service of his Maker, to describe the great images of Religion and Virtue.'[319] Sprat depicts Cowley as a dedicated scholar, but also portrays him as virtuous and religious in retirement, again intertwining his identity as a writer with his Christian morality and good character. In the same way that Sprat painted Cowley as politically loyal, he similarly assures his reader that Cowley's personal morality and religious piety make him an ideal author, worthy of commemorating and reading.

With his character sketch complete, Sprat finally turned to Cowley's published works. One of the reasons scholars like Pritchard are critical of the *Account* is that it does not meet modern expectations of a character portrait: 'it lacks concreteness of detail, and it does not provide so intimate an account as one might have hoped from Sprat's close acquaintance with Cowley and his use of the epistle form.'[320] Pritchard notes that in lacking the personal intimacies and physical descriptions modern readers might expect, Sprat follows the traditional 'conventions firmly established in seventeenth-century moral and religious biography.'[321] However, rather than rejecting this traditionalism, Sprat adapts it to reinvigorate the life of the poet without divorcing his work from the literary tastes and expectations of his readers during the seventeenth-century. As Loiseau observes, Sprat's *Account* provided the most complete and critical tribute of the poet in the mid-seventeenth

[319] Sprat, sig.b1r.
[320] Pritchard, pp.132-3.
[321] Pritchard, p.134.

century, 'a living portrait [and] a sympathetic analysis of the work, [through which] we can understand what his contemporaries so highly appreciated in his verse; not only the degree of their admiration but the motives that fostered it.'[322] Cowley's celebrated reputation endured for over a century after his death. Subsequent publications of his works continued to include Sprat's biography as the official record of the poet, which served as the primary source for later biographers like Wood, Aubrey, Langbaine and Johnson. Johnson's own lives, seen as the most direct influence on the modern biography, featured Cowley as one of the most prominent poets in the collection, and relied on Sprat for much of the biographical information about the poet.[323] Clearly Sprat's *Account* was an important component to canonising Cowley both during the seventeenth century through to the present day.

Cowley was an accomplished writer across multiple literary genres including the lyric, the epic and drama. He wrote about a variety of subjects during his lifetime: love, war and even botany. Sprat observes that:

> But in his Poetry, as well as his Life, he mingled with excellent skill what was good in both states. In his life he join'd the innocence, and sincerity of the Scholar, with the humanity and good behaviour of the Courtier. In his Poems he united the Solidity and the Art of the one, with the Gentility and Gracefulness of the other.[324]

Again, Sprat demonstrates the importance of the connection between the portrait of the scholar and the portrait of the good man, one familiar with the style and subjects fashionable in city and court:

> He forsook the Conversation, but never the Language, of the City and Court. He understood exceeding well all the variety and power of Poetical Numbers…If his

[322] Jean Loiseau, *Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England* (Paris: Henri Didier, 1931), pp.14-15.
[323] Johnson's life of Cowley is one of the longest and richest in the collection, with the only longer contribution being his life of Milton.
[324] Sprat, sig.b1v.

> Verses in some places seem not as soft and flowing as some would have them, it was his choice not his fault. He knew that in diverting mens minds, there should be the same variety observ'd as in the prospects of their Eyes; where a Rock, a Precipice, or a rising Wave, is often more delightful than a smooth, even ground, or a calm Sea…This may serve to answer those who upbraid some of his Pieces with roughness…different Arguments must have different Colours of Speech: that there is a kind of variety of Sexes in Poetry; as well as in Mankind: that as the peculiar excellence of the Feminine Kind, is smoothnesse and beauty: so strength is the chief praise of the Masculine.[325]

Sprat details particularities about Cowley's style of writing, his courtly language and strength of verse before he discusses the specific works. Sprat praises Cowley's rougher verses as masculine, revealing it is variety that delights rather than smoothness. In the *Account* Cowley is praised for his education, his talent and his wit. Loiseau has argued that near the end of the seventeenth century a preference for wit was exchanged for an appreciation of judgement. This change mandated that smooth, even versification and neoclassical rules were requisite qualities of English verse that resulted in a tentative criticism of Cowley, who was so highly regarded. One example of this sentiment can be found in *Applebee's Journal* (1732) where it is suggested that Waller's legacy would outlast Cowley's because of his smoothness; however, this verdict was hardly universal.[326] Literary critic Joseph Warton (1722-1800) in *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (1756) divided English poets into four classes, placing Cowley in the second class (poets of poetical genius with a talent for moral and ethical poetry), alongside Dryden, Donne, Denham and Congreve. The lowest class of 'mere versifiers, however smooth and mellifluous some of them may be thought' suggests that even

[325] Sprat, sig.b1v.
[326] Loiseau, pp.44, 84.

in the mid-eighteenth century poets were expected to do more than write harmonious numbers.[327] Sprat's arguments about Cowley, a century before Warton, make a similar suggestion: that there are strengths in different styles and understanding how Cowley viewed prosody and versification is an essential component to reading and appreciating the poet.

Sprat finally directs the *Account* to a detailed survey of Cowley's works, including a brief note on works omitted from the collection such as personal letters. Sprat's discussion of Cowley's poetry provides the clearest evidence of how Sprat attempted to shape Cowley's literary reception. Sprat begins with Cowley's amorous poetry, as Cowley did in his own preface to *Poems* a decade earlier:

> If there needed any excuse to be made, that his Love-Verses should take up so great a share in his Works, it may be alledg'd that they were compos'd, when he was very young. But it is a vain thing to make any kind of Apology for that sort of Writings. If Devout or Virtuous Men will superciliously forbid the minds of the young, to adorn those subjects about which they are most conversant: They would put them out of all capacity of performing graver matters, when they come to them. For the exercises of all Mens Wits, must be always proper for their Age.[328]

Sprat argues that the poems included in the section *Mistress* were appropriate odes for the young Cowley to write, suggesting that even the greatest poets begin their career with love poetry. Still, he suggests that the poems have value for all readers:

> never yet so much was written on a subject so Delicate, that can less offend the severest rules of Morality. The whole Passion of Love is intimately describ'd, with all its mighty Train of Hopes, and Joys, and Disquiets…and every where there may be

[327] Joseph Warton *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1756), pp.xi-xii; For commentary on Warton's canon see Ross, p.256.
[328] Sprat, sigs.b2r-v.

> something found, to inform the minds of wise Men, as well as to move the hearts of young Men, or Women.[329]

Sprat praises Cowley because of his ability to convey intimate passions through verse, both to move and instruct readers, recalling again Sidney's *Defence*.[330] The problems with praising love-poetry had been acknowledged in the sixteenth and earlier in the seventeenth centuries by poets such as Sidney, Spenser, Jonson and Donne.[331] Sprat strengthens his own account by reiterating the arguments found originally in Sidney's essay. Moreover, Sprat discusses Cowley's *Pindarique Odes* alongside the lyrical odes in the biography. Associating Cowley's lyrics with Pindar, as well as with the heroic poem *Davideis*, intended to lend prestige to the former.[332] Sprat is at paints to demonstrate that love poetry is a worthwhile accoutrement to a poet's oeuvre, not least because these odes make up a substantial portion of Cowley's own poetic writing, particularly during the Civil War and Interregnum. Of Cowley's *Pindarique Odes*, Sprat claims:

> If any are displeas'd at the boldness of his Metaphors, and length of his Digression, they contend not against Mr. *Cowley*, but *Pindar* himself: who was so much reverenc'd by all Antiquity, that the place of his Birth was preserv'd as Sacred, when his Native City was twice destroy'd by the fury of two Conquerors.[333]

Sprat praises Cowley as a perfect imitator of Pindar, claiming that to find fault with the odes is truly to find complaint about a man so revered throughout his lifetime and after that his birthplace 'was preserv'd as Sacred.' Sprat demonstrates that Pindar's literary fame is eternal,

[329] Sprat, sig.b2v.
[330] This is discussed in greater detail in my second chapter: Literary Criticism.
[331] Marotti, p.265.
[332] Marotti, p.265.
[333] Sprat, sig.b2v.

and links Cowley's own poetic reputation to the classical poet. Considering the style and subject of the odes, Sprat argues

> If the irregularity of the number disgust them, they may observe that this very thing makes that kind of Poesie fit for all manner of subjects: For the Pleasant, the Grave, the Amorous, the Heroic, the Philosophical, the Moral, the Divine…the frequent alteration of the Rhythm and Feet, affects the mind with a more various delight.[334]

The odes treat a diverse number of subjects, leading up to the philosophical, moral and divine as the most important. Again Sprat demonstrates the importance of the exemplar in life writing, even when composing a literary life. The odes are also praised for their 'near affinity with Prose: From which all other kinds of *English* Verse are so far distant, that it is very seldom found that the same man excels in both ways.' Sprat establishes the importance of English prose because it is the 'style of all business and conversation.'[335] Cowley, at the end of his life, had dedicated most of his time to prose writing, penning several essays and books about plants. Cowley's essays experienced a revival during the beginning of the twentieth century, and as Pettet observed in 1942, they proved Cowley's strength in both verse and prose, that the author expertly switched between media to best convey his ideas.[336] In discussing prose alongside the Pindarics, Sprat draws links between the whole of Cowley's literary works in verse and prose. Sprat argues that Cowley deserves the same elevation and commemoration as Pindar, because of the strength of his imitations and his genre flexibility. Sprat's account demonstrates the qualities of Cowley's work that make him worthy of fame.

The odes are also important to Sprat when discussing Cowley's contributions to English literature as a translator of verse.

---

[334] Sprat, sig.b2v.
[335] Sprat, sig.c1r.
[336] E.C. Pettet, 'A Study of Abraham Cowley', *The Journal of the English Association*, 4:21 (1942), 88.

> Besides this imitating of *Pindar*, which may perhaps be thought rather a new sort of Writing, than a restoring of an Ancient; he has also been wonderfully happy, in Translating many difficult parts of the Noblest Poets of Antiquity. To perform this…he had, as it was necessary he should have, not only the Elegance of both the Languages; but the true spirit of both the Poetries. This way of leaving Verbal Translations, and chiefly regarding the Sense and Genius of the Author, was scarce heard of in *England*, before this present Age. I will not presume to say, that Mr. *Cowley* was the absolute Inventor of it…Yet I appeal to you Sir, whether he did not conceive it, and discourse of it, and practise it as soon as any Man.[337]

Sprat praises Cowley as one of the earliest poets not just to offer a translation of earlier works, but to create original poetry from classical sources, and in this way presents Cowley as an important author not just for his English writing but for being able to introduce all manner of writing into English. Cowley is presented as a bridge between classical and English traditions, making him an important literary figure both for his poetic prowess and for increasing the prestige of vernacular poetry in his own nation.

The last major poetic work Sprat discusses in detail is the incomplete epic poem *Davideis*, which was according to Cowley and those close to him, was conceived of and written in his youth, and later revised and prepared for publication in *Poems*.[338] Sprat acknowledges that Cowley's 'Wit excell'd most other mens' it was for 'his Moral and Divine

[337] Sprat, sig.c1r.
[338] The discovery of the full text of Cowley's 1643 *Civil War* reveals that *Davideis* borrows heavily from the poem and therefore might be a much later work despite Sprat's claim of youth. However, my thesis is interested in how Sprat presents Cowley, and attempts to shape his literary reputation and legacy, suggesting notions relevant to the formation of an English literary canon in this period. Sprat being incorrect about the age of the author when beginning the work, either intentionally or otherwise, is not relevant to this particular study, although I do suggest that *Davideis* as it appeared in 1656 does not negate the possibility of an earlier version of the work that predates *Civil War*. On Sprat's involvement with *Davideis* see Dana F. Sutton, 'Introduction', *Abraham Cowley, Davideos Liber I (1656), The Philological Museum* (Irvine: University of California, 2007) <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/david/>.

Works' that he was most highly regarded.[339] However, the majority of his discussion is dedicated to justifying why an author could and should use scripture in poetry, and, most importantly, that Cowley in particular would never 'abuse Scripture by licentious Raillery'.[340] Sprat praises Cowley for his proper treatment of biblical sources. An important aspect of biography in this period was to exhibit the moral virtue of the subject, and for this reason Sprat pays particular attention to works where he can showcase not only Cowley's literary talents in form or style, but also Cowley's dedication to distinguished, and in this case specifically devotional, subject matter.

Sprat ends his *Account* by once again reminding his reader of Cowley's character, his goodness, his loyalty, modesty and strong royalist conviction. Like Walton, Sprat wants to paint his subject as devotional and moral, but he adapts the structure and presentation to focus on a secular, literary life rather than the clerical lives Walton published.[341] He reaffirms the importance of Cowley as a poet, emphasising that he was interned in Westminster Abbey next to Chaucer and Spenser, 'the two most Famous *English* Poets, of former times.'[342]

Sprat concludes his life with the hope that the *Account* has fulfilled its purpose of presenting an accurate representation of Cowley's character, as well as benefiting those who would read the works of Cowley.

> For this reason I have some hope, that a Character of Mr. *Cowley* may be of good advantage to our Nation. For what he wanted in Titles of Honour, and the Gifts of Fortune, was plentifully supplyed by many other Excellencies, which makes perhaps less noise, but are more beneficial for Example. This, Sir, was the principal end of this long Discourse…having this Picture of his life set before us, we may still keep him

[339] Sprat, sig.c1v.
[340] Sprat, sig.c2r.
[341] Sprat, sig.d1r-e1r.
[342] Sprat, sigs.e2r-v.

> alive in our memories, and by this means may have some small reparation, for our inexpressible loss by his death.[343]

Sprat expresses a wish to keep Cowley alive through his works, and to do this he found it necessary also to keep Cowley's reputation alive. Sprat's *Account* of Cowley's life depicts the author as a good person, virtuous and loyal, and he is thus argued to be a good author because of his character. This changes in the eighteenth century, but nonetheless, the exemplar tradition played an important role in determining which authors were most celebrated during the seventeenth century. While the prominence of authorship in literature was not as obvious as it is within the present day English literary canon, the emergence of biographical accounts of poets during the mid-seventeenth century demonstrates that there was an interest in including the best authors within the emerging English literary canon. Sprat's prefatory life contributes to an impetus from the mid-seventeenth century to focus biography on poets and other writers, contributing to debates about hierarchies of authors, the preservation of English poetry and literary value.

Brief Lives

The brief life is one of the most important contributions of seventeenth-century English writers to the biographical genre. From the mid-seventeenth century, collections of brief lives were one of the best sources of biographical and bibliographical information about poets and dramatists. As Pritchard has observed, while antecedents exist in the work of Diogenes Laertius, Suetonius and Cornelius Nepos, and even in the sixteenth century with figures like John Bale and John Leland, it is 'in the seventeenth century it achieves an unprecedented popularity and vitality. It becomes omnipresent and appears in a remarkable

[343] Sprat, sig.e2v.

variety of forms, ranging from short prefatory lives to biographical sketches in funeral sermons, and lives and characters incorporated in histories.'[344] Wood, Fuller and Aubrey's contributions to the brief life genre have been the focal point for most modern scholars; moreover, these lives are often analysed in comparison with modern lives rather than tracing the influence of these lives on the history and development of the biographical genre.[345]

There are two notable collections of poets that predate Langbaine's catalogues. The first is Edward Phillips *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675), which demonstrates a tremendous amount of scholarship but the included lives are exceptionally brief, both in detail about the authors and about their works. Half the work is dedicated to ancient poets, and his section on modern poets spans the entirety of the medieval and early modern period, including not just English authors but continental poets as well. The second work is William Winstanley's *The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets* (1687), which prioritised compelling character portraits rather than an accurate or faithful biography. William Riley Parker refers to Winstanley as an 'amateur literary historian' and reveals the text lifts much of its material from earlier sources, particularly Phillips *Theatrum Poetarum*, and does feature a significant number of inaccuracies.[346] In this section I examine Langbaine's final dramatic catalogue, which is both influenced by and serves to correct and improve the work of Winstanley and Phillips. In doing so I aim to shed light on the stylistic choices, literary themes and values that later emerge as key aspects of the modern biographical form. These things are currently attributed to the late eighteenth century works of Johnson and Boswell, but I argue elements of them can be found much earlier in the work of Langbaine.

[344] Pritchard, p.145.
[345] Again, Pritchard does also consider how these lives emerge as a new genre in addition to analysing how they hold up against modern biographical standards.
[346] William Winstanley, *The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets* (1687), facsimile reproduction (1963) <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15461/15461-h/15461-h.htm > [accessed 9 September 2013] (Introduction by William Riley Parker).

An Account of the English Dramatick Poets

Gerard Langbaine, born 15 July 1656, was a writer and dramatic cataloguer. He was apprenticed to the bookseller Neville Simmons but never took up the career, returning home upon the death of his brother. He attended Oxford but never completed his studies, leaving in order to marry Mary Greenwood (d.1724). From 1685 he lived a retired life in which he was able to pursue his greater interest in dramatic poetry, collecting a sizable library of plays and compiling his own innovative catalogues of plays and dramatists. His 1668 *A New Catalogue of English Plays*, better known as *Momus Triumphans, or, The Plageries of the English Stage* 'was the first ever to arrange entries alphabetically by authors' surnames, thus indicating the growing status of playwriting towards the end of the seventeenth century, the first to identify the sources of individual plays.' He later expanded this work into the defining publication of his career, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691).[347]

An Account of the English Dramatick Poets (1691) was published at the end of the century and included commentary on 'the Lives and Writings, of all those that have Publish'd either Comedies, Tragedies, Tragi-Comedies, Pastorals, Masques, Interludes, Farces, or Opera's in the English Tongue.' The collection is dedicated to the English history of playwriting and is assembled to provide a comprehensive record of English dramatists, which is noteworthy, as while an interest in canonising drama emerges over the seventeenth century it is rarely the focal point of seventeenth-century canon-forming activities. The earlier catalogue *Momus Triumphans*, as David Rhodes observes, was 'the most comprehensive catalogue of English theatre to its time, [providing] a list of surprising bibliographical competence and extent for its subject and period and a source study which is still of some use today.'[348] With his *Account*, Langbaine expands the original catalogue *Momus* into a more

[347] See Paulina Kewes, 'Gerard Langbaine (1656-1692)', *ODNB* for further biographical information.
[348] David Stuart Rhodes, 'Introduction', in Gerard Langbaine, *Momus Triumphans: or The Plagiaries of the English Stage* (Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society, 1971, originally 1688 [1687]), p.i.

biographical work that provides information about the life of each author in the context of their dramatic works.

The text is focused on gathering English playwrights, and while major playwrights such as Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson and Shakespeare are all featured, Langbaine includes minor authors, such as Frances Boothby and her single play *Marcelia or the Treacherous Friend* (1670). Boothby's inclusion is also notable as few biographical catalogues of this type would have included female authors. Similarly, the collection includes authors not primarily known for theatrical writing, such as Milton, as long as they wrote at least one play. However, Langbaine's text does clearly make distinctions between authors; the previously mentioned entry for Boothby only lists sparse details concerning her one play whereas the accounts of major playwrights and authors include more information about their birth, education, character and reputation. This is true of Jonson, one of the most eminent playwrights of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as well as authors like Cowley, someone not primarily known for his plays, but who was a major literary figure from the mid-seventeenth century into the following century.

Langbaine provides his motives for assembling *An Account* in the preface to his work. First, to expand and correct his previous catalogue, but also '[he] endavour'd to make this *Piece* as useful as the Subject would bear, or my Abilities reach; and I am almost confident, that those who were satisfied with my former *Catalogue*, will be much more favourable to *This Account*...they will find this so different from *That*, both in Form and Matter, that it may justly be stil'd *A New Book.*'[349] Langbaine's catalogues were intended to be useful sources of biographical and bibliographical information for his readers about English playwrights; it is for this reason his primary objective is to provide as accurate and as detailed an account as

[349] Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poet* (Oxford: Printed by L.L, 1691), sig.a5r.

possible. He therefore reveals this collection is first and foremost meant to combat plagiarism in English drama:

> I might be capable of doing them better Service, in vindicating *Their Fame*, and in exposing our Modern *Plagiaries*, by detecting *Part* of their Thefts. I say *Part*, because I cannot be suppos'd to have trac'd them in *All*: And having no *Partners* in my Discovery, it cannot be expected…However, this may serve for a Hint to others; who being better vers'd in Books, may build upon the Foundation which is here laid.[350]

Langbaine is one of the earliest writers and scholars to show a particular interest in what it means for authors to borrow from their predecessors, revealing an awareness of a line between stylised *imitatio* and abject theft. Modern critics such as Paulina Kewes and Kevin Pask are interested in Langbaine precisely because he offers an early definition of plagiarism.[351] What is more notable, in my opinion, is that Langbaine cites and debates with existing life writers such as Fuller or Wood, whom he consults and reasons with frequently within his more extensive entries. Engagement with contemporary opinions is recognised currently as a crucial aspect of critiquing and analysing English literature, and evidence of this practice in biographical writing can clearly be uncovered in Langbaine's work. Additionally, he endeavours to prompt future life writers to follow his model when producing their own works, stressing the importance of accurate representation in the biographical genre. With many seventeenth-century biographers often censured by modern scholars for factual inaccuracies, it is noteworthy that Langbaine was expressing the same concern about his contemporaries long before the biography emerged in its modern form.

[350] Langbaine, *An Account*, sigs.a4r-v.
[351] Paulina Kewes, 'Gerard Langbaine's "View of Plagiaries": The Rhetoric of Dramatic Appropriation in the Restoration', *RES*, New Series, 48 (1997), 2-18, and Kevin Pask, 'Plagiarism and the Originality of National Literature: Gerard Langbaine', *English Literary History*, 69 (2002), 727-747.

Langbaine's dramatic catalogues propose ideas relevant to the formation of literary canons, providing authorial hierarchies to honour the most esteemed writers and offering successive models to emulate. Kewes notes that Langbaine makes the distinction between imitating classical models and directly plagiarising a contemporary source, that for Langbaine the 'imitative enterprise is envisaged as ethically sound since it assigns full credit to the original; it is also aesthetically desirable…the eminent status of the models to a large degree guarantees the high quality of the later versions.'[352] Kewes offers a more historical approach to how readers and writers in the seventeenth-century understood the concept of plagiarism, considering that laws that specifically defined and banned plagiarism did not exist prior to the eighteenth century. The first Copyright Statute, Queen Anne's Act for the Encouragement of Learning, did not appear until 1710, and it was not until the late eighteenth century that an author's proprietary ownership of their works was established.[353] However, Langbaine's biographies do shed light on early ideas about the rules for imitation and poetic borrowing.

Langbaine frequently consults other biographical catalogues and writers, and at times discredits his contemporaries, to demonstrate the qualities that make a prestigious author and good play, such as, again, originality.

> In the First place then I have given a succinct Account of the Time in which most of the Ancient *Poets* liv'd; the place of their Nativity, Quality, Death, Writings, &c. in a larger manner than either Mr. *Philips* or Mr. *Winstanley*; and have collected all the material Passages of their Lives, which I found scattered in Doctor *Fuller, Lloydd, à Wood, &c.* into one Volume, for the greater Ease of the *Reader,* and Advantage of the Work…I here once for all make my publick Acknowledgement to the Fore-mention'd, as well as other worthy Writers.[354]

[352] Kewes, p.10.
[353] Kewes, p.17.
[354] Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick* Poets (Oxford: Printed by L.L, 1691), sig.a5r.

In his introductory preface Langbaine surveys other biographers, particularly ones that have featured dramatists in their works. He establishes a hierarchy of historians whose works he greatly respects and has borrowed from, such as Fuller, and those in which he has noted clear deficiencies, such as Winstanley. The distinction Langbaine makes between these various authors is established throughout the whole of his work. In his praise of Carew's *Coelum Britanicum* (1634) he notes the masque 'is not mentioned by either Mr. *Philips*, or Mr. *Winstanley*, because it was formerly, through a mistake, ascrib'd to Sr. *William Davenant*.' In his entry for Cowley, Langbaine writes 'my Predecessors in this Work, I mean Mr. *Phillips* and Mr. *Winstanley*, have given but an imperfect account of Him, or his Writings.'[355] Throughout this collection, Langbaine expounds on the weaknesses of Phillips' accounts and especially those of Winstanley in their own endeavours in life writing. Conversely, his engagement with other biographers is less critical and more factual, such as his observation on Fulke Greville's burial, 'This Worthy Nobleman lies Buried (as Dr. *Fuller* ([t]) says) in *Warwick* Church.'[356] *An Account* is not simply filled with Langbaine's bias in favour and against his contemporaries; in his brief biography of Edmund Prestwith he notes a mistaken attribution of Phillips and Winstanley but clarifies that 'it was a fault, which I suppose they-were led into by my Catalogue, printed 1680.'[357] Langbaine acknowledges his own previous failings in order to demonstrate how biographical writing can and should progressively improve. His anecdotes are carefully constructed to be a faithful recollection of biographical history.

The frequency with which Langbaine scrutinises the preeminent achievements of certain life writers establishes a hierarchy of authoritative life writers about dramatists alongside his collection of dramatic authors. *An Account* does not just refer to the works of other biographers, but also of contemporary poets who similarly critique literature and

[355] Langbaine, sigs.C6v and E7r.
[356] Langbaine, sig.C4v.
[357] Langbaine, sig.Cc5r.

authors in both prose and verse. Langbaine's biography of Jonson is coloured with a survey of the many authors who have written about Jonson and his literary career.

> As to his Poetry, I dare not pretend to give a Judgement on it, it deserving somewhat above what my faint Praise can reach, or describe: therefore those who would be better satisfy'd must have recourse to his Character drawn by Dr. *Fuller*, and Mr. *Anthony Wood* in Prose, and by Mr. *Carthwright*, and the late Mr. *Oldham* in Verse.[358]

Jonson's reputation is preserved not only by the myriad of genres in which he wrote, but the multitude of genres, from elegy to life writing, that recognise his fame and talent. Evidence of canon-formation can be uncovered by examining the circles in which authors worked. No author whose works have been preserved and whose reputation has endured through to the present day wrote or published in isolation. Today, the most esteemed scholars network and consult with the works of their peers; more importantly, their works are further cited by future scholars. Eminent authors both in and outside of academia read, imitate and engage with both historical and contemporary literature. Jonson is one of the most prestigious dramatists in Langbaine's opinion; his substantial collection of plays and poems, in addition to his endeavours in publishing and disseminating his own works, still influence and entertain numerous readers and critics today precisely because of the impact he has had on both prose and verse readers and writers. Langbaine's work recognises that writers are not only to be esteemed for their work but for the praise and criticism their work has inspired. Langbaine's catalogues, including *An Account*, intended to represent a measure of quality and thereby award fame to the most eminent and original authors.

[358] Langbaine, sig.S7r.

In this section I have selected seven lives that I feel are representative of Langbaine's treatment of major dramatic authors in this work, focusing on poets who lived and worked from the mid-seventeenth century. While Langbaine endeavours, and in many ways succeeds, to provide an accurate and unbiased account of each author, the reputation of the individual authors colours the way in which he presents each life, which is of course most noticeable in his treatment of contemporary and near-contemporary authors. For this reason I first examine a selection of lives featuring authors whose reputations, both personal and literary, were favourable from the mid-seventeenth until the end of the century. Second, I analyse how Langbaine in particular treats major female dramatists. Finally, I examine the accounts of two authors that Langbaine handles critically, though through two vastly different methods. In surveying these lives I demonstrate Langbaine's contribution to establishing the legacy of renowned poets in the seventeenth century and later. His accounts display a clear interest in determining which authors are included in the emerging English literary canon, as well as demonstrates the development of the biographical genre, particularly the brief life, in this period. Langbaine's catalogue arranges the lives in alphabetical rather than chronological order, and so within each sub-section I similarly arrange the accounts in alphabetical order.

Poets of Renown: Cowley, Davenant and Denham

One of the most lauded poets in the entire collection is Abraham Cowley, whose biography I have already discussed in some detail in my discussion of Sprat and will be further discussed in the fifth chapter of this study. Whereas most of Langbaine's accounts are focused on the works and are brief in biographical detail, Cowley, who only had a small number of plays to his name, features prominently in the catalogue.

> I have generally hitherto contended my self with giving a succinct Account of each Authors Affairs of Life, or Family: and chose rather to enlarge on their Works: but

> Mr. *Cowley* was a Person of so great Merit and Esteem in the world when Living; and his Memory so fresh in the minds of Learned Men, that I am oblig'd not to pass him slightly over.[359]

As previously discussed in analysing Sprat's account of Cowley, the life of the poet was heavily shaped by the previous tradition of saints' lives. Therefore, biographers tended to be richer in detail with authors seen as not just talented but virtuous. Langbaine embellishes the tale of Cowley's inclination to poetry found previously in both Sprat's life and Cowley's *Essay of Myself.*

> His first Inclinations to Poetry, proceeded from his falling by chance on *Spencer's Fairy Queen,* (ᵍ) With which he was so infinitely delighted, and which by degrees so fill'd his head with the tinkling of the Rhime, and dance of the Numbers, that he had read him all over before he was Twelve years old, and was thus made a Poet as immediately as a Child is made an Eunuch…(in the opinion of a great Man now living, (ʰ) 'Whoever would do him right, should not only equal him to the principal Ancient Writers of our *own* Nation, but should also rank his Name amongst the Authors of the *true* Antiquity, the best of the Greeks and Romans.[360]

Again, Cowley's life is not as perfunctory as many of the lives in the collection. It is more animated and enriched by anecdotes and metaphors that highlight that Cowley is not meant to just be part of the catalogue but one of the highlights of it.

As discussed in the introduction to this section, Langbaine does not only canonise his dramatists but critiques and ranks other life writers throughout the collection. Langbaine dutifully cites Sprat as a primary source throughout the life, but he also refers to the work of

[359] Langbaine, sig.E7r.
[360] Langbaine, sig.E8r.

Winstanley and Phillips, in this case with regards to errors they have made in their own accounts of the author. When discussing works falsely attributed to the author Langbaine mentions a poem:

> father'd upon him by Mr. *Phillips* and Mr. *Winstanley*, which they call *Antonius and Mellida*, which in truth is not a Poem, but a Play in Two Parts, written by *John Marston*. Tho' I can give no Account how Mr. *Phillips* fell into this mistake, yet I know very well, that the little Poem he speaks of ([q]) is call'd *Constantia and Philetus*. As for Mr. *Winstanley*, he like blind Bayard boldly follows the former at a venture.[361]

Langbaine highlights the mistakes of his predecessors, and yet his treatments of Phillips and Winstanley are quite different. Langbaine conveys surprise that Phillips has made this mistake, implying that he would generally find Phillips to be a more knowledgeable and accurate biographer. However, Langbaine reveals that he is not at all astonished that Winstanley made this mistake, as Winstanley's work reveals him to be neither original nor careful, and that his work for the most part only copies Phillips' record. In this way Langbaine's work recommends Phillips more positively than Winstanley, and indirectly encourages his readership to read, reference, and ostensibly, to canonise the work of Phillips.

Langbaine is positive about Cowley's plays and other writings, but is less animated in discussing his work than his character. In addressing whether or not Cowley has plagiarised material, which is what Langbaine himself revealed as the purpose of this catalogue, he writes: 'It might be expected that I should give some Account either of the Plots of these Plays, or whence he has borrow'd: but let those that think so, be satisfied from the Famous *Denham's* Character, *That he is not an Author of that Stamp.*'[362] Langbaine does not argue that Cowley does not borrow as he is too talented to need to do so, but because he is of too

[361]Langbaine, sig.F4v.
[362] Langbaine, sig.F1v.

good a character to stoop to the theft of other's works, using Denham's reputable character to vouch for this claim. Langbaine's biographical work, like much life writing in this period, reveals that the most important quality of a writer is their character and reputation, and serves to promote him on these qualities alone. It is perhaps part of what eventually leads to a decline in Cowley's reputation, with too many of his contemporaries and commemorators focusing on canonising his person rather than his works. Nonetheless, it is important for those interested in the evolution of the English literary canon to acknowledge this aspect of seventeenth-century life writing, as it reveals how authors were commemorated, how their works were disseminated, and thus how their works were received into the eighteenth-century and after.

Similar to Langbaine's treatment of Cowley, William Davenant is also canonised on the basis of his personal reputation in addition to his literary talents. Langbaine begins his account as follows: A Person sufficiently known to all Lovers of Poetry, and One whose Works will preserve his Memory to Posterity.'[363] Davenant's life is richer in early details than many of the lives in the collection.

> He was Born in the City of *Oxford*, in the Parish of St. *Martins*…near the End of *February* in the year 1605…the Mercurial Son of a Saturnine Father, Mr. *John D'Avenant*, a Vinter by Profession…formerly of *Lincoln* College, and instructed in Logick and Physicks…tho' his Genius rather inclin'd him to walk in the flowry Fields of Poetry, in which he made a Prodigious discovery: advancing even without any Guide but his own Wit, and Ingenuity, as far as the *Herculean* Pillars…He was Poet *Laureat* to Two Kings…King *Charles* the First, the Martyr for, and King *Charles* the Second, the Restorer of the Protestant Religion.[364]

[363] Langbaine, sig.G5v.
[364] Langbaine, sig.G5v..

Unlike Cowley, whom Langbaine focuses on because of the merits of his reputation, Langbaine does a more dutiful job of portraying Davenant as a poet and playwright. Like Cowley, Davenant is revealed to have taken to poetry early, but Langbaine goes further to discuss his role as poet laureate throughout the life. His life of Davenant focuses almost entirely on his work as a writer. On *Gondibert* he records that: 'Nor was Mr. *Hobbs* the only Person that commended this Poem: for the first and second Books were usher'd into the world, by the Pens of two of our best Poets: *viz* Mr. *Waller*, and Mr. *Cowley*.' [365]
Where Langbaine reveals Denham's approval of Cowley's character, he reveals that poets like Thomas Hobbes, Edmund Waller, and Cowley approved of and promoted Davenant's works specifically. Langbaine's life of Davenant is more typical of his treatment of prominent authors in this collection, focused primarily on the works and providing a biography closer to modern expectations.

Langbaine offers a favourable account of Davenant's works. In discussing the tragi-comedy *Law against Lovers* Langbaine writes that it is 'made up of two Plays written by Mr. *Shakespeare*, *viz Measure for Measure*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*. Tho' not only the Characters, but the Language of the whole Play almost, be borrow'd from *Shakespeare*: yet where the Language is rough or obsolete, our Author has taken care to polish it' and Langbaine follows this analysis of the play by offering an excerpt from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and an excerpt from Davenant's play for comparison. Again, Langbaine's life of Cowley is atypical for not discussing Cowley's possible sources. In his account of Davenant, Langbaine reveals that he has borrowed, but demonstrates the difference between theft and creating something still original based on an earlier author's works. *Imitatio* is an important aspect of seventeenth-century writing, one that was discussed in greater detail in my previous chapter on criticism. Langbaine's accounts of plagiarism

[365] Langbaine, sig.G8v.

reveal an awareness of the distinction between imitatio and theft, and serves to elevate poets whose works successfully navigate the difference.

Finally, Langbaine honours Sir John Denham (1614/15-1669), poet and courtier, who was a royalist writer likely remembered best for his poem *Cooper's Hill* (1642), a descriptive poem of the Thames Valley near Egham reflecting on kingship during the onset of the Civil War.[366] He also wrote one play, a tragedy entitled *The Sophy* (1641), which is the basis for his inclusion in Langbaine's work. 'A Poet of the first Form, whose Virtue and Memory will ever be as dear to all Lovers of Poetry, as his Person was to Majesty it self; I mean, King *Charles* the first, and Second.'[367] As with Davenant, Langbaine provides ample detail about his birth and education, but also dedicates a significant portion of the life to discussing his affairs during the Civil War. Similar to his treatment of Cowley, Langbaine finds the particulars of his personal life worth mentioning, again demonstrating the influence of exemplar traditions that still shape the literary life in the seventeenth-century. These details also serve to embellish the life of a subject that Langbaine recognises as an important literary figure, yet not particularly known as a dramatist and thus unlikely to receive proper veneration in this catalogue without including more about his life and other works.

Langbaine provides a lengthy biography of Denham before moving onto his works, honouring the poet in mentioning that he 'was Buried the Twenty-third Instant at *Westminster*, amongst those Noble Poets, *Chaucer, Spencer,* and *Cowley*.'[368] Where Cowley was frequently extolled in this period by mention of his burial near Chaucer and Spencer, Langbaine endeavours to position Denham as one of the greatest writers by including him as a fourth addition to the list. On his works, it is revealed that 'his *Coopers Hill* is most commended' and, to quote Dryden, '*for the Majesty of the Stile, is, and ever will be, the exact Standard of good Writing*,' but Langbaine particularly praises him for his elegy for Cowley,

[366] Further biographical information on Denham can be found W. H. Kelliher, 'John Denham', *ODNB*.
[367] Langbaine, sig.H7v.
[368] Langbaine, sig.H8r.

which was previously inscribed into Langbaine's account of Cowley. He claims that 'His Elegy on Mr. *Cowley*…will make his Name famous to Posterity: and there wants nothing to eternise his Name, but a Pen equal to his, (if any such were to be found) to perform the like Friendly office to his *Manes*.'[369] As I discuss in my next chapter on commendatory verse, in the seventeenth-century authors were expected to commemorate in order to be commemorated.

Langbaine concludes Denham's life with a discussion of his single play, the tragedy *The Sophy*. Langbaine observes that:

> For the Plot of this Play, it is the same with that of *Baron's Mirza*…tho' differently handled by each Poet: and tho' it has been objected by Mr. *Baron*, that our Author kills *Abbas* in this Tragedy, who really surviv'd for some years after the Murther of his Son; it may be answer'd, That he did only Poetical Justice, and took no other Liberty than what is allow'd by *Horace*.[370]

Denham is praised by Langbaine for his 'poetical justice,' what modern readers might recognise as poetic or creative license, demonstrating that it is for his originality, even when making use of existing subject matter, that Denham deserves to be considered one of the greatest writers of the seventeenth century. Langbaine's final praise is to associate the writer with Horace, one of the most enduring classical figures in the seventeenth century and today. Langbaine's account of Denham, as well as of Davenant and Cowley, demonstrates that eminent poets were praised through a combination of factors. First, they were honoured for the merits in their literary works such as originality, language and representation of dramatic character. More importantly, however, poets were also worth remembering for their good character and reputation. This will be discussed further in analysing how Langbaine

[369] Langbaine, sig.H8v.
[370] Langbaine, sigs.H8v-I1r.

attempted to portray Dryden and Milton; however, from Sprat through to Langbaine it is evident that from the mid-to-late seventeenth century the life of the writer endeavoured to canonise poets for a number of qualities both literary and personal.

Female dramatists: Behn and Philips

Langbaine is notable for his recognition of female dramatists. As Terry observes, Phillips separated women into a separate section to be treated differently from male writers, and Winstanley ignored them entirely, but Langbaine incorporates them into his text alongside the male playwrights, which contributes greatly to ending the pattern of excluding female writers from the English literary canon.[371] While some aspects of his lives for female poets are still undoubtedly gendered, he demonstrates the importance of including women as part of the English dramatic canon. One of his earliest lives, on the basis of an alphabetical arrangement, is of Aphra Behn (1640-1689), a female poet praised particularly for the number of her plays, though few details about her life are known.[372] In Langbaine's account he refers to her as Astraea Behn, which was a moniker she used and which has been used by others to commemorate her.[373] Langbaine begins by promising that her 'Memory will be long fresh amongst the Lovers of Dramatick Poetry, as having been sufficiently Eminent not only for her Theatrical Performances, but several other Pieces both in Verse and Prose…almost equal to that of the incomparable *Orinda*, Madam Katherine Phillips.'[374] When discussing female poets Langbaine does tend to praise them in comparison to other female writers rather than their male contemporaries. However, for the most part Langbaine discusses Behn's works in a similar fashion to her male counterparts. In discussing her sources Langbaine reveals:

[371] Terry, p.260.
[372] For further biographical information about Aphra Behn see Janet Todd, 'Aphra Behn', *ODNB*.
[373] For example in the anonymous poem 'An Elegy Upon the Death of Mrs A. Behn, the Incomparable Astraea.' Astraea is a minor Greek goddess associated with virginity and justice.
[374] Langbaine, sig.B1r.

> [It] must be confest that she has borrow'd very much, not only from her own Country Men, but likewise from the French Poets, yet it may be said in her behalf, that she has often been forc'd to it through hast: and has borrow'd from others Stores, rather of Choice than for want of a fond of Wit of her own…Tis also to her Commendation, that whatever she borrows she improves for the better.[375]

Langbaine highlights that in some cases Behn borrows too hastily, but he also notes that she does not simply plagiarise but improve upon the sources she consults. This can be seen in Langbaine's treatment of her *Amorous Prince* (1671) which he reveals 'is founded on a Novel in the Romance of *Don Quixot*, call'd *The Curious Impertinent*' and that 'The *City Night-Cap* is founded on the same Story, tho' Mrs. *Behn* has much out-donne that Play, and improv'd the Novel it self.'[376] As with Davenant and Denham, Langbaine reveals the sources Behn consults but praises her for improving rather than simply copying what she has previously read. One of the few plays Langbaine is critical of is *Rover* (1677): he '[condemns] this ingenious Authoress; [as these plays] being so excellent in their Original, that 'tis pity they should have been alter'd.'[377] Throughout his account he frequently refers to Behn as ingenious, stressing her talent and originality, and criticising her in a few cases for haste or choosing an inappropriate source to recreate. None of her faults are ever attributed to her being a female author; *An Account* is one of the earliest collections of lives to treat its female subjects primarily as writers rather than women. This is significant, as it is Langbaine's historical and biographical work that helps leverage equal space for women within the emerging English literary canon.

Langbaine's account of Katherine Philips (1632-1664) reveals that the poet was viewed as one of the best, if not the most well-regarded, seventeenth-century female poets,

[375] Langbaine, sigs.B1r-v.
[376] Langbaine, sig.B2r.
[377] Langbaine, sig.B3r.

something that likely still holds true today. Terry reveals that Langbaine's account offers 'the earliest significant biographical coverage' of Philips, which is similarly the case for Behn.[378] Writing under the pen-name Orinda, she wrote and translated a number of poetic works and is known to have harboured royalist sympathies despite coming from a puritan family and her marriage to James Philips, an active Parliamentary supporter.[379]

> A Lady of that admirable Merit, and Reputation, that her Memory will be honour'd of all men, that are Favourers of Poetry. One, who not only has equall'd all that is reported of the Poetesses of Antiquity…but whose Merit has justly found her Admirers, amongst the greatest Poets of our Age..the Earls of *Orrey* and *Roscomman*, the Incomprable *Cowley*, and the Ingenious *Flatman*, with others…would not have employ'd their Pens in praise of the Excellent *Orinda*, had she not justly deserv'd their Elogies.[380]

While Langbaine frequently compares his female subjects to other female authors, for Philips there is no comparison amongst her female contemporaries, going so far as to say at the conclusion of the account that she has 'not left any of her Sex, her Equal in *Poetry*.'[381] He instead associates her with celebrated writers like Cowley. She is included in the collection for her translations of *Corneille*'s plays, *Horace* and *Pompey*, both tragedies. According to Langbaine, they have been composed 'with such exquisite Art and Judgment, that the Copies of each seem to transcend the Original.'[382] Langbaine's account endeavours to not just offer a biographical record of each English dramatist, but to compare and rank the writers, offering a

[378] Terry, p.263.
[379] See Warren Chernaik, 'Katherine Philips', *ODNB* and John Butler 'The Life of Katherine Philips', *Luminarium* (15 Apr 2003) <http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/philips/>.
[380] Langbaine, sig.Cc2r.
[381] Langbaine, sig.Cc3v.
[382] Langbaine, sig.Cc2v.

hierarchy of the most eminent poets. In his report of Philips, he reveals that the poet is the equal of some of the most popular and well-regarded English authors, male or female.

Of each play Langbaine reveals details of its staging at court before offering words of praise. While Langbaine's account of female poets is not free from gendered bias, he nonetheless still focuses his discussion primarily on their writing rather than simply praising beauty or virtue, which can be seen in the extracts he includes in the text. For instance, Langbaine extracts the following from Lord Orrery's praise of *Pompey*:

> *You English* Corneille's Pompey *with such*
>
> *Flame,*
>
> *That you both raise our wonder and his Fame;*
>
> *If he could read it, he like us would call*
>
> *The* Copy *greater than the Original:*
>
> *...*
>
> *That 'tis* Orinda's Work, *and but his Play.*[383]

As discussed, Langbaine frequently points out the distinction between simply stealing the work of another poet and imitating a great model. He selects Orrey's verse to again highlight this distinction, showing that Philips is praised not only as a translator but for her own originality and insight, improving the work of Corneille in anglicising *Pompey*. While there is no shortage of verse pieces praising Orinda as virtuous and beautiful, including Cowley's 'On *Orinda's* Poems' (1668), Langbaine provides an ample selection of verses praising her instead as a talented poet. From Lord Orrery's verses cited above to Denham's praise of

[383] Langbaine, sig.Cc3r, p.405

'Orinda's *Matchless* Muse,'[384] Langbaine ensures that female poets are immortalised and praised because of their literary prowess rather than attributes relating to their gender.

Langbaine's plagiaries and poets of ill-fame: treatment of Dryden and Milton

The longest entry in Langbaine's catalogue is his account of John Dryden, although it is certainly not a positive account. As Rodes reveals, 'Langbaine's prejudices against Dryden in *Momus* and their resulting intensification in the *Account* suggest a matrix of literature, alliances of taste, politics and religion interestingly characteristic of late seventeenth-century England.'[385] Langbaine's account of Dryden is one of the most negative in the collection, and yet clearly recognises Dryden's importance and influence given the amount of space Langbaine uses to debate the writer's views. Langbaine criticises Dryden particularly for his borrowing, and especially for his reliance on French writers, but his primary concern with Dryden is not his works but his opinions on some of the most distinguished earlier dramatists: Shakespeare, Fletcher and, most particularly, Jonson.

No discussion of Langbaine's *Account* could completely omit mentioning Dryden, but given the sheer length of the account, I focus only briefly on Langbaine's discussion of Dryden's plays. For a more detailed discussion of Dryden in Langbaine I refer to Kewes, who notes that it is within the life of Dryden that Langbaine elucidates that:

> only plots (ideas, themes, sentiments) can be legitimately borrowed, while the language (style, words, expression) has to be altered, if the work is not to degenerate into literary theft…[unlike *Momus*] the *Account* precisely locates the author's property right in the linguistic form of a literary work.[386]

[384] Langbaine, sig.Cc2v.
[385] Rodes, p.i.
[386] Kewes, 'View of Plagiaries', 2-18 (p.12)

Of course, as Kewes notes, it is difficult to always make the distinction between what is an acceptable borrowing and what is not, at times omitting authorial intention such as with Dryden's *All for Love or, The World Well Lost* (1678) imitating Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*.[387] Langbaine's arguments are frequently coloured by his personal biases and opinions with regards to Dryden. Nonetheless, Langbaine is attempting a project relatively unheard of in the seventeenth century, and his notes on Dryden still reveal insight into certain seventeenth-century tastes and expectations.

One of Dryden's supposed criticisms of Jonson was the dramatist's reliance on ancient poets. To this Langbaine responds first that Jonson 'has only follow'd the Pattern of the great Men of former Ages, *Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Plautus, Terence, Seneca*, &c. all which have imitated,' moreover, that Jonson acknowledges his borrowings whereas Dryden more often attempted to hide his borrowings from French poets.[388] While Langbaine allows Jonson's borrowings because he acknowledges them and they are traditional, Langbaine's sentiment also conveys a preference for borrowing from classical sources. Indeed, earlier in his account Langbaine claimed:

> But had he only extended his Conquests over the *French* Poets, I had not medled in this Affair…and as if the proscription of his Contemporaries Reputation, were not sufficient to satiate his implacable thirst after Fame, endeavouring to demolish the Statues and Monuments of his Ancestors, the Works of those his Illustrious predecessors, *Shakespeare*, *Fletcher*, and *Johnson.*[389]

Once again, it is not because of Dryden's borrowings that Langbaine particularly takes issue with the playwright. Rather, it is because he not only borrowed from English predecessors, but also spoke poorly of them. Langbaine primarily criticises Dryden for unfairly attacking

[387] Kewes, p.13
[388] Langbaine, sigs.K1r-v.
[389] Langbaine, sig.I3r.

other English playwrights, writers who at the end of the seventeenth-century were still esteemed as some of the best dramatists of the period. While Kewes attempts to show where Langbaine's assessment of Dryden as a plagiarist is unfounded, I argue that the more important aspect of Langbaine's life is the expectation of decorum toward eminent writers in the seventeenth century. This changes in the eighteenth century, and results in Dryden actually emerging as one of the most influential critics of the seventeenth century in retrospect. Yet it is clear that how authors were discussed and commemorated in the seventeenth century was reliant on personal reputation, and this is demonstrated most clearly in Langbaine's *Account* within his life of Dryden. Writers of brief lives in this period esteemed particular authors in part because of their character and the manner in which they critiqued and analysed other illustrious poets. This later influences the content of the English literary canon that emerges more concretely in the eighteenth and later centuries. With few exceptions, the majority of the seventeenth-century writers to be included in the literary canon were highly thought of during and shortly after their own lifetimes. Evidence of this regard can easily be found in the life writing, commendatory verse and criticism of their contemporaries and near contemporaries such as Langbaine.

I conclude my survey of Langbaine's lives with John Milton (1608-1674), one of the most enduring literary figures to emerge from the seventeenth century, although many of his contemporaries were often hostile to his literary works on the basis of his staunch Commonwealth politics.[390] Previously, Langbaine debated Dryden's critical opinions, with which he disagreed, and in part this may have been because Dryden was still living at the time. More probable, however, is that Dryden's personal politics did not directly conflict so glaringly with Langbaine's own, and he could discuss the author and his ideas in detail as a

[390] For further biographical information on Milton see Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: life, work, and thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), Paul Hammond & Blair Worden (eds), *John Milton: life, writing, reputation* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), and Annabel Patterson, 'Biography', in *Milton in Context* ed. by Stephen B. Dobranski (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).

writer rather than resent him on the basis of his political or moral character as is clearly the case with Milton. Pritchard reveals that the lapse of censorship after the Glorious Revolution contributed to more positive portrayals of the author, but most of these early lives of Milton tended to conceal the identity of the author, such as his nephew Edward Phillips' anonymous prefatory life ahead of his letters and John Toland's account affixed to Milton's prose works bearing only the writers initials.[391] Langbaine, like many other seventeenth-century writers, is critical of Milton's character, but unlike Dryden who is lambasted in a lengthy essay, Langbaine is brief in his attention to Milton. The entire biographical account of Milton's life and character are written as follows: 'An Author that liv'd in the Reign of King *Charles* the Martyr. Had his Principles been as good as his Parts, he had been an Excellent Person; but his demerits toward his Sovereign, has very much sullied his Reputation.'[392] The greatest disservice Langbaine can do to Milton is to ignore and bury him without fanfare, rather than meticulously pick apart his character. However, Langbaine cannot bring himself to exclude Milton from the collection entirely. First, because he endeavours to present an accurate collection of all playwrights no matter how minor, and a purposeful exclusion would be a step too far from his purpose of creating a useful and authoritative work. Second, and more importantly, Langbaine cannot deny that Milton's works were too high quality to ignore. Were Milton a terrible writer Langbaine perhaps could have excluded him without concern.

Treatment of Milton's work is short and terse, attempting to offer a perfunctory account that disassociates the works from the author, but cannot help but compliment Milton's poetic talent. Of *Samson Agonistes* Langbaine primarily concentrates on the form: ''tis writ in Blank Verse of ten Syllables, which the Author prefers to Rime. His Reasons are too long to be transcribed; but those who have the Curiosity, may read them at the Entrance of his *Paradice lost*. The *Chorus* is introduced after the *Greek* Manner,' and of this stylistic

[391] Pritchard, p.137.
[392] Langbaine, sig.Aa4r.

choice Langbaine refers to the author's own words, before concluding: 'In this the Author seems to follow *Sophocles*, whose Plays are not divided into Acts. I take this to be an Excellent Piece; and as an Argument of its Excellency, I have before taken Notice that Mr. *Dryden* has transcribed several Thoughts to his *Aurengzebe*.' Langbaine reveals Milton to be a poet of such quality that his contemporaries borrow from him. While Langbaine's account still shows evidence of being influenced by the exemplar life writing model, his treatment of figures like Milton do demonstrate a recognition of promoting authors on the quality of their work regardless of their character and personal reputation.

Langbaine's work may only receive minimal attention by critics today, but it is undoubtedly an important forerunner to the modern biography and there is significant evidence that the collection influenced ensuing biographical writing. Where the work of Phillips and Winstanley were viewed as poor first attempts, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* endured favourably after the seventeenth-century.[393] Jacob Giles in *The poetical register* (1719) acknowledges Langbaine as a precursor. While *Biographia Britannica* (1747) takes a corrective approach in surveying the biographical works that came earlier, commenting that Langbaine was 'too concise' in his accounts, the collection still reveals that Langbaine is the earliest of the life writers worth surveying. Overall, Langbaine's work provides crucial insight into how seventeenth-century English life writers presented the history and works of prominent English vernacular writers. Poets were ranked and praised in comparison with their contemporaries as well as ancient and continental models. Political, cultural and social factors also influenced how a poet would be commemorated, with writers like Cowley and Philips honoured for loyalty, morality and royalist allegiances during the Civil War through to the Restoration. Langbaine's work is arguably one of the best examples of seventeenth-century biographical writing, and is an important source in order to

[393] Terry notes that while Rene Welleck has hailed Winstanley's dictionary as the first inaugurative literary historical work, Winstanley borrows heavily from Phillips and Fuller and was not viewed with the same professionalism as Langbaine. See Terry, pp.77-8, 81-2.

understand the development of both the life writing genre in this period, as well as providing insight into how authors were ranked, celebrated and immortalised.

Conclusion

Life writing in the mid-seventeenth century, while in terms of content and style does not necessarily conform to modern expectations for the biographical genre, nonetheless can provide a plethora of insight into the aspects of a writer and their works that seventeenth-century authors, scholars and readers considered canonical, worthy of commemoration, preservation and further dissemination. Still heavily influenced by the exemplar tradition of Reformation life writing, rooted in medieval hagiography and even classical precursors such as Plutarch, the life of the poet in the seventeenth century demonstrates that personal reputation was a crucial attribute to whether and how a person would be commemorated. Yet, by the mid-seventeenth century a clear shift can be seen in how biographers commemorated literary subjects, increasing the attention paid not only to their character but specifically to their works. Sprat's consideration of Cowley's works in his account of the poet is one of the first instances of a synthesis between critical analysis and the biographical genre. Similarly, while perhaps classically biased and limited in the definition of plagiary, as Rhodes and Kewes have both noted, and focused on his vendetta with Dryden to the point of distraction, Langbaine's *Account* is one of the earliest biographical collections dedicated solely to championing literary figures, the first collection interested exclusively in the lives of playwrights. Langbaine offers a rich resource tracing both the history of early modern playwriting in England, as well as offering a record of the various life writers attempting to canonise English poets and dramatists in this period. He offers not only a reference source still useful today, but more importantly, a book that reveals seventeenth-century tastes and ideas about the characteristics of an author worthy of reading. It is for these reasons that I

argue further attention should be paid to the biographical genre when discussing the evolution of the English literary canon during the second half of the seventeenth century, not just as source for anecdotal evidence to colour modern biographies, but to uncover further evidence of seventeenth-century thinking about authorship and inclusion criteria that inevitably shape the formation of the English literary canon.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMENDATORY POETRY

Early modern commendatory poetry, including the dedicatory ode and funerary verse, is often included among the canonical oeuvre of prominent poets. For instance, Ben Jonson's epigrams and elegies, including epigram XXIII *To John Donne*, epigram LV *To Francis Beaumont* and particularly his elegy *To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr William Shakespeare* are some of his best known short poems. In spite of this, works of remembrance and praise are rarely thought to contribute to the formation of an English literary canon, or considered worth studying because they are capable of shedding light on ideas about authorial fame, influential literary genres, and the preservation of English writing. More often these poems are consulted when studying the entire works of an individual author, or else to analyse the immediate function these verses played: for example, Andrea Brady reads funerary elegies as 'ritualised utterances,' focusing on the social roles and rhetoric of grief performed by the elegy.[394] The few scholars who do examine commemorative writing in order to discuss concepts such as fame or an author's afterlife often concentrate their studies on a single author rather than analyse the genre.[395] Mid-seventeenth century elegies, epigrams, epitaphs, dedicatory odes and other types of commendatory verse are rarely read today as works capable of shaping and contributing to the emerging English literary canon. Yet, I argue that these verses, meant to eulogise, praise and commemorate in a particular

[394] Andrea Brady, *English Funerary Elegy in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.1. Recent studies on or including commendatory genres include David Kennedy, *The Elegy* (London: Routledge, 2007), *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy* ed. by Karen Weisman (Oxford: OUP, 2010) and *The Oxford Handbook of Donne* ed. by Jeanne Shami, Dennis Flynn and M. Thomas Hester (Oxford: OUP, 2011). These studies are often discussing subgenres including the elegy and the epigram in the context of form, the relationship to classical models, the expression of humanist ideas and the function of these poems in religious contexts, concentrating on either themes of love or grief.

[395] There are several studies of this sort, particularly those focusing on early-seventeenth century poets such as Ben Jonson, John Donne and Thomas Carew, including *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson* ed. by Stanley Stewart and Richard Harp (Cambridge: CUP, 2000); *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry, Donne to Marvell* ed. by Thomas N. Corns (Cambridge: CUP, 1983); Ian Donaldson, 'Perishing and Surviving: The Poetry of Donne and Johnson', *Essays in Criticism* 51:1 (2001), 68-85. Wayne A. Chandler, *Commendatory verse and authorship in the English Renaissance* (Lewiston, N.Y: Edwin Mellen, 2003) is one study that does consider the manner in which writers of commendatory verse might promote themselves through their poems, though focusing more specifically on book-selling and patronage.

moment, were also attempting to influence which works and authors would find eternal fame within the muse's garden.

Canon-formation relies on the preservation and circulation of works and authors deemed original, ground-breaking, featuring verse selections of unparalleled beauty or offering instructive value; for example during the mid-seventeenth century works demonstrating moral precepts were especially revered. No genre focuses on the theme of preservation more than commemorative verse. Originating within ancient Greek verse, the elegy and the epitaph are two of the oldest surviving forms of commemorative text.[396] In Ancient Greece and Rome the term 'elegy' originally referred to a poem composed in the elegiac metre, consisting of dactylic hexameter couplets followed by a quasi-pentameter. A wide variety of subjects were addressed in elegiac verse, although the root term ἔλεγος generally refers to a lament or song of mourning.[397] David Kennedy observes that the Greek elegos typically dealt with topics such as love and war in addition to death and loss.[398] Versatile flexibility remained a feature of the genre in English, with the medieval personal elegy meditating upon ethics and the human condition in addition to the subject of death, and the pastoral elegy meditating on death via an analogy of the idyllic rural life; one of the most famous examples of this is John Milton's *Lycidas* (1638).[399]

By the mid-seventeenth century, the elegy was most frequently associated with funerary verse. One reason for this might be the ease with which funerary poems were able to circulate in print. Trevor Ross argues that honouring the deceased was laudable enough to breach the usual courtly aversion to print, as well as offer a more fitting memorial because of

[396] From the medieval era to the present day the epitaph has played a crucial role in memorialising English poets. In the Western literary tradition, longer funeral elegies frequently concluded with a poetic epitaph, for example Thomas Carew's elegy for John Donne, fusing the two literary genres into one fictional setting. See Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.86.
[397] R.V. Young, 'The Elegy', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. by Dennis Flynn, M. Thomas Hester, and Jeanne Shami (Oxford: OUP, 2011), p.134.
[398] Kennedy, p.11.
[399] Dennis Kay, *Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1990), p.9.

print's implied permanence.[400] Commendatory verse valued particular authors and encouraged the preservation of a writer's memory, reputation and literary legacy. As Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle observe, genres such as the elegy and epitaph display 'the nature of the literary monument and the way in which the writings of living authors are posthumously transformed into monuments to those authors' lives and work'; the metaphor of a literal grave within many of these poems 'performs an act of monumentalization.'[401]

Commendatory poems honouring a living subject also play an active role in attempting to canonise writers and their works. Whereas a verse composition like the funeral elegy is often general, praising an author for the whole of their literary career, such as the verses written by Jonson and Milton for Shakespeare, a commendatory poem is usually written to grace a specific work, such as Andrew Marvell's '*On Mr.* Milton's *Paradise Lost*.' The most influential and enduring examples of mid-seventeenth-century commendatory poetry offer explicit commentary on how a particular work caters to contemporary literary tastes in subject matter or style; for example, Abraham Cowley's dedicatory poem for Davenant's *Gondibert* comments on the epic's thematic suitability for an English audience. As Franklin Williams observes, 'Whereas the custom of dedicating books had a continuous tradition from antiquity, commendatory verses are an innovation of the Renaissance humanists.'[402] So unlike the funeral elegy, which often attempted to emulate much older examples of verse both stylistically and thematically, dedicatory poems can offer more insight into contemporary tastes and notions about literature. It should be noted, of course, that not all commendatory verse was written to honour a living author or authors; many of the dedicatory verses included in the Beaumont and Fletcher folio (1647), for example, were

[400] Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon from the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century*, p.124

[401] Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, 'Monuments', in *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 3rd edn (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2004), p.55.

[402] See Franklin B. Williams for further information about the humanist development of the commendatory genre during the Renaissance and early seventeenth-century customs ('Commendatory Verses: The Rise of the Art of Puffing', *Studies in Bibliography* 19 (1966), 1-14).

written specifically for the collection, well after the death of both authors. Nonetheless, through a close reading of the memorial poems and commendatory poems written to honour a particular work or collection, we can uncover a great deal of evidence about seventeenth-century notions of authorship, the preservation of influential texts and the reputation of distinguished poets, as well as prevalent literary preferences in the period; for instance, preferences for a particular literary genre such as epic and drama, or opinions on form and style, such as debates over the relative merits of blank and rhymed verse. All of these revealed notions and preferences played an important role, often hidden, in influencing the shape, content and even concept of the emerging English literary canon in the mid-seventeenth century.

In this chapter I analyse a selection of commendatory verse written to honour and promote the reputation of particular authors and their works. For my purpose in this study, I use the term commendatory broadly to discuss poetry that venerates a particular author, generally posthumously, or one that celebrates a particular work, usually at or near the moment of its publication. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first I analyse poems by John Denham that posthumously commemorate their subjects, John Fletcher and Abraham Cowley. Denham's works shed light on the genre criteria according to which poets were praised, such as style and hard work, as well as creating authorial hierarchies which contributed to the nascent English literary canon, resulting in a ranked order of influential and popular poets. I also demonstrate that Denham's work was written to cement his own literary reputation, both by means of where and in what company the poems were presented, and by particular ideas expressed in his poems. The second section discusses the commemorative work of Abraham Cowley and Edmund Waller for Davenant's epic *Gondibert*. I take these two authors as a case study to demonstrate how poets in this period commemorated a living author, focusing primarily on a specific work rather than offering a general assessment of

Davenant's legacy, praising the poet and his work through a critique of his expressed thematic and stylistic conventions for the epic genre. Moreover, *Gondibert* offers an interesting example of poets collaborating with one another to praise and elevate their contemporaries and their own literary reputations, with Davenant, Cowley and Waller all working and writing together during their time in exile in France during the Civil War and Interregnum. Finally, I examine Dryden's praise of his contemporaries nearer the end of the century, demonstrating how he builds on earlier traditions, such as constructing authorial hierarchies, to concentrate on the significance of his own historical moment, and on the Restoration poets, rather than simply analyse English literary history more broadly. Additionally, Dryden demonstrates more overt efforts in the period to promote his own works and reputation in selecting which poets he praises, specifically his near contemporaries like Milton and Congreve, and how he does so, for example, by using his praise to highlight his own literary achievements such as his poet laureate status.

John Denham: posthumous commemoration

Commendatory verse was a prominent adornment of many seventeenth-century texts, especially single-author collections, particularly during the mid-seventeenth century when there was an increase in these publications such as those of John Milton, Richard Crashaw, and Abraham Cowley, all printed by Humphrey Moseley. The increase in printed collections contributed to the rise in commemorative writing, with Ross noting an increase in both elegy-writing and dedicatory odes beginning in the 1630s and persisting throughout the century.[403] Williams, in his essay on the art of puffing, describes these dedicatory pieces as works 'in which friends and well-wishers testify to the merits of favored authors, [a] familiar feature of the preliminary leaves of English books during the two centuries that span the Renaissance.'

[403] Ross, p.339, n.13.

He goes on to point out that current scholarship rarely perceives these verses to demonstrate 'intrinsic value as poetry…commonly searched for evidence on conditions of publication or for biographical clues on the contributor or his subject,' but argues that these poems are useful in studying Renaissance literary preferences, cultural circumstances and even on occasion serve as a form of literary criticism.[404] In this first section I analyse two commendatory poems written by John Denham, the first for John Fletcher (1647) and the second for Abraham Cowley (1668). These poems demonstrate mid-seventeenth century literary preferences, tastes and criticism, as well as highlight notions relevant to shaping and informing what we currently recognise as the English literary canon. This includes revealing ideas about authorship and posthumous fame, as well as demonstrating elements of literary competition between authors like Denham and Dryden and the English poets that they seek to immortalise.

In 1647 a folio edition of the plays of Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625) was published for Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley, entitled *Comedies and tragedies written by Francis Beaumont and Iohn Fletcher Gentlemen*.[405] The collection is prefaced by 34 commendatory poems applauding the authors and their works. The folio offers the first occasion in which all of these selections of verse appeared in print; however several indicate that they were written during the lifetime or nearer to the date of death of their subject and potentially had a manuscript circulation prior to their inclusion in the folio.[406] For example, the folio included a dedicatory ode for Beaumont written by Jonson, who himself died a decade before the folio's publication, and bears the subtitle 'then living,' suggesting that it was written much earlier in the century

[404] Franklin B. Williams, 'Commendatory Verses: The Rise of the Art of Puffing', *Studies in Bibliography* 19 (1996), 1-14 (p.1).
[405] The collection contained all plays not previously printed barring *The Wild-Goose chase* which was recovered and printed in 1652.
[406] A comprehensive search using *EEBO, ECCO* and the *ESTC* has not offered evidence of these poems appearing in print ahead of the Beaumont and Fetcher folio.

during Beaumont's own lifetime. Similarly, Richard Corbert's ode is subtitled 'then newly dead' and other poems in the collection, such as those by Aston Cokaine and John Earle, suggest that they were written as funeral elegies or to praise the dramatists more generally, rather than to preface the edition. Other poems were written specifically for the new edition, including those written by Thomas Stanley and Roger L'Estrange. It is among this mixed assortment of old and new poems that we find Denham's 'On Mr. JOHN FLETCHER'S Workes.'

Denham's dedicatory ode is written to esteem the dramatist and his works, placing him alongside the greatest playwrights of his age:

> *When* Johnson, Shakespeare, *and thy selfe did sit,*
> *And sway'd in the triumvirate of wit –*
> *Yet what from* Johnsons *oyle and sweat did flow,*
> *Or what more easie nature did bestow*
> *On* Shakespeares *gentler Muse, in thee full growne*
> *Their Graces both appeare.*[407]

The poem honours Fletcher's works by placing him in the company of Shakespeare and Jonson, the two most widely known Renaissance dramatists both during their lifetime and today. Tanya Caldwell notes that 'Denham was first to configure the relationship between the three preeminent English dramatists of the pre-Civil War period.'[408] Denham praises Jonson for 'oyle and sweat,' revealing the dramatist achieved greatness through hard labour and

[407] John Denham, 'On Mr. John Fletcher's Workes', in Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies* (London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley, 1647), sig.b1v, ll.29-34.
[408] Tanya Caldwell, 'John Dryden and John Denham', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 46:1 (2004), p.56.

study; conversely, Shakespeare is lauded for his natural talent.[409] However, Denham's ode declares that Fletcher benefited both from natural talent and his own effort, achieving a greatness that places him not just alongside Shakespeare and Jonson but above them. Denham concludes '*Twas this the Ancients meant, Nature and Skill/Are the two topps of their* Pernassus *Hill.*' The home of the muses in Greek mythology, Parnassus symbolised literary excellence in medieval and early modern European literary culture; securing a place atop the famous mountain represented the highest achievement of literary fame in the period.

One of the more remarkable features about Denham's poem is the prominence he gives Fletcher among the great English dramatists. In fact, the majority of the poems ornamenting the folio are either written or show a preference for Fletcher, despite the collection promising the unpublished work of Beaumont as well as Fletcher. Of the 34 poems prefacing the folio four pay tribute to both Beaumont and Fletcher, four are dedicated solely to Beaumont and the remaining 26 attend to Fletcher exclusively. This includes Thomas Stanley's 'On the Edition' and George Buck's 'To the desert of the Author in his most Ingenious Pieces,' both of which almost exclude Beaumont from the collection. Stanley's poem, written specifically for the edition, commemorated Fletcher only, and Buck's verse implies that the folio is valuable chiefly because of the work of Fletcher. Of the four pieces written for Beaumont, two are much shorter epitaphs and one, George Lisle Knight's 'To the memory of my most honoured kinsman, Mr. *Francis Beaumont*,' praises Beaumont and Fletcher equally:

> *Behold, here's* Fletcher *too! The World ne're knew*
>
> *Two Potent Witts co-operate till You;*
>
> *For still your fancies are so wov'n and knit,*

[409] The *OED* specifically includes this line of Denham's in the definition of oil: 'used in a lamp for (esp. nocturnal) study; (hence *allusively*) laborious study' in 'oil, n.1', *OED Online* (OUP, June 2016) [accessed July 2016].

'Twas Francis-Fletcher, *or* Iohn Beaumont *writ.*[410]

While Knight attempts to portray Beaumont and Fletcher as equals, the majority of the prefatory material, as well as the composition of the collection, suggest that this project esteems Fletcher above his contemporary.

Of the 34 plays and 1 masque that were published in the 1647 folio, the majority of the works belonged to Fletcher alone, or were collaborations between Fletcher and other dramatists, such as *The Maid in the Mill* which was a written by Fletcher and William Rowley, or the plays that were co-authored by Fletcher and Philip Massinger such as *The Spanish Curate* (performed 1622, published 1647), *The Custom of the Country* (1647) and *The Prophetess* (licensed 1622, published 1647).[411] There are various possible reasons why the folio is so heavily weighted toward works written by Fletcher. The first is pragmatic, for instance, Moseley might not have been able to use or locate what of Beaumont's works remained unpublished at this time. Similarly, Beaumont died much earlier than Fletcher, and while the folio appeared over two decades after the death of the latter man, he was nonetheless the nearer contemporary and potentially favoured for this reason. Finally, the decision potentially reflects that by the 1640s there was a contemporary preference for Fletcher, which the commendatory poetry certainly suggests. This preference persisted throughout the century, quite probably aided by this folio project. In 1691, over forty years after the publication of the first folio, Langbaine refers his readers that are searching for an account of the life and works of Beaumont to 'See *Fletcher*.'[412] Furthermore, John Dryden is still using this same juxtaposition of Shakespeare, Jonson and Fletcher in his commendatory

[410] George Lisle Knight, 'To the memory of my most honoured kinsman, Mr. *Francis Beaumont*', in Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies* (London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley, 1647), sig.b1r, ll.15-18.
[411] In regards to number of plays, Massinger is better represented than Beaumont in the 1647 folio, although some of Beaumont's inclusions are solely his, such as *The Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn* (performed 1613, 1647).
[412] Langbaine, sig.A7v.

ode that prefaces William Congreve's play *Double-Dealer* (1694), which I turn to in more detail later in this chapter. While Dryden routinely finds flaws in the style of his predecessors from the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, he still applauds Shakespeare, Jonson and Fletcher as three most pre-eminent English Renaissance dramatists.

Other authors in the Beaumont and Fletcher folio endeavour to create authorial hierarchies, such as George Buck praising Fletcher with 'Shakespeare, Chapman, *and applauded* Ben.' Similarly, examples of the authorial hierarchy can be found in earlier works, such as in Jonson's elegy for Shakespeare which elevates the bard by proclaiming '*I will not lodge thee by/*Chaucer, *or* Spencer, *or bid* Beaumont *lye*' and compares his fame to classical greats such as Aeschylus and Sophocles.[413] But Denham and other contributors of commendatory verse in the first Beaumont and Fletcher folio are innovative in that they offer some of the earliest commemorative poems that specifically attempt to canonise the writers on the basis of a particular genre, in this case drama. Denham's elegy endeavours to create a trifecta of the most accomplished Renaissance dramatists. Moreover, he also pushes to elevate Fletcher to the top position in the hierarchy, granting Shakespeare nature and grace, Jonson his honed craft and awarding Fletcher both of these achievements.

An Elegy for Cowley

The elegy, alongside other posthumous literary genres such as the epitaph and eulogy, offered one of the most straightforward methods in which to consecrate something that appears similar to the modern English literary canon; to build lists of the most eminent authors and shed light on the qualities that make a writer worthy to be memorialised as well as to have their works preserved and disseminated to future generations. As with other kinds of commendatory verse, elegies offered the opportunity to create literary hierarchies. In the

[413] Ben Jonson, 'To the memory of my beloued, The AVTHOR Mr. William Shakespeare: AND what he hath left vs', *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories & Tragedies* (London: Printed by Isaac Iaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623), ll.19-20, 33-34.

early seventeenth century, the majority of elegists creating lists of English worthies tended to begin with Chaucer, the most popular and enduring medieval poet, and Spenser. This allowed poets to confirm a history of English literary greatness by demonstrating that there is a group of prominent English authors and influential literary works, rather than just discussing individual authors in isolation. Poets commemorated by their peers and literary descendants in the seventeenth century gained personal fame and a celebrated literary reputation not only because of their individual works, but because they are shown to be part of something greater. As Ross has observed, the elegy was the preferred genre for rhetorical consecration because it offered the opportunity to provide evaluative closure on both the subject and their works. He claims that this is in spite of certain aspects of the genre working against literary posterity, such as the need to confront temporality, the inadequacy of language to express loss, and the expression of mourning risking self-mourning.[414] I agree that the elegy has proven one of the most apt genres for poetic consecration during the seventeenth century, yet because of rather than in spite of the very reasons that Ross claims work against the genre. As I discuss next in analysing Denham's poem for Cowley, confronting temporality, inadequacy and even self-mourning all contribute to creating something permanent precisely because the genre allows poets to overcome these sentiments, demonstrating that while life is transitory the afterlife for one's poetic reputation and works certainly does not need to be.

Denham's 'On Mr. Abraham Cowley: His Death and Burial Amongst the Ancient Poets' (1668), like his commendatory poem for Fletcher 20 years prior, commemorates the poet by placing him high up within an authorial hierarchy.

Old *Chaucer*, like the morning Star,

To us discovers day from far,

His light those Mists and Clouds dissolv'd,

[414] Ross, p.124

Which our dark Nation long involv'd;

But he descending to the shades,

Darkness again the Age invades.

Next (like *Aurora*) *Spencer* rose,

Whose purple blush the day foreshows;

The other three, with his own fires,

Phœbus, the Poets God, inspires;

By *Shakespeare's*, *Johnson's*, *Fletcher's* lines,

Our Stages lustre *Rome's* outshines.[415]

Denham begins with Chaucer, one of the oldest poets of relevance within the canon of English literature even today. Chaucer is deemed to have discovered or initiated the English vernacular tradition, yet with his demise a cultural darkening sets in until the age of Spenser, symbolised by Aurora the goddess of dawn, which revitalises the English language and nation. Spenser is an important figure in Denham's elegy not only because of the wide readership he still enjoyed during the seventeenth century, but specifically because of his influence on Cowley, hailed by the poet as the source of his own poetic inspiration. Denham provides no connecting link between Chaucer and Spenser; in fact the metaphor of darkness invading suggests that no great author is recognised to have existed in the two centuries that separate the poets. In tracing Dryden's predecessors, Tanya Caldwell notes how 'Denham's poem on Cowley also opens by exalting "Old Chaucer"…Dryden, who was ahead of his time in pointing to Chaucer's place in English letters, had a precedent in Denham.'[416] Several earlier poets such as Jonson included Chaucer in their hierarchies, but Caldwell makes a valid

[415] Sir John Denham, 'On Mr. Abraham Cowley: His Death and Burial Amongst the Ancient Poets', in *Poems and Translations with the Sophy* (London: Printed for H. Herringman, 1668), sig.G5r, ll.1-12.
[416] Tanya Caldwell, 'John Dryden and John Denham', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 46, 1 (2004), 49-72 (p.57).

argument in designating Denham's use of Chaucer as innovative. Denham goes further than merely including Chaucer; he begins a poem dedicated to another poet with him. By prominently featuring Chaucer in the elegy Denham hopes to shed light on a much older English literary history. As Theresa Krier reveals, from the Renaissance and through the seventeenth century, authors frequently expressed gratitude to Chaucer for his works '[constituting] one of the chief accounts of [an authentic literary] history, a major narrative thread of the formation of English letters.'[417] Chaucer's inclusion grants a measure of authority to the idea of great literature being produced in English on the basis that there is already a long history of strong English talent. Denham moves from establishing his hierarchy of eminent English poets to revealing how it is specifically their dramatists that have outshone the Roman playwrights; he concludes his complimentary list of English greatness by celebrating a victory over classical poets.

Denham pivots from debating the merits of classic models in comparison with English poets like Chaucer and Spenser, and poetic genres such as drama, to his principal subject, lamenting the loss of Cowley:

> But cursed be the fatal hour
> That pluckt the fairest, sweetest flower
> That in the Muses Garden grew,
> And amongst wither'd Lawrels threw.[418]

In honouring Cowley with classical allusions, Denham's poem recalls not only earlier seventeenth-century elegies, but specifically Cowley's own work. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, inspired by classical precedent, the muses' garden was frequently

[417] Theresa M. Krier, 'Introduction: Receive Chaucer in Renaissance England', in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp.1-20 (pp.1-2). Also see Richard Terry, *Poetry and the making of the English literary past, 1660-1781* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), pp.93-4.
[418] Sir John Denham, 'On Mr. Abraham Cowley: His Death and Burial Amongst the Ancient Poets', in *Poems and Translations with the Sophy* (London: Printed for H. Herringman, 1668), sig.G5v, ll.17-20.

depicted in commemorative verse as the origin of great poets. The garden performs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries what physical texts such as anthology collections and reading lists do today, representing a pantheon of the best contemporary poets. Greek and Roman artwork frequently depicted gardens as places of creativity and learning, with philosophers sermonising and poets penning great odes amongst the flowers. Seventeenth-century poets claiming muses and enclosed garden spaces for their own purposes are acknowledging their classical roots while simultaneously suggesting that their current poetry and authors signify improvement and innovation compared to past traditions.

Denham's elegy celebrates Cowley's achievements over his predecessors, praising both his originality and his learning.

> To him no Author was unknown,
>
> Yet what he wrote was all his own;
>
> …
>
> His English stream so pure did flow,
>
> And all that saw, and tasted, know.
>
> But for his Latin vein, so clear,
>
> Strong, full, and high doth appear,
>
> That were immortal *Virgil* here,
>
> Him, for his judge, he would not fear. [419]

Cowley took pride in his classical training, but Denham awards Cowley particular praise for his contribution to the English language. Caldwell contends that 'Denham's panegyrics on Abraham Cowley [offers] genuine praise rather than fulsome flattery…praise that draws

[419] Sir John Denham, 'On Mr. Abraham Cowley: His Death and Burial Amongst the Ancient Poets', in *Poems and Translations with the Sophy* (London: Printed for H. Herringman, 1668), sigs.G5v, G6v, ll.29-30, 55-60.

attention to English writers and promotes English traditions.'[420] Denham displays an active interest in perpetuating the values for which he praises Cowley, English writing and traditions being foremost among these. He claims that the Roman poet Virgil would have been unable to find a fault in Cowley's Latin, but offers up no English master to judge the purity of his vernacular hand. This suggests high regard for Cowley himself, that the quality of his English writing is so secure that he needs no critic. Moreover, the elegy suggests that Cowley's inventiveness serves as a model for future poets, highlighted by Denham's praise for the author's originality, 'what he wrote was all his own.' Denham's work clearly reveals an underlying 'desire to stabilize and consolidate English literary traditions at a time when there is little certainty about them.'[421] The elegy is filled with evidence of this desire, from his introductory hierarchy of English worthies to his carefully crafted lines about Cowley's use of language. Most notably, Denham neither proclaims Cowley the master of English nor offers an alternative poet in that position to parallel Virgil's place as Latin's judge. In not doing so Denham offers a strong incentive to motivate further English poets, because English still has room for new champions.

Early modern poets across Europe wrote in vernacular languages with increased frequency in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Moreover, they took the time to consider and justify doing so, primarily because their mother tongue provided opportunities that classical languages did not. The English language went hand in hand with the idea of national identity as well as future opportunities for literary inventiveness. The seventeenth century heralded numerous major publishing ventures. The 1611 Authorised Version of the King James Bible was a monumental work reflecting both the Reformation and new confidence in the English language; England was God's nation, English His language. By the time of Cowley and Denham, English had proven to be a language on the rise. This increase

[420] Tanya Caldwell, p.58.
[421] Tanya Caldwell, p.58.

in the perceived prestige of English vernacular writing contributed to commendatory verse like Denham's that praised English poetry and authors.

Denham's self-canonisation

Before moving on to my second case study, I conclude this analysis of Denham's commendatory verse with a discussion of how the poet endeavoured not only to increase the prestige of his subjects, Fletcher and Cowley, but also to vie for his own position atop Parnassus. Many prominent poets in the seventeenth century and earlier cut their literary teeth in the commemorative genre: for example, Chaucer and his *Book of the Duchess* and Spenser's celebrated *Astrophel* which honours Sidney. Commemorative writing does more than honour its literary subjects, and is a genre many writers strive to master before building their own literary reputation, suggesting that one must commemorate before one is worthy to be commemorated. Poets used works of dedication or memorial in order to honour their contemporaries in a variety of ways, such as building authorial and generic hierarchies, or defining the thematic and stylistic choices exemplified by the best English authors. However, they also endeavoured to showcase their own literary talent, subtly building themselves into the hierarchies of canonical figures with which they praised their contemporaries. Rarely were these claims overt, instead, authors implemented tropes like the modesty or inadequacy topos, alluding to their own careers within their poetry. The inadequacy topos is a device with a long history rooted in Christian humility and ancient rhetoric, commonly used in seventeenth-century funerary verse to declare fealty and express an inability to surpass predecessors.[422] It also served as an indirect declaration of an author's own promising talent; in using this modesty trope, poets encouraged their contemporaries and antecedents to impute praise upon and bring attention and fame to the poet who successfully utilised the topos. I end

[422] Ross, p.127.

this discussion by demonstrating some of the ways in which Denham's two elegies served to promote his own literary legacy.

Evidence of Denham's interest in increasing his own literary fame can be found within his commemorative writing. For example, his elegy for Cowley suggests themes like literary succession, building up one's own reputation and encouraging other poets to do the same. He bemoans that Cowley was taken from the world too soon: 'Time on their off-spring hath no power, / Nor fire, nor fate their Bays shall blast, / Nor Death's dark vail their day o'recast.'[423] Rather than concentrating his attention on the tragedy of Cowley's death, Denham encourages his reader to recognise Denham's role as one of Cowley's literary offspring. Time has no power to decrease the reputation and legacy of a poet as long as they have other poets who promote their memory, Denham himself being an obvious example of this. Declaring that literary inspiration and promise will continue in Cowley's absence suggests hope for further talent and innovation, implicitly raising Denham into Cowley's now vacant position of contemporary greatness.

This is also suggested in the section I previously discussed where Denham names Virgil as the master of Latin but offers no poet holding a similar standing in English. In not naming an English master Denham encourages other poets to vie for the title, but it also suggestively leaves this unnamed position open for himself. After *Cooper's Hill*, for which Denham is best known, his elegy for Cowley is considered one of his best and most beautiful works even today. The poem, filled with classical allusions and metaphors, while implicitly critiquing the state of English literature in his own contemporary moment, ostensibly commemorates Cowley, but indirectly aims to secure Denham's own place in the muse's garden.

[423] Sir John Denham, 'On Mr. Abraham Cowley', sig.G7v, ll.86-88.

When Denham first published his ode for Fletcher it appeared in the company of a number of poets, between major figures like William Cartwright, Ben Jonson and Edmund Waller, and more obscure names like H. Howard, Thomas Peyton and Aston Cockaine. As previously mentioned Denham's poem appeared between a selection of new and existing poems, even if none had yet circulated in print. Denham clearly would be aware of a sense of competition between competing elegists and commemorators, poets who endeavoured not just to honour Fletcher and Beaumont, but to stand out as writers capable of producing poetry with its own aesthetic merits. Denham later included the poem in his own *Poems and Translations, with the Sophy* (1668), printed by Herringman with the author's involvement and dedicatory address. Here he also included his elegy for Cowley, presenting both poems not just as commendatory praise intended to elevate a contemporary, but as part of his own collection of great works alongside his *Cooper's Hill* (1641) and tragedy *The Sophy* (1642). Of greater interest is the 1679 second edition of the Beaumont and Fletcher folio, also published by Herringman, which although after Denham's lifetime reveals admiration for the writer by his contemporaries. All of the commendatory verses in the 1679 edition are taken from the 1647 folio; however, of the 34 original poems only 11 remain part of the collection. This suggests that these commendatory pieces were viewed to be the work of the most admired poets, that they demonstrate greater literary talent, and in most cases likely both of these things. After two thirds of the original prefatory material was removed, Denham remained in close company alongside major figures like Edmund Waller, Ben Jonson, Richard Corbert, William Cartwright and Thomas Stanley. Moving from the centre of a large collection of commendatory verse, Denham is now second in the collection between Waller and Jonson. Denham included the commendatory verse as part of his personal pantheon of great works, and clearly contemporary recognition placed Denham's work alongside other prominent poets like Jonson and Waller. Denham clearly had an interest in promoting his

own career and literary reputation, and similarly, Denham's contemporaries clearly appreciated and considered his commemorative poems to be some of his best works.

Exalting *Gondibert*: the dedicatory odes of Cowley and Waller

Previously in this study I have discussed the contribution made by Davenant's *Preface to Gondibert* in shaping literary tastes and ideas about the epic genre. Conceived while exiled in Paris with many other royalist supporters, Davenant's epic became a topic of great discussion among English writers, drawing criticism from some, but praise from others including Thomas Hobbes, Abraham Cowley and Edmund Waller.[424] I turn in this section to works of praise written specifically for an individual work published by a living author. Cowley and Waller's praise for both Davenant and his epic shed light on mid-seventeenth century ideas, particularly royalist ideas, about the desired shape and content of an English epic. They function as works of criticism, endorsements of a contemporary poet and even examples of self-promotion.

The first celebratory verse prefacing *Gondibert* is Edmund Waller's, '*To Sir* William Davenant: *Upon his two first Books of* Gondibert, *finished before his voyage to* America,' which appears in 1650 ahead of Davenant's stand-alone prefatory discourse about the epic, which I discussed in my second chapter, as well as ahead of the incomplete poem in 1651. The verse is accompanied by a second dedicatory ode by Cowley, and an essay by Thomas Hobbes praising the epic. The poem is included with publications of Waller's works from 1664, alongside his commendatory verse for other major literary figures including Jonson, Fletcher and Suckling. However, according to Herringman who printed the collection, Waller was neither involved nor necessarily in support of the publication of his own works. Waller intended his ode to serve as praise and support for Davenant, although not wanting to produce

[424] Nethercot, *The Muse's Hannibal*, pp.94-5.

a collection does not suggest Waller did not consider the poem to be meaningful to his own oeuvre. In fact, his avoidance of involving himself in the publication of his commendatory works potentially suggests that he considers the dedicatory ode to remain connected to the work that it is praising, rather than buried somewhere in the middle of his own poetry. The ode intends to influence readers' opinions about the epic genre, something that can be achieved more convincingly alongside the epic poem it is discussing. This similarly can apply to his dedicatory odes for Davenant and Fletcher, the latter of which appeared in the Beaumont and Fletcher folio next to Denham's in both 1647 and 1679. For Waller, commendatory verse belongs alongside the work or poet he praises. These dedicatory odes have a specific context and are more effective when attached to the works and authors they were written to promote.

The poem begins with an evaluation of Davenant's overall strong character, suggesting that Waller esteems Davenant as an author, but also for his royalist conviction and service:

Thus the wise Nightingale that leaves her home,
Her native Wood, when storms and winter come,
Pursuing constantly the cheerful Spring
To forreign Groves do's her old Musick bring:
The drooping Hebrews *banish'd Harps unstrung*
At Babylon, *upon the willows hung;*
Yours sounds aloud, and tell's us you excell
No lesse in courage; then in singing well;
Whilst unconcern'd you let your Countrey know,
They have impov'rished themselves, not you;
Who with the Muses help can mock those fates

Which threaten Kingdoms, & disorder States.[425]

Waller portrays Davenant as the nightingale, known for its beautiful song, but often portrayed in English poetry to convey themes of melancholy and joy, love and loss, which likely hints at the royalist author's virtue but also the adversity he faced in exile. In writing the epic, Davenant ventures into foreign territory, having never attempted an epic, but he is also at the time physically banished to a foreign country. In writing *Gondibert* Davenant blends English and French influences, as well as mixes epic traditions with his more familiar dramatic style. Waller praises him specifically for this, proclaiming Davenant is both bold in the attempt and a talented poet. It is his countrymen's own folly if they do not appreciate his contribution, but again this doubles as praising Davenant for his contribution to his kingdom as well as his prowess in writing poetry. This is significant because Waller is playing to the mid-seventeenth century expectation that a good poet will also be a good and virtuous person, an expectation discussed above in my third chapter on the life writing genre. Waller slowly builds to praising *Gondibert* by first praising Davenant, but he balances praise for his literary talent with praise for the exiled, royalist supporter.

After establishing Davenant's character, Waller then turns to specifically praising *Gondibert*.

Now to thy matchlesse Book,

Wherein those few that can with judgment look,

May find old Love in pure fresh Language told,

Like new stampt Coin made out of Angel gold.

Such truth in Love as th'antick world did know,

In such a style as Courts may boast of now.

[425] Edmund Waller, in Davenant, *A Discourse upon Gondibert* (1650), sig.A2r, ll.1-12

Which no bold tales of Gods or Monsters swell,

But humane Passions, such as with us dwell.

Man is thy theme, his Virtue or his Rage

Drawn to the life in each elaborate Page.

Mars *nor* Bellona *are not named here;*

But such a Gondibert *as both might fear*.[426]

Waller praises *Gondibert* as a project for the elite: only the small few exercising poetic judgment will be able to appreciate the true value of the epic. Davenant is praised for invigorating the epic genre, an old love, with fresh language – both praise for the English language as well as possible praise for Davenant introducing elements of dramatic language and style to the heroic genre. He uses the metaphor of 'angel-gold,' a term that references the higher value guinea, to again praise *Gondibert* as exclusive and valuable.[427] Similar to Waller's attempt to appeal to royalist sympathies in his assessment of Davenant's character, the line 'a stile as Courts may boast of now' suggests that the ancient epic has by Davenant been transformed into something specifically to cater to English, courtly tastes. Like Cowley, whom I discuss next, Waller praises Davenant for his attention to mortal themes, removing the mythological deities and monsters to focus on human passions. In spite of this Waller promises *Gondibert* in magnitude is still on the grand scale of previous epics that relied on these more mythological themes, alluded to by his claim that *Gondibert* is capable of striking fear into Mars and Bellona, the Roman god and goddess of war. Alongside Davenant's preface, and in combination with Cowley's ode, Waller endeavours to influence readers to desire writing that in both style and theme is more English, aiming to encourage cultural tastes to reflect social and political, specifically courtly, values.

[426] Waller, sig.A2v, ll.23-34.
[427] See angel-gold in 'angel, n.' *OED Online* (OUP, June 2016).

Cowley's ode followed Waller's, bearing the same title, prefacing both Davenant's 1650 *Discourse* as well as the 1651 edition of the incomplete poem. Cowley later included the ode in the *Miscellanies* section of his 1656 collection *Poems*, where it remained in all subsequent editions of Cowley's works, which were published frequently throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as in the 1905 A.R. Waller edition of Cowley's *Poems*, the most recent publication of the entirety of the collection.

The verse begins with a consideration of the thematic elements typically present in heroic verse, both classical, continental and English.

Methinks Heroick Poesie till now
Like some fantastic Fairy land did show,
Gods, Devils, Nymphs, Witches & Giants race,
And all but man in mans best work had place.
Thou like some worthy Knight, with sacred Arms
Dost drive the Monsters thence, and end the Charms:
Instead of those dost Men *and manners plant,*
The things w^ch^ that rich soil did chiefly want.
But even thy Mortals *do their* Gods *excell.*
Taught by the Muse to Fight & Love so well.[428]

Cowley laments that the epic genre, regarded in the seventeenth century and earlier periods as one the highest forms of writing, has typically been preoccupied with fantastical themes, ancient mythology and monsters, to the exclusion of the concerns of modern mortal men and their own Christian deity. Where Waller touches on this idea Cowley hammers it home, focusing the majority of the poem on praising *Gondibert*'s choice of theme. This was of

[428] Abraham Cowley, in Davenant, *A Discourse upon Gondibert* (1650), sig.A3r, ll.1-10.

personal significance to Cowley who endeavored to write his own epic on the life of David. He also praises Davenant for his implementation and treatment of the topic, particularly because the mortal subject matter of the poem excels the excess found in the portrayal of myth in other epics.

> *With shame methinks, great* Italy *must see*
> *Her Conquerours call'd to life again by thee.*
> *Cal'd by such powerful Arts that ancient Rome*
> *May blush no lesse to see her Wit o'recome.*[429]

Cowley also esteems Davenant by praising his English epic for surpassing the Italian epics, such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1320) and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516). He recalls the Roman epic, considered in this period the pinnacle of heroic writing with the works of figures like Virgil (70-19BC), Ovid (43BC-18AD) and Lucan (39-65AD), and its influence on English poetic writing. He then declares that it is Davenant who inherits the Roman legacy for great wit and verse, triumphing over the continental competition. Moreover, even ancient Rome has been overcome and bested by Davenant's epic, both for his more human themes and strength of verse.

Cowley's self-promotion and use of tropes like the inadequacy topos tended toward subtlety even in his elegiac writing for eminent poets like Crashaw and Philips, using metaphors like the monument or exalting his contemporaries to such heights that he might hope to be remembered in their shadow. However, in praising *Gondibert* Cowley does not insert himself directly into the poem, as in this case he strives to honour a living contemporary and does not need to attempt to appear modest in trying to place himself on par with Davenant. However, Cowley's praise for Davenant is clearly also a validation of his

[429] Cowley, sig.A3v, ll.22-25.

own epic writing, and by praising *Gondibert* he also endeavours to praise his own planned *Davideis.* When Cowley published *Davideis* in 1656 the epic, like Davenant's *Gondibert,* would appear in an incomplete form. However, having taken stock of the derision Davenant suffered for publishing an incomplete poem with too much fanfare, Cowley was more careful about how he presented his own work. I discuss this further in my final chapter centred on Cowley's own literary career. Cowley including his praise for Davenant's epic within *Poems* suggests that his critical analysis of the epic genre and his admiration of *Gondibert*'s style and themes might also serve as an introduction to Cowley's own *Davideis* which shares many of the same attributes this ode applauds. Throughout the poem Cowley does not overtly praise anything specific to *Gondibert* that does not similarly apply to *Davideis,* which also features a mortal hero presented for an English royalist audience. Cowley's poem is meant to praise and support his friend, but it is also timely in that it appears shortly before Cowley prepares his own epic for the press, something he probably discussed with Davenant while the two poets worked together in exile. While letters between Davenant and Cowley are not available, Davenant is mentioned in surviving letters written from Cowley to Henry Bennet.[430] Similarly, Nethercot reveals that *Gondibert* was a topic of discussion between Davenant and Cowley prior to his travels.[431] Cowley's ode performs the simultaneous functions of praising the work of a fellow poet, but also critiquing the epic genre in a way that would benefit his own epic ambitions.

John Dryden: Praising greatness, particularly his own

[430] For example, the first mention requests an account of the poet and his voyage to America, the second discusses Davenant's imprisonment in the Isle of Wight. Nethercot reveals that these letters are often only considered for their political and diplomatic nature, yet argues a personal element can be found. Indeed, they reveal much about the relationship between Cowley and Bennet, but in this case they also provide evidence of some of the people Cowley cared about and had been close with while in exile, in this case Davenant. See Thomas Brown of Shifnal, *Miscellanea Aulica: or, A Collection of State-Treatises, never before publish'd* (London, 1702), sigs.K1v-L8v, pp.130-160, and Author H. Nethercot, 'The Letters of Abraham Cowley', *Modern Language Notes* 43:6 (June 1928), pp.369-375 (372).
[431] Nethercot, *Muse's Hannibal*, p.95

This final section evaluates the manner in which Dryden's praise for his contemporaries, both living and dead, serves not only to shape and influence English literary tastes, for example about the dramatic genre, but also to identify the most talented and enduring writers of the second half of the seventeenth century. This of course includes Dryden himself, who whether praising the living or the dead always kept his own reputation at the forefront of his thoughts and writing.

By 1688 *Paradise Lost* had reached its fourth edition, which included a frontispiece inscribed with an epigram by Dryden. The epigram format is brief, yet can contribute to shaping authorial reputation and the reception of a work in a number of ways. First, the epigram is associated with the physical monument, often inscribed on tombs and conveying a sense of permanence.[432] Dryden's epigram functions as poetry but also recalls the epigram's original purpose as a memorial marker, engraved under Milton's portrait as an adornment to his text.

> *Three* Poets, *in three distant* Ages *born,*
> Greece, Italy, *and* England *did adorn.*
> *The* First *in loftiness of thought Surpass'd;*
> *The* Next *in Majesty; in both the* Last.
> *The force of* Nature *cou'd no farther goe:*
> *To make a* Third *she joynd the former two.*[433]

Dryden links Milton to Homer and Virgil, the most prominent Greek and Roman epic poets in the seventeenth-century and currently. Dryden enshrines Milton with classical predecessors because there are no English epics that can compare to Milton's *Paradise Lost*,

[432] 'Epigrams, in a small space, transmit the grammar of death, having originated (their etymology suggests: epigraphein [Gk.] -> epigramma [Lat.] -> epigramme [Old Fr.]: 'upon' + 'to write') as inscriptions on tombs or buildings, encomia, or memorial markings…the two main traditions of classical epigram–Greek and Latin–[were] widely imitated by English poets in the sixteenth century' (see M. Thomas Hester, 'The Epigram', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. by Dennis Flynn, M. Thomas Hester, and Jeanne Shami (Oxford: OUP, 2011), pp.105-7).

[433] John Dryden, in John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Printed by Miles Flesher for Jacob Tonson, 1688).

and even Homer and Virgil are each only half of Milton's talent. Homer offers imagination and Virgil a refined style, yet Milton not only combines both their strengths but sets an insurmountable bar, suggesting no poet has or can ever achieve more than Milton has with this poem.

Dryden's grandiose claim of distant ages also suggests an interest in literary permanence. D. W. Odell discusses the use of the term 'distant' in the first line, arguing against Marcie Frank's assumption that distance implies an age between Milton and Dryden, in addition to the space between Homer, Virgil and Milton.[434] Odell offers variant readings, including suggesting 'distant' is Dryden's attempt to separate Milton's classical, and perhaps old-fashioned style from Dryden's 'new-fashioned opera.'[435] However, he also focuses on how the three epic poets are both 'distant' and 'not distant' from one another:

> [The three are distant] as humans who are poets [distant] from each other in time, country, and biography. As poets only, they are "distant" from each other, they differ, in such literary elements as language, versification, concepts of heroism, and theology. However, they are not "distant" from each other in the sense Dryden emphasizes, that each treated superbly what he regarded as heroic subject in high style…That is what the "Epigram" stresses, what the three possessed in common as poets.[436]

Odell suggests reading Dryden's use of the term 'distant' in order to realise the comparisons between the poets. However, given the epigram format, I think the most useful analysis of distant ages is to consider that Dryden intended for the epigram, engraved at the forefront of a popular text adorned with sculptures, to be more permanent than ephemeral. Milton may have

[434] Marcie Frank, *Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism: From Dryden to Manley* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).
[435] D.W. Odell, 'Dryden's Epigram on Milton: A New Reading Questioned', *The Explicator* 68:3 (2010), 159-161 (p.160).
[436] Odell, 161

only died 14 years prior to the publication of the epigram, but Dryden intended the lines as a permanent monument, to honour a poet fated to be read far enough into the future to belong to a distant age.

Dryden's epigram also works to cement his own position as a chief poet worthy to stand with Milton, and by virtue Virgil and Homer. Dryden wrote an opera, *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man*, entered in the Stationers' Register in 1674 by Herringman, which was inspired by and meant to serve as a tribute to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, although its critics apparently included Milton himself, as well as Andrew Marvell.[437] In praising Milton in his '*On Mr.* Milton's *Paradise Lost*,' Marvell imbeds criticism of Dryden's *State of Innocence* into the verse:

> Or if a Work so infinite he spann'd,
> Jealous I was that some less skilful hand
> (Such as disquiet always what is well,
> And by ill imitating would excel)
> Might hence presume the whole Creations day
> To change in Scenes, and show it in a Play.[438]

Marvell accuses Dryden of doing Milton a disservice in rewriting epic as opera, moreover, it was an endeavour he should not have made as he was less skilful a poet than the original, and an ill imitation was inevitable. While *Paradise Lost* initially appeared unadorned, from 1674 onward it featured commemorative poetry in Latin by Samuel Barrow and the English ode by Marvell. The 1688 edition is the first time these commemorative pieces are removed, replaced with sculptures and including a frontispiece on which Dryden's verse is inscribed.

[437] George B. Churchill, 'The Relation of Dryden's "State of Innocence" to Milton's "Paradise Lost" and Wycherley's "Plain Dealer": An Inquiry into Dates', *Modern Philology* 4:2 (October 1906), 382.
[438] Andrew Marvell, '*On Mr.* Milton's *Paradise Lost*', in John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Printed by S. Simmons, 1674), sig.A3r, ll.17-22.

As suggested in my first section on Denham's commemoration of Fletcher, odes of praise celebrated esteemed authors, but they also enabled poets to enter into a competition with the verse tributes of other poets. In this case it is the publisher, Jacob Tonson (1655-1736), who probably made the decision to solicit Dryden's epigram and remove Marvell's commendatory poem. Having previously been denounced by Marvell for trying to emulate *Paradise Lost*, Dryden probably appreciated what appears to be a literal displacement of Marvell on the written page as Milton's primary commemorator. Moreover, Dryden's working relationship with Tonson began in 1679, and by 1684 Tonson was the chief publisher of Dryden's works.[439] In addition to a professional relationship, an intimate friendship can be found in the letters exchanged between the two men between the 1680s and the end of Dryden's life.[440] Given this, it is possible, although at this time not provable, that Dryden may have had a more active role in placing his own work at the front of the newest edition of *Paradise Lost*. Regardless, it is clear that Tonson favoured Dryden over Marvell and Barrow in determining which poet to showcase alongside Milton's highly regarded poem.

Six years after his epigram for Milton appeared under the frontispiece for the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*, Dryden wrote a dedicatory poem to celebrate the publication of William Congreve's *Double Dealer* (1694). In this poem Dryden is more overt in his own claim for fame, alongside promoting the reputation of his contemporary dramatic poets. As with Denham, Dryden's praise of Congreve relies on creating authorial hierarchies of eminent English poets.

In easie Dialogue is Fletcher's *Praise:*

[439] John Barnard, 'Creating an English literary canon, 1679-1720: Jacob Tonson, Dryden and Congreve', in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book* ed. by Simon Eliot, Andrew Nash and Ian Willison (London: British Library, 2007), p. 308.

[440] See Stephen Bernard (ed.), *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons* (Oxford: OUP, 2015). Letters include discussions of Dryden's work, for example in the fourteenth letter where Dryden reveals his progress with translating Ovid. Similarly, evidence of a friendship can be found in the sixth letter where Dryden thanks Tonson for a gift of two melons as well as reveals a friendship between the publisher and Dryden's own son Charles.

He mov'd the mind, but had not power to raise.

Great Johnson *did by strength of Judgment please:*

Yet doubling Fletcher*'s Force, he wants his Ease.*

In differing Tallents both adorn'd their Age;

One for the Study, t'other for the Stage.

But both to Congreve *justly shall submit,*

One match'd in Judgment, both o'er-match'd in Wit.

In Him all Beauties of this Age we see;

Etherege *his Courtship,* Southern's *Purity;*

The Satire, Wit and Strength of Manly Witcherly.

All this in blooming Youth you have Atchiev'd;

Nor are your foil'd Contemporaries griev'd

So much the Sweetness of your manners move,

We cannot envy you because we Love.

…

This is Your Portion; this Your Native Store;

Heav'n that but once was Prodigal before,

To Shakespeare *gave as much; she cou'd not give him more.*[441]

Dryden uses two contrasting authorial hierarchies in order to praise Congreve's dramatic talent. The first is the Renaissance triumvirate of Shakespeare, Jonson and Fletcher used earlier in the century by Denham, and the second is Dryden's newly composed list of Restoration era dramatists, George Etherege (1626-1692), Thomas Southerne (1660-1746) and William Wycherley (1641-1716). While Dryden's work frequently focused on honouring

[441] John Dryden, 'To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve, On His COMEDY, call'd, The Double-Dealer', in William Congreve, *The Double-Dealer, A Comedy* (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1694), sig.a2v-a3r, ll.17-34, 61-64.

his contemporaries rather than predecessors, Dryden's inclusion of Denham's hierarchy likely intends to demonstrate an acknowledgment of the models he followed. In 1692, prefacing his translation of Juvenal's satires, Dryden prefixes his essay 'A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire' at the end of which he discusses his debts to Denham and Waller.

> Twenty years ago, in a Conversation which I had with that Noble Wit of *Scotland*, Sir *George Mackenzy*: He asked me why I did not imitate in my Verses, the turns of Mr. *Waller*, and Sir *John Denham*; of which, he repeated many to me: I had often read with pleasure, and with some profit, those two Fathers of our *English* poetry…But this hint, thus seasonably given me, first made me sensible of my own wants, and brought me afterwards to seek for the supply of them in other *English* Authors.[442]

In the essay Dryden takes a moment to reflect on the importance of recognising earlier talent, particularly among his own English brethren, declaring Denham and Waller the patriarchs of English poetry, not just generally, but rather of 'our *English* poetry,' the patriarchs of the genres, styles of writing and themes prevalent at this point near the end of the seventeenth century. Discussing this moment in *A Discourse of Satire* and Dryden's conversation with Sir George Mackenzie, Tanya Caldwell notes that while it is curious that Dryden labels Denham and Waller as the fathers of English poetry given Denham's much smaller reputation today, an assessment of Dryden's works does reveal the author's debt to the earlier poet, both in his critical and political ideals, even if this debt is rarely acknowledged.[443] Here we can see that in many ways Dryden's commendatory praise of Congreve continues the conversation started in the 'Discourse of Satire,' and demonstrates Dryden's at least subtle acknowledgment of his debt to Denham. However, Dryden does not simply borrow Denham's assessment of

[442] John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. by Edward N. Hooker, H.T. Swedenberg, et al., 20 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956-2000), vol. 4, p.84.
[443] Caldwell, p.49.

Fletcher, Jonson and Shakespeare as the most pre-eminent Renaissance dramatists, but modernises it to fit his own purposes at a moment fifty years after the one in which Denham was writing.

Denham honoured the most eminent Renaissance dramatists in the middle of the Civil War, five years after the closure of the public theatre, and therefore the best examples of English drama required readers to seek out writers who had died between ten and thirty years prior. Dryden, nearing the close of the century, was writing thirty years into the Restoration which had demonstrated a renewed interest and fervour for the production of English plays. While some authors still wrote or revised plays during the Interregnum, the gap in which the theatre was closed, and the shift in literary themes to celebrate ideas of honour and heroism after the reinstatement of the monarchy, inevitably meant that Dryden had both a longer history of plays to consider than Denham, as well as new aesthetic and topical qualities to appraise. Where Denham appreciated Jonson for his tenacity, Shakespeare for his raw talent and Fletcher for emulating the great qualities of the other two, Dryden honours his contemporaries for themes more suited to the Restoration and newly restored monarchy. Etherege is praised for his courtly style of writing, Southerne for his purity – potentially suggesting morality, but also possibly a pure English style of writing uninfluenced by foreign tastes and standards – and Wycherley for his talent for satirical writing, a genre on the rise from the Restoration onward. It is of course his subject, Congreve, that demonstrates the best qualities shown in the works of all the Restoration poets. The earlier dramatists Jonson and Fletcher are praised, and Shakespeare is acknowledged as once holding the position as the muse's favourite. Yet they are also criticised: for example Jonson is praised for his wit and strong judgment, but his writing style is not as easy and natural as Fletcher's. It is Dryden's own contemporaries who have refined the work of their predecessors.

The beginning of the poem already acknowledges the conclusion that Dryden will reach:

> *Well then; the promis'd hour is come at last;*
> *The present Age of Wit obscures the past:*
> *Strong were our Syres; and as they Fought they Writ,*
> *Conquring with force of Arms, and dint of Wit;*
> *Theirs was the Gyant Race, before the Flood;*
> *And thus, when* Charles *Return'd, our Empire stood*.[444]

The return of Charles II ushered in a new age of English drama. While their sires, the pre-Restoration dramatists, possessed a literary strength and talent for which they deserved recognition, they also had their faults and were inevitably intended to be overcome. However, Dryden does not suggest that writers are always meant to be overthrown by their successors. He refers to drama during his current moment as the promised hour, and this implies that Restoration dramatists have not only have surpassed the Renaissance dramatists, but that they have achieved a pinnacle moment, that Dryden and his contemporaries will endure through the ages having achieved perfection. Dryden honours Congreve by placing him not only amongst these great poets but above them: '*In Him all Beauties of this Age we see*.' In the early-seventeenth century authorial hierarchies contained classical, and on occasion continental, literary figures as frequently as they contained English legacies. By the end of the seventeenth century English commemorative writing would display a greater interest in honouring their contemporaries and nation. The publishing of *Luctus Britannici* (1700) at the close of the seventeenth century reflects over a century of Britain's literary lineage; several poets honoured Dryden by placing him in the company of his illustrious English forerunners

[444] John Dryden, 'To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve, On His COMEDY, call'd The Double-Dealer', in William Congreve, *The Double-Dealer* (London, Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1694), sig.a2, ll.1-6.

from Chaucer and Spenser, to Shakespeare and Jonson, and his own nearer contemporaries like Cowley and Denham.[445]

Finally, I conclude this section by examining the ways in which Dryden endeavoured to elevate his own prestige through commemorating contemporaries. Authors in this period can and did perpetuate their own fame and preservation by placing themselves on even footing with those they praise. John Oldham died at the age of thirty, still only at the beginning of his career as a satirist. Rather than commemorating Oldham for his work, Dryden aims to ensure his contemporary's literary reputation by commemorating their friendship.

> Farewel, too little and too lately known,
> Whom I began to think and call my own;
> For sure our Souls were near ally'd; and thine
> Cast in the same Poetick mould with mine.[446]

Dryden uses his own literary reputation to elevate Oldham's, casting the young poet into 'the same Poetick mould with mine.' Dryden, trusting in his own reputation as a poet, attempts to preserve Oldham's memory by linking their careers and work together. However, while the lines convey an offer of friendship, they also highlight Dryden's own successes and reputation. The most notable quality Oldham has to offer is his association and relationship to Dryden. This approach is even more overt in his commendatory poem for Congreve:

> *Oh that your Brows my Lawrel had sustain'd*
> *Well had I been Depos'd, if You had reign'd!*
> *The Father had descended for the Son;*

[445] Henry Playford, *Luctus Britannici, or, the Tears of the British Muses for the Death of John Dryden, Esq.* (London: Printed for Henry Playford and Abel Roper, 1700).
[446] John Dryden, 'To the Memory of Mr. Oldham', in *Remains of Mr. John Oldham in Verse and Prose* (London: Printed for Jo. Hindmarsh, 1684), ll.1-4.

For only You are lineal to the Throne.

…

But now, not I, but Poetry is curs'd;

For Tom *the Second reigns like* Tom *the first.*[447]

In wishing Congreve success, Dryden reminds his readers of his own achievements, most notably his status as poet laureate. He denounces his own successors to this title, Thomas Shadwell and Thomas Rymer. 'Thomas Shadwell, the hero of *Mac Flecknoe*, who succeeded Dryden as Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal, died in 1692. He was succeeded as Poet Laureate by Nahum Tate and as Historiographer by Thomas Rymer, the author of a poor tragedy, to whom Dryden refers in this line.'[448] Dryden insists that Congreve should have succeeded him, casting himself in the patriarchal role he sets up between himself and his subject.

Yet this I Prophecy; Thou shalt be seen,

(Tho' with some short Parenthesis between:)

High on the Throne of Wit; and seated there,

Not mine (that's little) but thy Lawrel wear.

…

Maintain Your Post: That's all the Fame You need,

For 'tis impossible you shou'd proceed.

Already I am worn with Cares and Age;

And just abandoning th' Ungrateful Stage:

Unprofitably kept at Heav'ns expence,

I live a Rent-charge on his Providience:

[447] John Dryden, 'To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve', sigs.a2v-a3r, ll.41-44/47-48.
[448] Representative Poetry Online, <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/my-dear-friend-mr-congreve-his-comedy-calld-double-dealer#47>.

But You, whom ev'ry Muse and Grace adorn,

Whom I forsee to better Fortune born,

Be kind to my Remains; and oh defend,

Against Your Judgment Your departed Friend!

Let not the Insulting Foe my Fame pursue;

But shade those Lawrels which descend to You:

And take for Tribute what these Lines express:

Your merit more, nor cou'd my Love do less.[449]

Dryden promises that Congreve will eventually enjoy the same success that he has, that he will even rise higher than Dryden's own small throne. For now he offers this commendation as the laurels Congreve deserves, again placing Dryden in the elevated position in which to bestow honour on other poets and bringing attention to his own achievements rather than Congreve's. Dryden's commendatory work provides a great deal of insight into ideas such as honouring and ranking poets, authorial self-promotion and an enduring authorial reputation, specifically within the context of the Restoration period in which he is writing: all things that illuminate thinking relevant to the conception of an English literary canon at the end of the seventeenth century.

Conclusion

Richard Terry has argued that canon-formation is a 'spectrum of writings devoted to the recovery or construction of a native literary heritage.'[450] One extreme of this spectrum 'enumerates this heritage' represented by works like biographies and literary dictionaries. The opposite extreme, 'while not attempting a roll call [proffers] some summary canonical

[449] John Dryden, 'To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve', sigs.a3r-a3v, ll.51-54/64-77.
[450] Richard Terry, 'Literature, Aesthetics, and Canonicity in the Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 21:1 (1997), 80-101 (pp.94-95).

placement of a poet or poets.'[451] This second extreme would include commemorative poetry, with Terry identifying Jonson and Denham's elegies for Shakespeare and Cowley as examples. Jonson's poem draws 'Shakespeare into association not just with his direct contemporaries, but with a cabal of writers seen as the luminaries of an unfolding and unified tradition.'[452] As demonstrated through this chapter, commemorative poems indeed highlight and draw parallels between esteemed and influential English authors. However, they do more than simply group their contemporary greats and showcase the roots of emerging literary traditions. They highlight several important characteristics of English literary canon-formation, for example, making informed choices about which authors and works they choose to commemorate, for a number of reasons including the manner in which they excel in a particular genre like the epic or drama, their choice of thematic content, or their ability to move and please their audience. Poets honoured their contemporaries for a number of reasons, considering a range of aesthetic, moral, thematic and stylistic talents. These considerations played a key role in influencing which poets and works were read and imitated during the seventeenth-century and after.

These works of Denham, Waller, Cowley and Dryden are examples of a mid-seventeenth-century desire to stabilise literary traditions and promote English writing. Their work demonstrates admiration of their contemporaries as well as their mother tongue and country, while simultaneously supporting their own authorial careers. These authors did not refer to their activities as canon-forming, but that does not alter the fact that this is precisely what they were doing in ways both familiar and foreign to our present expectations, nor does it devalue the importance of appreciating these activities in discussing the seventeenth-century literary canon and its influence on canon theory generally. There is certainly value is analysing these poems in the context of the ritualised functions they perform, as we see in

[451] Terry, pp.94-95.
[452] Terry, p.95.

studies such as Andrea Brady's book on the function of funerary verse, specifically the elegy. However, there is equal value in analysing the commendatory genre in the context of explicit seventeenth-century thinking about literary value. Commendatory poetry is the genre where authors most directly discuss fame and authorship during the seventeenth century, making it a crucial genre to consider in the context of studies about the English literary canon.

CHAPTER FIVE

ABRAHAM COWLEY: CELEBRATED WRITER, ROYALIST HERO, RECLUSIVE HERMIT AND FORGOTTEN BARD – THE VARIOUS FACES OF THE MAN WHO VIED TO BE THE MUSE'S HANNIBAL

Who now reads Cowley? If he pleases yet,

His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;

Forgot his epic, nay, Pindaric art,

But still I love the language of his heart.[453]

Abraham Cowley is remembered best as a metaphysical poet, a talented essayist, a royalist who served faithfully, though ultimately one disillusioned by his cause, a political prisoner, an epic poet, a man of great ambition, and a man who in death found his literary legacy eclipsed only by his friends' admiration for his virtuous and honourable character. That is, of course, if he is remembered at all; as Harold Bloom claims, Cowley is 'now forgotten, except by specialists,' mentioned only in Bloom's *Western Canon* as a brief side comment when discussing Samuel Johnson's famed critical works.[454] In 1737, when Alexander Pope queried 'who now reads Cowley,' he was not making an unequivocal statement about a forgotten poet. The poet's works and essays continued to appear in print until the end of the eighteenth century, and he was still read, critiqued and admired by a variety of readers. He contributed to numerous literary genres during his lifetime and was frequently read and imitated by some of the most influential and enduring writers in the English literary canon, such as Milton, Dryden and Pope. Of Johnson's enduring *Lives of the Poets* (1779-81), Cowley's is by far one of the longest and richest biographies in the collection. It is perhaps chiefly because of Johnson's life writing, as well as references to the poet in the writing of other prominent seventeenth-and eighteenth-century authors, that we remember Cowley today. These literary

[453] Alexander Pope, *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace, Imitated* (London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1737), sig.C1r, p.5, ll.75-78.
[454] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994), p.179.

greats critiqued, praised and even imitated Cowley, and it is chiefly their celebrated reputations that keep the memory alive of the poet who aspired to be the 'Muses Hannibal' so that he might 'be for ever known.'[455]

Pope's brief epistle, in which he acknowledges his own fondness for the 'language of his heart,' puts forward some of the reasons why Cowley has been difficult to analyse as a canonical writer posthumously. During his lifetime and immediately thereafter, the writer was frequently admired by his contemporaries but often without critical justification of his poetic talent. As Pope reveals, while Cowley was renowned for his wit, it was his pervasive morality, both in his works and character, that pleased so many of his readers.[456] Nevertheless, while Cowley the man was admired, and his works achieved posthumous commercial success for over a century, it has proven difficult to argue for the canonisation of an author whose contemporaries praised his morality and goodness more often than his literary acumen. A careful study of Cowley's works and career can provide insight into the shape and content of the English literary canon during the mid-seventeenth-century. Cowley's works provide insight into early modern literary tastes and an emerging interest in an author's reputation in print. Today, Cowley's reputation has diminished within an English literary canon that he played a key role in shaping, and recent critical studies have been in short supply.[457] It therefore seems both appropriate and timely to examine his works and their appearance in print in order to address the development of the seventeenth-century English literary canon and Cowley's interest in self-promotion and attaining fame.

[455] Abraham Cowley, 'The Motto', *Miscellanies*, in *Poems* (London: Moseley, 1656), sig.B1r, ll.1, 18.
[456] This is shown for example in Gerard Langbaine's exuberant applause of Cowley's character, discussed previously in my biography chapter.
[457] Recent studies that are dedicated exclusively to the poet include Joseph Wallace, 'True Poetry and False Religion in Abraham Cowley's *Davideis*', *RES* (2015), 895-914; Nathaniel Stogdill, 'Abraham Cowley's "Pindaric Way": Adapting Athleticism in Interregnum England, *English Literary Renaissance* 42:3 (2012), 482-514; and Henry Power, '"Teares breake off my Verse": The Virgilian Incompleteness of Abraham Cowley's The Civil War', *Translation and Literature* 16:2 (2007), 141-159.

As this thesis has made clear, the creation of a literary canon is both an active and retroactive process shaped by the literature and literary tastes, judgements and marketplaces of both the past and present. Trevor Ross argues that '[canon-making] begins when authorship begins, in the first cries of poets eager to legitimize their practice, to lend aura to their tradition, and to affirm the power of their art in preserving a sense of the past.'[458] At the same time, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle identify those 'first cries of poets eager to legitimize their practice' as the place where questions surrounding the 'critical process of canonization…are inaugurated, first posed and first pondered.'[459] This applies particularly to those overt acts of self-canonisation when a poet consciously makes a bid for literary posterity. In such acts, like Ben Jonson's *Workes* (1616) and Abraham Cowley's *Poems* (1656), the writer contributes doubly to the process of canon-making: bidding for his own place in the pantheon, while, both explicitly and implicitly, posing and pondering questions surrounding the critical process of canonisation. Overt acts of self-canonisation, then, can provide us with insight into both the attitudes to literary value and fame held by the individual writer and those in play in the wider culture of the period.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries offer several examples of writers actively involved in building their authorial reputations, such as Jonson (1572-1637), Cowley (1618-1667), Thomas Stanley (1625-1678) and Margaret Cavendish (1623?-1673). While never using the term canon, these authors participate in a practice that can be clearly recognised as self-canonising. In broad terms, self-canonisation might be considered a form of self-promotion, but with a particular focus on situating one's own works in the inner circle of highly regarded literature rather than concentrating exclusively on the sale of books and pamphlets purely for monetary gain. There are a few key aspects that contribute to the process of self-canonisation. First, authors interested in fame and the longevity of their works

[458] Trevor Ross, p.26.
[459] Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, third edition (Harlow: Pearson, 2004), pp.43-44

are often conscious of genre and genre conventions. For example, the epic is one of the most highly regarded genres, which is rooted in classical precept. However, by the seventeenth century many of the most prominent authors were lyric poets like Cowley, John Donne (1573-1631), Robert Herrick (1591-1674), Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) and Henry Vaughan (1621-1695), and the lyric was a popular genre among writers vying for literary celebrity.[460] Authors also endeavoured to demonstrate their awareness of literary genre conventions, as well as of classical and continental literary models, which can be seen, for example, through imitation of celebrated precedents or in critical discussions about poetry and prose, practices that have been illuminated throughout the first four chapters of this thesis. Additionally, by the mid-seventeenth century many writers recognised the significance of circulating their works in print. The majority of seventeenth-century authors who have survived the test of time are almost exclusively writers whose works were put into print during or shortly after their lifetime. Writers angling to shape their own literary reception recognised this, justified this and on occasion contested this, but nonetheless, they all participated in disseminating their works, even if begrudgingly, to a wider audience through print.[461] Working with a stationer, publishing one's own writings, selecting which works to disseminate, intending to influence other authors, writing literary criticism, acknowledging how one's career and works relate to other authors and traditions, working within particular genres and choosing certain literary models are some activities, though certainly not all, that reflect an author's desire to self-canonise, activities which can clearly be traced throughout Cowley's literary career.

[460] On lyric poetry in print in the mid-seventeenth century see the fourth chapter in Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp.209-290 (particularly pp.259-280 on Moseley's lyric publications and printed anthologies of lyric poems).

[461] On the stigma of print and circumstances of manuscript preference in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see J.W. Saunders, 'The Stigma of print: a note on the social bases of Tudor Poetry,' *Essays in criticism* 1 (1951), 139-64; Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); and Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995).

One of the most well-known examples of an author's involvement in his own canonisation is Ben Jonson's close collaboration with William Stansby in the publication of the 1616 folio edition of Jonson's *Workes*. Jonson's efforts at self-canonisation have been analysed and written about extensively. Given the frequency in which Jonson has been the sole focus in studies on self-canonisation in the seventeenth century, and that his folio predates the parameters of my study which concentrates on the second half of the seventeenth century, I consider him comparatively rather than use him as a case study in this chapter.[462] Instead, in this chapter I am focusing on Abraham Cowley, as ambitious and proactive in shaping his own literary reception as Jonson, yet an author whose self-canonising practices have received only sporadic critical attention. I have selected Cowley as my case study for a number of reasons. First, Cowley lived and wrote through a period of seismic changes in literary tastes, fashions and conventions: from the reign of Charles I, through the Commonwealth and Interregnum, and on into the Restoration.[463] More importantly, he was an exceptionally popular poet during his lifetime, and while his popularity began to wane in the eighteenth century, he was still widely read and imitated into the late-eighteenth century.

Self-canonisation is not a term often used in literary criticism when discussing the formation of literary canons, nor does it appear in reference works like the *OED*. Canonisation is generally thought of as something bestowed upon a saint or poet, by others, not by the saint or poet him or herself, and almost always posthumously rather than during the lifetime of the canonical figure. In his book on the formation of the English literary canon, Trevor Ross coins the term, although never specifically defines what activities and ideas encompass self-canonisation. More loosely, Ross implies throughout his study that self-

[462] Prominent modern research into Jonson's self-canonisation and involvement in publication includes of Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011) and Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon* (1998).

[463] Other writers spanning the same periods, though not necessarily involved in their own literary canonisation to that extent of Cowley, include Milton, Richard Crashaw, Samuel Butler, John Evelyn, Sir John Denham, Lucy Hutchinson and Andrew Marvell.

canonisation involved first, the 'desire for recognition and self-determination,' second, a poet publicising their own works and finally, 'affirming the value of a healthy literary system…[while simultaneously demarcating] their work from others...[most often] these acts involved the rejection of a literary past.'[464] From Ross, then, we have the idea of self-canonisation as an active process where an author delineates the boundaries between his or her own works and what came before. There are several ways in which a poet might self-canonise in the seventeenth century. For example, participating in the publication of their works, notably in print, but participating within manuscript circles could also contribute to shaping the perception of an author, as Colin Burrow argues in analysing Donne's circulation in manuscript.[465] In this chapter I analyse Cowley's endeavours to self-canonise, both by investigating the presentation of his works in print, as well as examining the arguments in his individual verse and prose works.

This chapter is organised in three sections. The first examines Cowley's early life and the publication of his first collection of poetry, *Poetical Blossoms* (1633). The collection was published when Cowley was fifteen years old, demonstrating his early interest in achieving poetic fame. I argue that the collection contributed to introducing Cowley as a talented poet, offering insight into the emergence of the single-author folio of a living author, which was initiated by Jonson. Additionally, it was viewed by his contemporaries as an influential and remarkable publication for over a century, clearly signifying Cowley's success in promoting himself with his juvenilia. The second and third sections concentrate on Cowley's literary career and works during the peak of his career until the end of his life. In the second section I examine the contribution of the mid-seventeenth-century, single-author lyric collection in determining which authors and works were celebrated and commemorated. Specifically, I examine how Cowley's *Poems* (1656) in both structure and presentation demonstrate the

[464] Ross, pp.38-9, 100.
[465] *Metaphysical Poetry* ed. by Colin Burrow (London: Penguin Books, 2006) p.xxix.

author's intention not only to achieve personal fame and an enduring literary legacy, but to influence the manner in which he would be read and remembered. In the third section I offer an analysis of a selection of works from *Poems* and his later years to reveal how the author's works, in verse and prose, contributed to notions relevant to the development of an English literary canon during the second half of the seventeenth century. This includes Cowley's arguments about fame and an authorial reputation, particularly the achievement of a posthumous legacy, as well as his contributions to critical literary theory, such as defining the concept of wit, and adapting classical and continental precept to fit the cultural, social and political contexts of the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration periods in which he was writing. I do want to conclude with a brief note on the sources in this chapter. Given that Cowley has received sporadic critical attention over the last century, there are a number of critical sources in this chapter that are significantly older. To date some of the most extensive research into Cowley's life and works are the publications of Arthur Nethercot and Jean Loiseau at the beginning of the twentieth century, and certain selections of his works have been neglected in the last several decades that I feel are worth analysing in the context of studying literary canons, so at times I do refer to older studies about the author to provide critical context.

Early Blossoms: Cowley's first poetic inclinations

Abraham Cowley was born in 1618 in London, the seventh son of a stationer, Thomas Cowley, who died just prior to his son's birth.[466] Cowley was considered an early literary prodigy, first inspired to write by reading Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In his posthumously published essay *Of Myself* (1668), Cowley recalled:

[466] For a discussion on the profession of Thomas Cowley see Nethercot (Arthur H. Nethercot, *Abraham Cowley: The Muse's Hannibal* (London: Humphrey Milford, OUP, 1931), pp.1-6).

> I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my Mother's Parlour…*Spencers* VVorks; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the Stories…I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a Poet as irremediably.[467]

He composed the earliest of his poems at the age of 10. His first published collection of poetry, including these first early poems, appeared in 1633 when he was just 15 years old, and was titled *Poetical Blossoms*, which was published in a second edition in 1636 and a third in 1637.[468]

Cowley's formative years were spent at Westminster school where he remained longer than was usual at the time. According to Nethercot, most boys entered university between 14 and 17, but at 17 Cowley still found himself at Westminster. The reasons for this are not known, be they scholarly or financial, but Cowley was unhappy with the situation and endeavoured to gain a scholarship to Cambridge.[469] He was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge as a pensioner in 1636 and became a scholar in 1637. Ejected from Cambridge in 1643 for his royalist sympathies, Cowley transferred to Oxford and resided at St John's College.[470]

The quarto edition of *Poetical Blossoms* (1633) was published when the poet was only 15, and potentially completed as early as 1631. The text demonstrates an interest in self-promotion and amassing a wider reading public from a very early age. It was not typical at this time for many writers to print collections of works as young as Cowley, as Thomas Calhoun and Lawrence Heyworth note in their edition of *Poetical Blossoms* (1989).[471] The

[467] Cowley, *Works* (1668), sig.S4v.
[468] *ODNB*
[469] Nethercot, pp.35-6.
[470] *ODNB*
[471] Other writers endeavoured to obtain early fame, including Milton, but most of these writers were in their twenties rather than their teens, publishing their first works only after finishing their formative education. See

text was received favourably enough to merit two further octavo editions within less than a decade. Calhoun and Heyworth remark on the historical and bibliographical interest of the collection, which was claimed still to be in high demand in 1681 by Charles Harper and Jacob Tonson; two hundred years later in 1881 Alexander Grosart insisted that the quarto was a treasure for book collectors, and only two years after this Edmund Gosse declared the rarity of Cowley's poetry, using 'rare' to specify unique character, in particular when discussing how Cowley's *Pyramus and Thisbe* achieved a precocity whose parallel might only be found within non-literary arts like music or engraving.[472] The juvenilia collection is a significant contribution to the development of Cowley's works, and he clearly had a hand in the publication and presentation of the collection in print. The prefatory material for the original quarto includes Cowley's dedication to the Dean of Westminster, a short verse 'To the Reader' and two commendatory addresses from the author's Westminster schoolfellows Ben Maers and Rob Meade. Maers also wrote the verse lines inscribed on the frontispiece beneath Cowley's portrait.[473]

> *Reader when first thou shalt behold this boyes*
> *Picture perhaps thoult think his writings toyes*
> *Wrong not our* Cowley *so will nothing passe*
> *But gravity with thee* Apollo *was*
> *Beardless himself and for ought can see*
> *Cowley may youngest sonne of* Phoebus *bee*.[474]

Thomas Calhoun and Laurence Heyworth, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, ed. by Thomas O. Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth and Allan Pritchard, vol. 1 (Newark, London and Toronto: University of Delaware Press and Associated University Presses, 1989), pp.297-8

[472] Calhoun and Heyworth, p.296 (see also Edmund Gosse, *Seventeenth-century Studies: A Contribution to the History of English Poetry* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Co., 1883), p.193 and Abraham Cowley, *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Abraham Cowley*, ed. by Alexander B. Grosart, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&A. Constable; Chertsey Worthies' Library, 1881), 1:xii).

[473] Calhoun and Heyworth, p.298.

[474] Ben Maers, in A.C., *Poetical Blossomes* (London: for Henry Seile, 1633), sig.A1v.

Maers' short verse implores readers not to underestimate the talent of the author because of his young age, drawing parallels between Cowley and the youthful Greek God of music, poetry, truth and prophecy, Apollo. By addressing Cowley's youth at the beginning of the collection, Maers further suggests that publishing a collection of poetry while still in school was highly unusual, thereby emphasising the poet's status as a poetic prodigy.

The 1636 title page of the second edition bears the subtitle 'The Second Edition enlarged by the Avthor,' advertising the collection as both expanded and shaped by Cowley personally.[475] This edition adds an additional prose epistle 'To the Reader' which is included after the dedication to John Lord Bishop of Lincoln and Dean of Westminster. The original verse 'To the Reader' is kept but moved to a position immediately prior to the opening poem, *Constantia and Philetvs*. Calhoun and Heyworth identify this move as an apt and intentional placement as the poem 'To the Reader' was clearly composed as a preface to the tragedy.[476] Cowley's new prose epistle 'To the Reader' is better suited to preface the collection as a whole, and aims to address the critics of his publication, functioning on the surface as a defence of his early works.

> If in all mens judgements it suffer shipwracke…you shall finde one argument (and I hope I shall neede no more) to confute unbelievers: which is, that as mine age, and consequently experience (which is yet but little) hath increased, so they have not left my Poesie flagging behind them…I hope a pardon may easily bee gotten for the errors of ten yeeres age…[but the] rest were made since upon severall occasions, and perhaps doe not belie the time of their birth…they were created by mee, but their fate lies in your hands.'[477]

[475] Abraham Cowley, *Poetical Blossoms* (London: Henry Seile, 1636), sig.A2r.
[476] Calhoun and Heyworth, p.299.
[477] Cowley (1636), sig.A4r.

In the second edition of *Poetical Blossoms* (1636), Cowley's preface endeavours to pre-emptively defend from ruin, using the metaphor of shipwreck to imply a difficult recovery if he is not careful with his presentation of the book. He does this by drawing attention to his age, asking his reader both to be kinder to the early verses of a child poet while once again subtly reminding his audience of his status as an early prodigy. Cowley acknowledges that he has been writing since he was ten, and that some of the works may reflect this, but he also argues that he has grown and developed as a writer over the several occasions in which he has taken to writing poetry. Cowley's address to the reader is not just a defence, but a way in which the poet asserts agency over his own works and reputation. He allows his readers to excuse whatever they do not like as his earliest works, and encourages them to applaud what they do like as evidence of his progression, his increased experience, in later years. His efforts to influence his readership, seeking a favourable fate such as fame and longevity, demonstrate the author's interest in self-preservation from an early age, something that he consciously continued to strive for throughout his literary career.

It is worth taking a moment to consider the presentation of Jonson's 1616 folio of his works when considering Cowley's *Poetical Blossoms*, as well as when anticipating the poet's much more ambitious project *Poems* two decades later. As previously mentioned, Jonson's folio is one of the earliest collections reflecting an author's self-legacy. Jonson is one of Cowley's earlier literary influences, which is revealed by the 1st Earl of Clarendon, then Edward Hyde, and was considered by the young author by this point in his life to be one of the best examples of English wit.[478] Trevor Ross reports the general scholarly consensus that 'Jonson's 1616 folio *WORKES* is the first self-consciously canonical edition of an author's works in English literature.'[479] The collection paints a picture of Jonson and his oeuvre mid-career, intending to promote the writer's fame. The folio publication offers a frontispiece

[478] See Nethercot, pp.29-30 and Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The Life of, in Which is Included a Continuation of His History of the Grand Rebellion* vol.i (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1827), p.34.
[479] Ross, p.108.

portrait of Jonson, a decorative title page and several commendatory pieces written to Jonson by friends. However, the only prefaces written by Jonson are the dedications that were first published with individual works, which are printed ahead of the original title pages to these texts. Intended to introduce individual masques, plays and poems, Jonson's dedications were never meant to discuss or theorise about self-canonisation or his works as a complete collection. Prefatory material is certainly only one of a number of ways that an author might participate in his self-canonisation, one that Cowley uses to his advantage, as discussed in more detail later in this chapter. A more notable feature of the publication, according to Ross, is that the collection makes no claim to influence the future direction of English literary production, focused on Jonson as an individual author and not part of a broader English literary canon; while representative of its own period it is not concerned with being part of an historical tradition.[480] Ross claims Jonson is the first English author to self-canonise and therefore lacks a clear English model to imitate in his collection; however, Jonson does model his collection on the classical canon tradition. Jonson's involvement in the arrangement and printing of the text, along with his involvement in classical and historical traditions, are certainly evidence of his efforts to self-canonise, which has been covered in more detail by other scholars such as Donaldson and Ross.[481] Jonson's preliminary efforts offer a bridge between the classical body of Greek and Latin poetry and the emerging English pantheon, paving the way for further English authors to shape their own literary reputation. Such an author is Cowley, who, emulating one of his principal influences, imitates Jonson in collecting, revising and publishing his works.

Poetical Blossoms is the first publication of the young poet, and while it is unclear what motivated Seile to print such a young author, or encouraged Cowley to gather his juvenilia for circulation in print, it is nonetheless a collection that demonstrates in many ways

[480] Ross, pp.108-110.
[481] See Donaldson, *A Life* (particularly pp.304-381) and Ross, pp.108-116.

that self-promotion, the attainment of personal fame and the longevity of both works and poetic reputation, were always at the forefront of Cowley's priorities. The collection bolstered his literary reputation long after the publication of his mature works and indeed his lifetime. At the end of the century both Langbaine and Wood, two of the century's most prominent life writers, still refer to the collection favourably. Langbaine declares the collection 'prov'd the pregnancy of his Wit' and Wood advertises that 'where in the year 1633, being then going into the sixteenth year of his age, he composed a book called *Poetical Blossomes*; whereby the great pregnancy of his parts was discovered.'[482] Similarly, in 1753, over hundred years after *Poetical Blossoms* was first published, Shiells's account of Cowley includes an assessment of the book: 'In the 16th year of his age, being still at Westminster school, he published a collection of poems, under the title of Poetical Blossoms, in which there are many things that bespeak a ripened genius, and a wit, rather manly than puerile.'[483] Moreover, he even includes an excerpt from one of the poems printed in the collection because 'It is indeed so much superior to what might be expected from one of his years.'[484] Of Cowley's substantial literary repertoire, there are writers like Shiells who still publicised and praised the poet because of these early works. Including the extract suggests the juvenilia collection was viewed as worth reading over a century later. These late seventeenth-century and eighteenth century biographical accounts would make selections about which works, if any, to discuss in detail and include extracts from. Accounts like those provided by Langbaine, Wood and Shiells reveal that Cowley's reputation endured, and additionally, that *Poetical Blossoms* was considered a key contribution to his legacy. Indeed, one of the most recent publications of Cowley's works to date is the 1989 first volume of *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, which includes his *Poetical Blossoms*, when much of his work still has not been published in its entirety since the beginning of the twentieth century or

[482] Langbaine, sig.E7v and Wood, p.798.
[483] Shiells, pp.42-3.
[484] Shiells, p.43.

earlier.[485] *Poetical Blossoms* was the bid of a fifteen year old poet already pursuing eternal fame, and the text certainly helped contribute to this goal. In the next section I turn to Cowley's life during the war and Interregnum, investigating how the author's publication *Poems* was his bid for fame and posterity, and how the individual works were intended to speak to Cowley's desire to both self-promote and influence English literary tastes.

War, exile and the ongoing quest for fame

'a warlike, various, and a tragical age is best to *write of*, but worst to *write in*.'[486]

The majority of Cowley's mature writing years were influenced and shaped by conflict, the turmoil leading up to the Civil War, a life in exile and time spent in prison, and a half decade living as a royalist in England during the Protectorate. As Cowley puts it in the preface to his *Poems* (1656), this upheaval provided an interesting history to write about retrospectively, but difficult conditions in which to write during. Sometime between 1644 and 1646 Cowley accompanied Queen Henrietta Maria's retinue to France, conducting secret correspondence in cipher between members of the royalist party, including exchanges between the exiled queen and Charles I. It was during his time in exile with the royal court that Cowley wrote much of his cycle of love poems, which were first published by Moseley in *The Mistresse* (1647). *Mistresse* proved to be a popular collection, with the individual poems frequently transcribed in miscellanies, commonplace books or even set to music by prominent seventeenth-century composers.[487] The collection appeared without the author's

[485] *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley* was reportedly discontinued after the death of Thomas Calhoun, one of the general editors, and did plan to print the rest of Cowley's works from *Poems*. However, the collection is clearly shaped by more than a desire to print all his works in order, evidenced by printing *Mistress* first in part 1 of volume 2 despite it appearing after *Miscellanies* in *Poems*, the focal text of volume 2. Nor were all works necessarily planned for inclusion, such as his essays.

[486] Cowley, 'Preface', in *Poems* (1656), sig.a2r.

[487] For example, poems from his *The Mistresse* (1647) were published in *Witts Recreations* (1655) and reprinted in 1663 and 1667, and *Anacreon* appeared in the 1671 *New Academy of Complements* (song 17). William King produced *Poems of Mr. Cowley and others* (1668) featuring 24 songs, 16 of which belonged to Cowley, and Henry Purcell, Henry Bowman and John and Henry Playford were all prominent musicians who set several of Cowley's poems to music (see Loiseau, p.26). See also Vol. 2 of Thomas Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth and

input or permission, and yet was likely motivated by Moseley's ambition both to support royalist authors and include the writer within the stationer's own collection of lyrical poets, which will be discussed further in this chapter.[488] Cowley returned to England in 1654 as a royalist agent, for which he was arrested in April 1655. It was during his incarceration that he prepared the bulk of his verse for publication in *Poems* (1656).

Cowley's *Poems* appeared during the Interregnum period where writers, many exiled royalists, stationers and readers were thinking about literature in the context of consolidating and commemorating the best English authors and works. They did so to establish and preserve something similar to an English literary canon at a moment when many felt conflicted about the political, social and cultural values of the nation. *Poems* was first printed by Moseley, a stationer who, as discussed in other parts of this study, played an important role in the printed legacy of English playwrights and poets. *Poems* (1656) is an important collection to consider when discussing self-canonisation, both on its own and in relation to the other contemporary lyric collections and works printed during the seventeenth century, particularly those produced by Moseley. One of the first lyric collections Moseley printed was *Poems of Mr. John Milton* (1645). Much of the poetry published during Milton's lifetime included minimal prefatory material by the author, often a deliberate decision such as with his *Paradise Lost*; and this initial collection is no exception, lacking both prefatory material or other indicators that Milton might have worked closely with either editor or printer in producing this volume. Moseley's 'Stationer to the Reader' at the beginning of the collection focuses on other lyricists such as Henry Wotton and Edmund Waller, and the only mention of Milton reveals that he '*was too well known to conceal his Papers, or to keep me from attempting to solicit them from him*.'[489] Moseley was primarily a publisher of royalist authors,

---

Allen Pritchard's *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley* (1993) which includes a section on the musical settings of Cowley's poetry from *The Mistress*.

[488] I discussed Moseley and his publishing career in greater detail in the first chapter of this study.

[489] John Milton, *Poems of Mr. John Milton* (London: Moseley, 1645), sig.a4r.

and while Milton originally aimed several of his publications toward the court, it was clear by the 1640s that he was not sympathetic to the royalist cause. Scholars have not been able definitively to conclude to what extent Milton may have had a hand in this publication. According to John Carey, the 1673 collection of Milton's works is based on the 1645 collection and there is evidence of Milton's connection to the later collection, including not only additions but revision to the earlier publication.[490] Peter Lindenbaum argues that while there is no concrete evidence of a relationship between Milton and Moseley modern scholars tend to lean toward assuming that there must have been some association between the two. This is perhaps because in retrospect it is difficult to imagine the now highly regarded Milton not participating in every aspect of his literary career, vying to assert himself as one of the English greats. Lindenbaum suggests that Moseley might have propositioned Milton, which Moseley himself suggests in the preface, suggesting that Milton either refused or only begrudgingly allowed Moseley access, or even that Milton may have approached Moseley. While Lindenbaum argues that Milton's politics were clear in the mid-1640s, his works and reputation such as the masque *Comus* (1634) might still have attracted the courtly and upper class readership that Moseley was probably aiming the collection toward.[491] Nonetheless, Milton may have seen an advantage to being printed by Moseley, who was already earning a reputation as a provider of original and influential literary works, although that does not mean they worked in close proximity to one another.

Other lyric collections printed by Moseley include Edmund Waller's *Poems* (1645) and *Workes* (1645), Richard Crashaw's *Steps to the Temple* (1646), James Shirley's *Poems* (1646), John Suckling's *Fragmenta aurea* (1646), Abraham Cowley's *The Mistresse* (1647), Thomas Carew's *Poems* (1651) and Thomas Stanley's *Poems* (1652).[492] The texts are fairly

[490] John Milton, *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. by John Carey, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 1997), pp.3-5.
[491] Peter Lindenbaum, 'Humphrey Moseley', in *The British Literary Book Trade, 1475-1700*, ed. by James K. Bracken and Joel Silver (Detroit: Gale Research, 1996), 177-183 (pp.179-81).
[492] Waller's poems were also published by Thomas Walkley in 1645, illegally according to Moseley.

similar in presentation, featuring minimal introductory paratext that generally take the form of the typical dedicatory pieces commonly written by friends and contemporaries, with only Carew and Suckling's works appearing posthumously. Some of the books feature a frontispiece portrait along with a short dedicatory epistle by the author, or more often a note from Moseley himself. Moseley would eventually use his prefaces to advertise his other publications, such as his praise of Waller in his collection of Milton's poetry, as well as print *Courteous Reader* catalogues from 1653 to 1660.[493] These lyric collections display different levels of authorial involvement. Some collections were published posthumously or without authorial consent like Carew's *Poems*, but others demonstrate that the author was clearly interested in seeking fame or attracting the favour of a patron, such as Shirley's *Poems*.[494] While not all authors could be said to be participating in their own self-canonisation, Moseley, as Lindenbaum and other scholars have observed, was clearly creating a homogenous series of great English poets, all royalists barring Milton, which bears an easy resemblance to the English literary canon that would be identified and critiqued from the eighteenth century.

One of the more interesting collections is Thomas Stanley's *Poems*. Stanley had previously self-published his own works in 1647 as *Poems and Translations by Thomas Stanley*. Stanley's personal project was similar in appearance to several of Moseley's collections, particularly Shirley's, and Stanley even includes a dedication from Shirley with his own works. The collection is clearly designed to promote himself as a poet equal to Moseley's emerging canon of English lyricists, and it is plausible that Stanley might have approached Moseley to include his works alongside his peers in 1652 after the conclusion of his own 1647 edition, which would have been either a small run or else commercially successful enough that Moseley would not have been concerned about a competing

[493] Lindenbaum, pp.178-9.
[494] Shirley provides the dedication to the collection and includes numerous dedicatory odes by his friends and contemporaries including Thomas Stanley, Thomas May and George Buck.

publication.[495] Similarly, Moseley could have decided to publish Stanley for the same reason. Another edition of Stanley's works appeared in 1651 and is potentially the source for Moseley's collection, if not an earlier edition of Moseley's that was released unauthorised. Nonetheless, Moseley's publications offer a seventeenth-century gathering of several prominent English poets, including Cowley, although at the time without his participation. Moseley's next publication of Cowley would not only be influenced by the poet, but demonstrates several different approaches to self-canonisation in the seventeenth century.

Cowley's Poems (1656)

Poems, first published by Moseley in 1656, formed the basis of the posthumously published *The Works of Mr Abraham Cowley*, printed for the first time in 1668 by Henry Herringman who had worked closely with Moseley and purchased the copyrights for the works of several prominent authors upon Moseley's death in 1661.[496] *The Works of Cowley* appeared in two editions in 1668, the year after the author's death. A third edition was produced in 1672 and by the turn of the century the collection was onto a ninth edition, in a collection boasting new additions. By 1721 there were at least 14 known printings of *Works*, in addition to a second part that started to appear from 1681 and a third part available by 1689. His influence potentially even reached beyond his own nation, as editions of his works were also published in Brussels in 1681 and 1682.[497] Furthermore, Cowley's essays and other writings continued to appear in print throughout the eighteenth century, although their numerousness did begin to decline around the 1720s.

[495] Maureen Bell makes an argument for determining the investment into the Beaumont and Fletcher folio on the basis of time between two editions. This resembles Peter Blayney's argument regarding Shakespeare's folio, as the market for print texts in this period would not easily support competing editions (Maureen Bell, 'Booksellers Without An Author, 1627-1685', in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2007), p.269)

[496] In addition to Cowley Herringman purchased the right to the works of figures like Crashaw, Denham, Donne, Jonson and Waller. (C.Y. Ferdinand, 'Henry Herringman', *ODNB*).

[497] M.R Perkin has suggested the Brussels publications may have been commissioned in England. *ESTC*

The preface to *Poems* (1656) is a critical literary essay that simultaneously underlines Cowley's involvement in and reasons for publishing the collection. It is an example of Cowley's endeavour to self-canonise and promote his own authorship and literary fame. The preface to *Poems* begins with an account of *The Iron Age*, a book published under Cowley's name which he disavows writing: 'It would have been much less injurious, if it had pleased the *Author* to put for some of my Writings under his *own name*, rather than his own under *mine*: He had been in that a more pardonable Plagiary, and had done less wrong by *Robbery*…for no body can be *justified* by the *Imputation* even of anothers *Merit*.'[498] Cowley declares that he would rather be robbed than to suffer the imputation of his literary merit, that he does not want his oeuvre misrepresented by works that are not his own. Yet, Cowley is most aggrieved by the publication of works he admits to writing, but which are presented in a state that he has not approved or had a hand in publishing. This is what leads to his reflection on the print industry, and specifically on the printing of an author's works without their knowledge or consent: 'the publication of some things of mine without my consent or knowledge, and those so mangled and imperfect, that I could neither with honor acknowledge, nor with honesty quite disavow them.'[499] The mangled work Cowley refers to is an unrevised publication of his comedy *The Guardian* (1642) which was printed for James Calvin. I argue that Cowley's initial comments reflect his attempt to influence the composition of and editorial considerations for printed texts. Cowley has his own reservations about print, which I discuss further shortly. Yet he acknowledges the importance and usefulness of the medium in securing literary fame, and thus tries to influence his audience to prefer texts that are printed with their author's input and approval. In this way Cowley can denounce the publication of *Guardian* that he finds objectionable, and promote *Poems* as an accurate text with authorial approval.

[498] Cowley, *Poems* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1656), sig.a1r.
[499] *Poems*, sig.a2v.

Turning from his analysis of what should be avoided in printed collections, Cowley lists the texts he has chosen to include, offering a critique of the various genres in which he has written and how he hopes readers will view and approach the texts. *Poems* consists of four parts: *Miscellanies*, miscellaneous poems on a variety of subjects written at different parts of his life; *The Mistress*, a collection of love poems, many of which were written during his exile in France; *Pindarique Odes*, a set of lyrics imitating the style of Pindar; and *Davideis*, his incomplete epic on the life of David. Before addressing what he has included in the book Cowley discusses the works he has excluded and justifies his reasons for making these cuts. First, Cowley excludes his school age writings and juvenilia, putting them aside as the works of a child. Nonetheless, he notes most of these works have already had a life in several editions, bringing attention to, and subtly advertising, his earlier publication. *Poetical Blossoms* is acknowledged as fundamental to his development as an author, but placed aside to emphasise his best works which are offered in this later, polished collection. This is evident because Cowley does not just dismiss *Poetical Blossoms* as previously published, because *The Mistresse* was also published earlier as a standalone collection, by Moseley, but Cowley does not mention this fact. There are several new poems included at the end of *The Mistress* within *Poems*, although 'Love given over' maintains its position as the concluding poem in the collection. Cowley included the now finished and approved version of *The Mistress*, which suggests that the more recent love poems were meant to be central to how he presented his literary legacy to his contemporary as well as future audiences.

Cowley also excludes his political works like the epic *Civil War*, wanting to 'cast away all such pieces as I wrote during the time of the late troubles.'[500] Alexander Lindsay notes that *Poems* 'contains a passage which Cowley would have to regret,' instructing his fellow royalists to 'abandon the cause for which they have so long contended, to acquiesce in

[500] *Poems*, sig.a4r.

the mercy accorded by the victorious side.'[501] When Sprat reprints the preface in the 1668 *Works* he omits this section, a change that still exists in A.R. Waller's 1905 version of the text, the most recent re-printing of Cowley's entire *Poems*. While Cowley was viewed as a traitor to the royalist cause, I would argue that the move was at least partially motivated by Cowley wanting to push his image away from politics to be viewed purely as a poet. If *Poems* was meant to help Cowley enter the emerging collection of English literary greats, he needed to portray himself primarily as an author rather than as a political representative of the, at this time, defeated side. Similarly, Thomas Corns observes that Cowley never attempts to disguise or apologise for his royalism and that many of the poems included in *Miscellanies* pay tribute to royalist figures and writers.[502] While this passage in *Poems* has prompted conflicting opinions about Cowley's motives, both from his contemporaries and scholars today, the composition of *Poems* in the context of the whole of Cowley's life and literary career suggests that the author's decisions were first and foremost about presenting his works in order to be remembered as a celebrated poet.

After justifying the primary verse exclusions from his collection, Cowley introduces the works he has decided to publish. The first section, *Miscellanies*, includes Cowley's occasional poems about which he writes very little, commenting 'I think they have no extraordinary virtue in them.'[503] The poems in this section of the collection vary, including odes, commendatory poems such as his elegies, a prologue and epilogue for his play *The Guardian* and his *Anacreontiques*, paraphrased verses translated from the Greek lyricist Anacreon (582-485BC). Some of Cowley's best works are included in this section, and

[501] Lindsay, *ODNB*
[502] Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature* 1640-1660 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.253, 256. Additionally, Wilcher suggests that Cowley's stance in *Poems* reveals an attempt to emulate the rationalistic poetics of Hobbes and Davenant rather than to divorce his works from royalist ideas (see Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism 1628-1660* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), p.342)
[503] *Poems*, sig.a4v.

Cowley never overtly praises any of his own works, demonstrating something like the modesty trope commonly used in commendatory verse as discussed previously in this study.

The second section, *Mistress*, features his love poems. Of these Marotti notes that 'Cowley treats love poetry as fictional and literary, rather than as personal, social, and occasional, making it a sign of one's identity as a serious author.'[504] However, based on the prior work of Sidney, Spenser, Jonson and Donne, Cowley would have been aware that amorous verse faced several prejudices that made it more difficult to have these types of poems viewed as worthy of preservation. In associating these lyrics with the more elevated *Pindarique Odes* and the heroic poem, Cowley endeavoured to increase respect for the less weighty pieces.[505] The *Pindarique Odes* comprise the third section and it is these poems that Cowley is 'in great doubt whether they will be understood by most *Readers*,' but directs his audience to the ode 'The Resurrection' in which he has 'briefly described the nature of these Verses.'[506] The scholars who do study Cowley's poetry typically believe the *Pindariques* were written sometime between the period in which the author was in Jersey and when he returned to England (1651-1655). Royal fortunes were bleakest in the time when Cowley was thought to have written most of the odes, so scholars like Nethercot generally thought that politics were unlikely to influence their composition; however, Stella Revard observes that 'the Renaissance Pindaric ode had been employed again and again as a favoured form to celebrate the fortunes and misfortunes of kings and emperors,' and interprets the odes to subtly suggest royalist support, again contradicting his earlier claim to excise politics from his collection.[507] Regardless, Cowley advertises them as highly academic and literary, meant to bolster the prestige of the publication. The final section of *Poems* is composed of the four revised books of his incomplete epic *Davideis*. Cowley allows a significant portion of his

[504] Marotti, p.265.
[505] Marotti, p.265.
[506] *Poems*, sig.b1r.
[507] Stella P. Revard, 'Cowley's "Pindarique Odes" and the Politics of the Inter-regnum', *Criticism*, 35:3 (1993), 392-395.

preface to discuss his original plans for the epic and his reasons for undertaking the task, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter during an analysis of a selection of the poetry in *Poems*.

Throughout the preface, Cowley frequently analyses and critiques the medium of print. In the seventeenth century writers had minimal control over their works once they were circulating in print. Publishers in this period who attempted to obtain an author's consent to publish were less concerned with the morality of the issue, or authorial rights, and more often concerned with 'secur[ing] victory in a particular affray,' for example, one printer blocking another from publishing a particular work.[508] Moseley may have worked directly with authors from time to time, but he had no scruples about publishing without an author's consent. He insistently defended the printer's right, obligation even, to print without consent, 'alleging that it preserved works that would otherwise be lost.'[509] Moseley did have a particular interest in establishing the 'sociocultural authority and legitimacy of poets.'[510] He also clearly allowed Cowley, and others, the prefatory space to present their works and authorial opinions, as well as enabled the poet to make his own selections about which works he wanted to publish and in what arrangement.

Moseley had previously published Cowley's *The Mistresse* in 1647. Ahead of this text Moseley includes a stationer's address to the reader to discuss his motives in printing the edition:

> *A correct copy of these verses…written by the Authour himselfe, falling into my hands, I thought fit to send them to the Presse; chiefly because I heare that the same is like to be don from a more imperfect one. It is not my good fortune to be acquainted with the Authour any farther then his fame (by which hee is well knowne to all English*

[508] Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p.229.
[509] Johns, p.228.
[510] Marotti, p.263.

> *men) and to that I am sure I shall doe a service by this Publication: Not doubting but that, if these verses please his Mistresse but halfe so well as they will generally doe the rest of the world, he will bee so well contended, as to forgive at least this my boldnesse, which proceedes onely from my Love of him, who will gaine reputation, and of my Countrey, which will receive delight from it. I shall use no more preface, nor add one word (besides these few lines) to the Booke; but faithfully and nakedly transimit it to thy view, just as it came to mine…*[511]

This address assures the reader that the copy consulted was the author's own, even if not necessarily procured from the author or with his permission. This is significant, as part of Moseley's interest in shaping literary tastes included promoting particular authors, with Cowley being one of the names the publisher was most interested in. He confesses that he was not privileged to be acquainted with Cowley, but hopes to appease the author with flattery, potentially opening the door for a more direct working relationship in the future. More interestingly, he presents Cowley as the quintessential picture of Englishness, promising particular esteem of Cowley's reputation through the love of his countrymen who are certain to love the publication. With *Mistresse* he does not include the dedications that precede collections like Waller's, allowing the author's own reputation to speak for itself. Cowley may not have been involved with the 1647 printing of his love poems, but he certainly would have been aware of the publication, having a particular interest in any occasion when his name appeared in print.[512] Given this, it is quite likely that the 1647 *Mistresse* either influenced Cowley to seek Moseley out, or at least encouraged the author to work more closely with the stationer in order to actively influence the reception of his works and shape his own authorial reputation in publishing *Poems*.

[511] Abraham Cowley, *The Mistresse* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1647), sigs.A2r-A2v.
[512] For example, his ire with the falsely attributed *Iron Age*.

Cowley uses much of his preface to *Poems* to reflect on how most writers are unable to control their own literary reputations. This is what Cowley claims as his chief motivation in allowing the printing and involving himself in the publication of *Poems* (1656), and how he justifies and defends producing the book. He begins this defence of publishing by considering the common agents responsible for the dissemination of an author's works, friends and stationers:

> I began to reflect on the fortune of almost all *Writers*, and especially *Poets*, whose *Works* (commonly printed after their deaths) we finde stuffed out, either with *counterfeit pieces*…or with such, which though of their own *Coyn*, they would have called in themselves for the baseness of the *Allay*: whether this proceed from the indiscretion of their *Friends*, who think a vast *heap* of Stones and Rubbish a better *Monument*, then a little *Tomb* of *Marble*, or by the unworthy avarice of some *Stationers*, who are content to diminish the value of the *Author*, so they may encrease the price of the *Book*.[513]

Cowley reflects on the indiscretion of well-meaning friends motivated because they want to commemorate the author, generally posthumously, as well as of certain stationers who are motivated only by monetary gain. Cowley does not label all stationers as unworthy, and I have already discussed the likelihood that Cowley and Moseley shared at least some mutual interests and respect in producing this book. In death, however, an author is reliant on his friends in order to publish the right works and to avoid the less reputable stationers motivated only by financial greed rather than the promotion of literary genius and valuable works.

Aware of the importance of contemporary friendships in shaping a posthumous reputation, Cowley was deliberate in nominating his friend Thomas Sprat to be his literary executor, entrusting him with Cowley's posthumous publications and reputation. Nominating

[513] *Poems*, sig.a1v.

a literary executor would have been common practice in the seventeenth century, but Cowley's awareness of authors who were misrepresented by well-meaning friends led him to choose a man that he felt had the greatest interest in faithfully shaping the author's legacy. Sprat has been heavily criticised for his decision to hold back Cowley's letters, the majority of which were in the possession of himself and Martin Clifford.[514] J. Rawson Lumby, commenting in 1923 on a short excerpt from one of the few surviving letters, went so far as to declare that 'Cowley excelled in his letters to his private friends, and we cannot sufficiently condemn Sprat for declining to publish them.'[515] Cowley realised authors are not always in control of their literary reputations but the ability to shape his reception is still of great importance to the poet. This influenced his decision to involve himself in the publication of his poetry while he was still living, and quite possibly led to him selecting a literary executor who would abide by his wishes. Cowley dedicates significant space in his will to the performance of this task:

> I desire my dear Freind Mr Thomas Sprat to trouble himself wth ye Collection and Revision of all such writings of mine (whither printed before or not) as hee shall think fit to bee published, Beseeching him not to let any passe wch hee shall iudge vnworthy of ye name of his Freind, and most especially nothing (if any thing of yt king have escaped my pen) wch may give the least offence in point of Religion or good Manners. And in consideration of this vnpleasant task I desire him to accept of my Study of Books.[516]

Cowley selects Sprat as his literary executor, a close friend, imploring that Sprat use discretion and judgment in ensuring which of Cowley's works will continue to be published

[514] Arthur Nethercot, 'The Letters of Abraham Cowley', *Modern Language Notes*, 43:6 (June 1928), 369-375 (pp.369-70).
[515] Lumby/Tilley, p.xix.
[516] 'The Will of Abraham Cowley' see Nethercot, p.297.

and which would be kept from the press. He asks Sprat to do what he thinks is best, but I argue that Cowley selected Sprat knowing that he was the best person to present Cowley in the way he himself would want to be remembered. Indeed, Sprat consistently promised that he was following Cowley's wishes, and was dedicated to the task of immortalising Cowley in the manner the author would have chosen. This includes publishing the best of his poetry and essays, and leaving works like his letters unpublished, which were written for Cowley's 'private friends.'

Finally, the preface touches heavily on what at the time was a cultural preference for an author to be published posthumously. Cowley writes of memorialisation, lamenting those friends 'who think a vast *heap* of Stones or Rubbish a better *Monument*, then a little *Tomb* of *Marble*.'[517] However, his protest highlights that to be remembered a man must have a tomb. Here, Cowley is not arguing to avoid the permanence of print entirely, but to prioritise quality over quantity, marble over stone, the circulation of great works rather than every single piece of parchment that Cowley had touched with his pen. Keeping his works out of circulation is not an option for Cowley. However, fearing piracy and an unscrupulous posthumous publication, he takes great care to justify the publication of and by a living author. Authors during the seventeenth-century displayed uneasiness in publishing their own works during their lifetime. This was usually addressed in a number of ways, such as by letting dedicatory poems advertise the book rather than include an authorial prefatory statement. Other authors wrote a dedicatory letter to a patron or well-known figure, beseeching their support of the publication. James Shirley's *Poems* did both, beginning with an address to Bernard Hide, Esquire, and including dedicatory odes by Thomas Stanley, Thomas May and others. Cowley does something a bit more unusual; he presents his works in a fashion that suggests they are appearing during his afterlife:

[517] Cowley, sig.a1v.

> But though I publish here, more than in strict wisdom I ought to have done, yet I have suppress and cast away more than I *publish*…I have been perswaded to overcome all the just repugnances of my own *modesty*, and to produce these *Poems* to the light and view of the World; not as a thing that I approved of in it self, but as a lesser evil, which I choose rather than to stay till it were done for me by some body else, either surreptitiously before, or avowedly after my death.[518]

Cowley tries to present himself as humble, publishing because he has been persuaded and supported by others to do so, as well as to ensure that his legacy is cemented with authorial rather than unauthorised copies. Yet, more interestingly, Cowley promises that his '*Reader* shall know in what respects he may look upon me as a *Dead*, or at least a *Dying Person*, and upon my *Muse* in this action…*assisting* at her own *Funeral*.'[519] Cowley presents *Poems* as his final action; essentially asking to be viewed with the same generosity usually afforded the dead. Marotti suggests that in asking to be viewed as a dying person Cowley is 'anticipating the posthumous collection meant to gather an author's poetic remains.'[520] There are a few other authors who do something similar, such as Robert Herrick in his *Hesperides* (1648).[521] However, in the case of Herrick, the references to his book as a memorial work are more subtle, alluding to the idea in his poetry rather than providing a critical statement in the way Cowley does.[522] Cowley recognises that fame is something generally awarded posthumously, and therefore presents himself as a pseudo-posthumous author at the front of the collection; he follows this statement by moving into a discussion of his possible retirement, further suggesting that the collection is meant to represent his final works. Cowley's words show a

[518] *Poems*, sig.a2r.
[519] *Poems*, sig.a2r.
[520] Marotti, p.258.
[521] Warren Chernaik discusses Herrick's presentation of his book as a memorial in 'Books as Memorials: The Politics of Consolation', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol.21, Politics, Patronage and Literature in England 1558-1658 Special Number (1991), 207-217.
[522] Chernaick, pp.207-208.

balance between his interests in self-promotion alongside his awareness of prevalent mid-seventeenth century attitudes to print publications. In this section I have examined Cowley's presentation of the collection and how it was designed to shape his literary reception and help him achieve a position alongside the most eminent English poets. In the final section I evaluate a selection of Cowley's works in order to demonstrate his ideas about an emerging English literary tradition.

Cowley's works: self-canonising in verse and prose

Cowley's interest in preserving his own literary reputation and legacy can be found throughout his individual works, in addition to the care and attention clearly put into his preface to *Poems* and the arrangement of the collection. This includes works in which he directly discusses fame such as 'The Motto,' as well as works that seek to shape and influence literary tastes and styles of writing such as 'Ode of Wit.' For the remainder of this chapter I analyse a selection of works and extracts that reveal Cowley's thinking about poetic fame, literary tastes, authorial reputation and the preservation of distinguished English poets and outstanding poetry.

'The Motto' is the first poem in Cowley's *Miscellanies*, the first section of *Poems* (1656), and was originally included as part of Moseley's 'To the Reader' which concludes *The Mistresse* (1647). Moseley originally included the following note alongside the poem:

> *Instead of the Authors Picture in the beginning, I thought fit to fixe here this following Copy of Verses, being his owne illustration of his Motto, and (as I conceive) the more lively representation of him.*[523]

[523] Abraham Cowley, 'To the Reader', in *The Mistresse* (London: Printed for Moseley, 1647), sig.H3v.

Moseley offers Cowley's self-reflection as the best tribute to and representation of the poet. 'Motto' contemplates how an author might find everlasting fame and join the pantheon of literary greats.

> What shall I do to be for ever known,
>
> And make the *Age to come* my own?
>
> I shall like *Beasts* or *Common People* dy,
>
> Unless you write my *Elegy*;
>
> . . .
>
> Sure I *Fames Trumpet* hear.
>
> It sounds like the *last Trumpet*; for it can
>
> Raise up the *bur'ied Man*.
>
> Unpast *Alpes* stop me, but I'll cut through all,
>
> And march, the *Muses Hannibal*.[524]

Cowley's poem uses a wide range of biblical and classical imagery, as well as an elevated style of writing reminiscent of epic poetry throughout the poem. In these first few lines Cowley alludes to the Book of Revelation and the resurrection, with the 'last Trumpet' raising the 'buri'ed Man.' Cowley's motto considers how the poet might achieve an afterlife through poetry, to stand the test of time as the representative beacon of his age, 'the Muses Hannibal.' For Cowley and his contemporaries, Hannibal represented the greatest military commander of the ancient world, the embodiment of audacious heroism, famous in particular for his campaign in the Second Punic War (218-202BC) in which he surprised the Romans by crossing through the Alps.[525] Conceiving of himself as the Muse's Hannibal, Cowley is

[524] Abraham Cowley, 'The Motto', sig.B1r, ll.1-4/14-18

[525] On Hannibal's military history see John Francis Lazenby, *Hannibal's war: a military history of the Second Punic War* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1978).

promising to conquer 'the Alps of verse which had never before been scaled.'[526] Specifically, as Nethercot suggests and I concur, Cowley's motto is intended to promise the first religious epic in English, something not yet attempted by any author previously.[527] However, Cowley's motto also reveals that achieving fame requires more than writing a great work, but to have others acknowledge his greatness. A poet may try to shape his own reputation, but in order to hear fames' trumpet, an author must touch other writers, which in turn prompts them to write the elegies that will ensure Cowley's memory and works continue to endure.

Cowley is certain that he will succeed, to cut through all and be acknowledged as an eminent poet if he is successful in his epic ambitions. Still, he strives for more than fame but to be part of something larger:

> Tell me, ye mighty *Three* [*Stagirite, Cicero, Virgil*], what shall I do
>
> To be like one of you.
>
> But you have climb'd the *Mountains* top, there sit
>
> On the calm flourishing head of it,
>
> And whilst with wearied steps we upward go,
>
> See *Us*, and *Clouds* below.[528]

Cowley recognises that it is not just personal fame that ensures posterity, but to be esteemed alongside the most eminent of the literary greats, to join the 'mighty three,' Aristotle, Virgil and Cicero, atop the mountain representing the pantheon of classical poets who have already ascended and flourished. Here Cowley is using classical imagery such as Mount Parnassus as well as referring to the achievements of the most venerated classical writers; this further contributes to the grandiose and epic nature of the poem, which is indeed meant to introduce

[526] Nethercot, p.47
[527] Nethercot suggests the poem was likely first written around 1637 or 1638, before Cowley had abandoned the idea of completing *Davideis* but after he had conceived of the project. See Nethercot, pp.48, 100.
[528] Cowley, 'The Motto', B1v, ll.39-44.

his epic. The mixture of classical and biblical imagery adds to the elevated nature of the poem, displaying the poets learning, but also revealing his intention to write a Christian epic fit to stand alongside the best examples of classical epic verse. 'Motto' suggests that the path to literary fame requires enduring posthumously in the minds and pens of contemporary and future poets, as well as enshrining one's legacy alongside other great poets. Moreover, it reveals that Cowley intends to achieve fame not through birth, as he was not born into great titles, but by earning his own literary fame, '[cutting] through all' earthly vanities to emulate the greatness of Aristotle, Virgil and Cicero, and ascend into the pantheon of epic poets.

Cowley's works also endeavour to shape literary tastes, to play an important role in the critical thinking of his age as well as ensure a place for his own works, in this case both 'Motto' and *Davideis* to which the poem alludes, which will surely follow his own prescribed tenets. Michael Murrin notes that some of the seventeenth-century's best literary criticism is written in verse, including Herbert's Jordan poems, Carew's elegy for Donne and Cowley's 'Ode of Wit.' Murrin discusses the confusion of modern critics when early modern poets incorporated indirect yet complicated criticism into their work, creating a poem that mimics the subject it is addressing, using as an example Herbert's *Jordan II* in which a metaphysical poem questions the metaphysical style.[529] Cowley's 'Ode of Wit' begins by asking 'Tell me, O tell, what kinde of thing is *Wit*, / Thou who *Master* art of it.'[530] The poem both defines wit and concludes by declaring this poem as a prime example of the form. Cowley's ode doubles as criticism, offering generic arguments about writing wit as well as producing an aesthetic example. In the poem Cowley reveals numerous difficulties in defining wit: 'A thousand different shapes it [wit] bears,' reflecting on the fact that wit can be found, or has been identified, in various forms.[531] He also reveals that there are numerous poets who are not wits, whose '*false Ware[s]*' appear in '*Colour*, and [*Shape*]' appropriate and thus 'through

[529] Michael Murrin, 'Poetry as Literary Criticism', *Modern Philology*, 65:3 (Feb 1968), 202-207 (p.202).
[530] *Poems*, sig.B1v, ll.1-2
[531] *Poems*, sig.B1v, l.5.

our Judgment pass/…/And *Wits* by our *Creation* they become.'[532] There are also false types of wit such as jests, excessively ornamental lines, puns, anagrams, and jokes which Cowley denounces for having been included within the genre erroneously. Cowley compares wit with 'the *Power Divine*/We only can by *Negatives* define.'[533] Wit like divine example is often best expressed through analogy and precept.[534]

Cowley's 'Of Wit' is what Murrin identifies as a mirror poem in English which exhibits self-reflective qualities; he compares it to Herbert's *Jordan* poems, but claims Cowley goes further by hinting at the end that it is his own poem he seeks to define.[535] In the ninth and final stanza of 'Of Wit,' Cowley returns to the anonymous friend to which he writes the poem.

9.

But *Love* that moulds *One Man* up out of *Two*,
Makes me forget and injure you.
I took *you* for *my self* sure when I thought
That you in any thing were to be *Taught*.
Correct my error with thy pen;
And if any ask me then,
What thing right *Wit*, and height of *Genius* is,
I'll only shew your *Lines*, and say, '*Tis This*.[536]

Cowley's poem begins by querying the nature of wit, to then provide his own definition of the term, primarily through negative associations that reveal what wit is not, for example, simple adornment, or worse, a jest, anagram or acrostic, which are common and 'Admir'ed

[532] *Poems*, sigs.B1v-B2r, ll.9-13/19.
[533] *Poems*, sig.B2r, ll.55-56.
[534] Murrin, 206.
[535] Murrin, p.206.
[536] *Poems*, sig.B2v, ll.65-72.

with *Laughter*,' which demonstrates why Cowley considers them lower forms of verse. He concludes his long list of negatives with an apology, revealing that wit is not a thing to be taught but an inherent natural talent. However, this has the potential to be read as Cowley's own self-praise. While the poem is addressed to an unnamed master of wit it is conceivable that Cowley is speaking to either himself or his own poem. Cowley writes two voices into the poem, at the end here differentiating 'my self' from 'you' when apologising. Yet, as Murrin notes, the poem in both dramatic situation and logical argumentation is fundamentally witty and an example of what the poem seeks to define.[537] The poem undoubtedly displays Cowley's own wit, and the separate 'you' and 'I' may just be another example of the modesty trope. However, Cowley may indeed have another master of wit in mind, such as Jonson or Donne who were considered by the poet to be the height of wit.[538] He asks this unnamed figure to 'correct [his] error with thy pen,' to literally correct the manuscript for 'Of Wit' so that when Cowley shows 'your *Lines*' what he reveals is still his own poem. The crucial message of the poem is not who is the master, but what is wit, and the answer to that is demonstrated by Cowley's poem. 'Of Wit' defines and reveals the qualities and intricacies of wit in verse, serving as a powerful piece of criticism and the ideal poem to follow 'The Motto' in which Cowley begs for fame. 'Of Wit' concludes by awarding Cowley at least some of the fame that he seeks, proving his own poetic merit and again revealing the author's interest in self-promotion.

In addition to writing about themes relevant to our understanding of literary canon-formation, Cowley also endeavoured to promote his own fame in the writing and translating of classical poets and styles, such as Anacreon and Pindar. Cowley was celebrated both during his life and posthumously for his *Pindarique Odes*, 'Written in Imitation of the Stile &

[537] Murrin, p.207.
[538] Nethercot, p.29

Maner of the Odes of Pindar.'[539] Examining Cowley's political expression in poetry, Nathaniel Stogdill observes that the Pindaric form was a popular way to explore political relationships in early modern Europe and England.[540] From the sixteenth century, writers like Sidney, Spenser, Drayton and others turned to Pindar because his odes were thought to possess instructive value for elite readers, celebrating the exemplary actions of aristocratic athletes, and therefore prompting readers to noble actions.[541] Cowley's odes also have literary motives in addition to political ones, exploring the nature of translation and imitation, as well as considering authorship and literary legacies. In his preface for the *Pindarique Odes*, Cowley discusses the task of translating Pindar specifically, but also of verse translation in general. Critics have observed that Cowley did not always adhere to strict Pindaric rules in his odes. However, Nethercot observes that we cannot doubt Cowley's scholarship and clear understanding of Pindar, pointing to Robert Shafer who demonstrates that Cowley intended 'merely to infuse the *style* and *manner* of Pindar into poetry that was in all other respects of his own age…[not attempting] to imitate in English verse the form of Pindar.'[542] According to Cowley, translation is a process that always results in some loss of poetry regardless of any additional innovation, which he relates through an analogy of the reception of English poesie in France or Italy 'if converted faithfully, and word for word, into *French* or *Italian Prose*.'[543] He is highlighting that poetry is about more than language and that even a perfect word for word translation would not retain the music, emotion and other aspects of poetry that are not simply linguistic. It is for this reason that Cowley does not endeavour to be a translator, 'a *Copy* [is never] better than the *Original*,' but '*Something Better*, though it want yet a *Name* … [he has] not sought to supply the lost Excellencies of another *Language* with new ones in

[539] *Poems*, sig.Aaa1r.
[540] For further information about Cowley's use of Pindar to discuss the royal cause see Nathaniel Stogdill, 'Abraham Colwey's "Pindaric Way": Adapting Athleticisim in Interregnum England', *English Literary Renaissance*, 42:3 (Fall 2012), 482-514.
[541] Stogdill, p.484.
[542] Nethercot, p.136 and Robert Shafer, *The English Ode to 1660* (Princeton, 1918), pp.123-157.
[543] Poems, sig.Aa2r.

[his] own.'[544] Cowley was one of the first English critics to convey an understanding that imitation needed to do more than flatter or copy another author's style, culture or language. Imitation, and related to this, translation, required individual innovation, and the adaptation of the source to the literary, political and cultural interests of its new context: in this case, mid-seventeenth century England.

The *Pindarique Odes* endeavour to show to Cowley's best advantage his classical knowledge, particularly '*The Praise of* Pindar' which also demonstrates Horace's influence on Cowley's poetry:

> *Pindar* is imitable by none;
>
> The *Phoneix Pindar* is a vast *Species alone*.
>
> Who ere but *Dædalus* with waxen wings could fly
>
> And neither *sink* too low, nor *soar* too high?
>
> What could he who *follow'd* claim,
>
> But of vain *boldness* the unhappy fame,
>
> And by his fall a *Sea* to name?[545]
>
> *Pindars unnavigable Song*.[546]

Cowley's '*The Praise of* Pindar' begins by elevating Pindar above other writers. He uses the metaphor of Icarus, son of Dædalus, whose wings burned when he flew to close to the sun, forcing him to fall to the sea, to suggest that those who try to reach Pindar's heights are doomed to be remembered only for their failure. This appears to set aside the more familiar notion of a group, or canon, of great authors by placing the writer in a class of his own. However, as discussed elsewhere in this study, the idea of a literary canon in the seventeenth century, while potentially something that could be shaped around a group of celebrated

[544] Poems, sigs.Aa2r-v.
[545] Reference to Icarus, The Icarian Sea.
[546] '*The Praise of* Pindar', in *Poems*, sig.Ddd1v, ll.1-8.

authors, might also be used to showcase the best work of one author. More importantly, this poem argues for Cowley's suitability to tackle Pindar's odes, while utilising a traditional modesty topos from the very first line: '*Pindar* is imitable by none' is the first line of a poem featured in Cowley's collection of odes imitating Pindar. Cowley's ode pre-emptively defends against accusations of grandiosity and over-ambition, his own fall to the Icarian Sea, while still enabling him to set himself up as a worthy translator of, and perhaps, rival to Pindar. The claim of Pindar's inimitability is found in Horace's ode 'To Antonius Iulus,' which Cowley's ode recalls and imitates, arguing the futility of rivalling Pindar:

Pindarum quisquis studet aemulari,
Iulle, ceratis ope Daedalea
nititur pinnis, vitreo daturus
    nomina ponto :
monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres
quem super notas aluere ripas,
fervet inmensusque ruit profundo
    Pindarus ore.[547]

Who would compete with Pindar tries
On wings of Daedalus to rise,
Iulus, naming when he dies
    Some smooth and shining sea.
A river pouring down amain,
Swollen above its banks by rain,
He rages boundless through the plain,
    Sure of the laurel he.[548]

[547] Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *Odes 4.2*, in *Horace The Odes*, ed. by Kenneth Quinn (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp.94-5, ll.1-8.

Stogdill discusses the manner in which Cowley prioritised Pindar's irregular style, deviating from the strict triadic structure, '[using] a new mode of translation that subordinates the content of the odes to their erratic form.'[549] This is true of all the poems in *Pindarique Odes* and acknowledged by Cowley in his arguments on 'The Second Olympique Ode of Pindar' and 'Nemeaean Odes,' that 'Upon this ground, I have in these two *Odes of Pindar* taken, left out, and added what I please; nor make it so much my aim to let the Reader know precisely what he spoke, as what was his *way* and *manner* of speaking; which has not been yet (that I know of) introduced into *English*; though it be the noblest and highest kind of writing in Verse.'[550] Cowley is both justifying and arguing for his own original choices in imitating, but also experimenting, with Pindar's form. Cowley recognises the importance his contemporaries placed on imitating those that came before, yet he also strived to be original and make a name for himself. In this ode, Cowley aligns himself with the reputation of Pindar, but more importantly, that of Horace who was the more well-read author at this time. There are earlier translations of classical poetry in English, such as Harington's Virgil, and of course many adaptions of Horace such as those by Jonson. Yet as Robin Sowerby has observed, there is little evidence that Pindar was read in England, and Cowley is the first poet to translate his works into English.[551] Cowley reworks Horace's ode into Pindar's style, using Horace's fame to increase that of Pindar.[552] However, Cowley does more than introduce readers to Pindar, as Sprat revealed in his account of the poet, 'this imitating of *Pindar* [may] perhaps be thought rather a new sort of Writing, than a restoring of an Ancient.'[553] The *Pindarique Odes* were not simply translations meant to introduce a less commonly read

---

[548] Quintus Horatius Flaccus, 'II To Antonius Iulus', Odes Book 4, *The Collected Works of Horace* trans. by Lord Dunsany and Michael Oakley (London, New York: J.M. Dent and E.P. Dutton, 1961), p.91, ll.1-8
[549] Nathaniel Stogdill, p.489
[550] *Poems*, sig.Aaa1v.
[551] Robin Sowerby, *The Classical Legacy in Renaissance Poetry* (London and New York: Longman, 1994), p.178.
[552] On Cowley pindarising Horace see Sowerby, p.175.
[553] Sprat, 'An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Abraham Cowley', *Works* (1668), sig.c1r.

classical poet to English audiences, but a way for Cowley to demonstrate his own classical training and poetic skill. The odes are entirely Cowley's, and he endeavours to achieve personal fame for his originality as a poet rather than as a translator.

The final work in Cowley's collection *Poems* was his incomplete biblical epic *Davideis*. Although the work is too lengthy to treat in detail within this study, *Davideis* was such an important part of Cowley's desire to be 'the Muses Hannibal' that I do want to briefly discuss the work and how it contributes to Cowley's presentation of his oeuvre in his bid for canonicity. Cowley intended that the epic should appear in twelve books following the model of Virgil; however, Cowley only finished four books, which were printed in English alongside extensive commentary. The first book was also translated into Latin, and many of the sources and notes in the epic are printed in Latin and Greek without translation, advertising that the epic was meant for an elite, educated and well-read audience. In Cowley's preface to *Poems* he provides details of the events for the twelve intended books, but protests that in the end he had neither the leisure nor the '*Appetite* at present' to finish. Yet, rather than withholding the epic, Cowley revised and published what he had written as part of *Poems*, a collection he begins with the poem 'Motto' which revealed his epic ambition. His conclusion to his preface reveals the sheer magnitude of attempting to compose a sacred epic. The Bible is, in Cowley's estimation, a worthwhile source for a literary masterpiece, but it would take the most skilled artist in order to utilise it effectively: 'For if any man design to compose a *Sacred Poem*, by only turning a story of the *Scripture*, like Mr. *Quarles*'s, or some other godly matter, like Mr. *Heywood of Angels*, into *Rhyme*; He is so far from elevating of *Poesie*, that he only *abases Divinity*.'[554] Nonetheless Cowley attempts the endeavour, admitting that:

[554] *Poems*, sig.b3r; Thomas Heywood wrote a didactic poem in 9 books, *The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels* (1635) and Frances Quarles produced several poems based on scripture such as *Feast for Wormes* (1620) and *Sion Sonets sung by Solomon the King* (1624) which are primarily scriptural paraphrases, meditations or aphorisms.

> I am farre from assuming to my self to have fulfilled this duty of this weighty undertaking : But sure I am, that there is nothing yet in our *Language* (nor perhaps in *any*) that is any degree answerable to the *Idea* that I conceive of it. And I shall be ambitious of no other fruit from this weak and imperfect attempt of mine, but the opening of a way to the courage and industry of some other persons, who may be better able to perform it thoroughly and successfully.[555]

Cowley recognises the importance of the epic genre for achieving literary fame. Yet, writing in the mid-seventeenth century, he argues that it is a timely moment in which to review the state of epic poetry, arguing vehemently that a biblical epic would be the crowning achievement not just for English poetry but all modern – to his lifetime – poetry. In introducing *Gondibert* Davenant argued the merits of epic poetry, but specifically English epic poetry. Cowley drives this argument further by suggesting the definitive English epic would be divinely inspired, not by the classical deities of the ancient world, but based on their own Christian religion. Living as a royalist exile in France, Cowley would have been familiar with earlier continental models of the Christian epic such as Sanazaro's *De Partu Virginis* (1526) and Du Bartas's *Judit* (1574) and *La Semaine* (1578).[556] Nonetheless, Cowley argues that even outside of England there is perhaps no example that fully realises his own lofty goal, either for lack of obedience to the Virginian model Cowley deemed most suitable for epic, or perhaps because their subject was not as elevated as the life of David, 'who from so small beginnings, through such infinite troubles and oppositions, by such miraculous virtues and excellencies, and with such incomparable variety of wonderful actions and accidents, became the greatest *Monarch* that ever sat upon the most *famous* Throne of the whole

[555] *Poems*, sig.b3v.
[556] See Timothy Dykstal, 'The Epic Reticence of Abraham Cowley', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 3:1 (Winter, 1991), 95-115 (p.96).

Earth.'[557] The life of David offers Cowley grand subject matter fitting for the epic genre, as well as a platform to dialogue about issues so close to home, a king overcoming opposition, in a poem heavily conceived of and written during the Civil War and ensuing Interregnum period. Cowley laments that he did not fully realise the project, but hopes to serve as an inspiration for future authors. In this way he makes a case for his own literary significance because of his ideas about the English epic, and the potential that *Davideis* will encourage further English epic poems that acquiesce with Cowley's theories and ideas about the genre.

Cowley's attempt to preserve his own reputation by encouraging other writers to follow his model bore some fruit. *Davideis* was one of the works which inspired Milton to include Cowley among his three favourite English poets.[558] Cowley's epic was not just enjoyed by Milton but was one of the sources that inspired and influenced one of Milton's most acclaimed works, *Paradise Lost*. The influence of *Davideis* on *Paradise Lost* is undeniable. Nethercot argues that ideas and passages in *Paradise Lost* including the discussion of fatal qualities of gold, the use of proper names, the division of labour in constructing Pandemonium and the image of Satan and his staff, 'Which Nature meant some tall ship's masts to be' in Cowley's words, are all undoubtedly suggested to Milton through *Davideis*.[559] Timothy Dykstal similarly demonstrates many of the ways in which *Davideis* serves as a model for *Paradise Lost*, particularly in the first two books.[560] One of the more recent articles to consider the significance of the epic is Joseph Wallace's study of true and false religion in the poem. Wallace similarly observes that '*Davideis* also provided a way for Milton to think about the central difficulty of writing a sacred epic in the seventeenth century: the friction between Christian truth and pagan cultural traditions.'[561] *Davideis* not only

[557] Cowley, sig.b2r.
[558] The other two being Spenser and Shakespeare (Loiseau, p.10).
[559] Arthur H. Nethercot, *Abraham Cowley: The Muse's Hannibal* (London: OUP, 1931), p.52.
[560] Dykstal, pp.103-104.
[561] Joseph Wallace, 'True Poetry and False Religion in Abraham Cowley's *Davideis*', *RES* (2015), 895-914 (p.913).

informs and shapes some of the content of *Paradise Lost*, it also motivates Milton's thinking about both religious and poetic truth, as Wallace reveals. Milton may have been the most successful poet to attempt an English biblical epic after Cowley, but certainly not the only one. For example, Reverend Samuel Wesley attempted his own epic poem, *The Life of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (1693) in which Wesley acknowledges that he owes *Davideis* a great debt.[562] Clearly Cowley enjoyed some success in his desire to influence the genre even if he did not contribute the defining work previously envisioned.

Today it is difficult to consider Cowley's epic as influential when so few people read, or have even heard of *Davideis* at present. The decline in the poem's standing began near the end of the eighteenth century, when Cowley himself began to fall into greater obscurity. Charles Martindale attributes *Davideis's* failure to endure to the author's own limitations: he 'is too small a poet for the magnitude of the task he has set himself; whereas there can be successful minor lyrics, a good minor epic is almost a contradiction in terms – epic must be great or fail.'[563] Martindale attributes some of these failings to subject matter; whereas Milton chose to render the Bible as myth, Cowley attempted a more historical style of writing, which was smoother, but he did not take the same risks in elevating his subject matter that Milton undertook. Cowley wanted to write a biblical epic but could not make his subject work for him. Reflecting on *Davideis* in the eighteenth century, Johnson remarked 'There are not many examples of so great a work produced by an author generally read, and generally praised, that has crept through a century with so little regard. Whatever is said of Cowley, is meant of his other works.'[564] However, there are several examples of both Cowley and particularly *Davideis* being read and praised in the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries. For example, René Rapin (1621-1687) in his *Reflections on Aristotle's treatise of*

[562] Loiseau, p.33.
[563] Charles Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of the Ancient Epic* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1986, 2002), p.31.
[564] Samuel Johnson, 'Cowley', in *The Lives of the English Poets; and a Criticism of their Works* (Dublin: Printed for Messrs. Whitestone et al, 1779), p.57.

poesie (1674) argues that 'In the *Davideis* (fragment and imperfect as it is) there shines something of a more fine, more free, more new, and more noble *air*, than appears in the *Hierusalem* of *Tasso*.'[565] It is praised in biographical accounts of the poet, such as those by William Winstanley and Gerard Langbaine, and referenced by other authors, for instance, in Thomas Gibbons essay on rhetoric (1767) and in *The works of Mr. William Congreve* (1717), in which there is a citation referring to Cowley's notes on the epic.[566] In 1712 Thomas Ellwood published a lengthy imitation of the text also titled *Davideis*.[567] The epic's most glaring deficiency, both in Cowley's time and at present, is the fact that the work was never completed, yet Cowley does his best to justify this in his preface, and he certainly does so with more success than Davenant did with *Gondibert*. The inclusion of *Davideis* in *Poems,* although no longer the bright point within Cowley's oeuvre that the author intended, was evidently meant to showcase the author's poetic talents and classical training, influence contemporary thinking about the English epic genre and garner the poet at least some modicum of fame. In the mid-seventeenth century no genre was regarded more highly than the epic, and *Davideis* was certainly written and published with the goal of attaining Cowley fame both as a writer of epic poetry and critic of the epic genre. It is undeniable that he was at least marginally successful, if falling short of his loftier goal of being the Muse's Hannibal.

Later Years

During the final years of the protectorate Cowley undertook the study of botany and medicine at Oxford, briefly returning to France.[568] After the Restoration Cowley retired to the

[565] René Rapin, *Reflections on Aristotle's treatise of poesie containing the necessary, rational, and universal rules for epick, dramatick,and other sorts of poetry: with reflections on the works of the ancient and modern poets, and their faults noted* (London: Printed by T.N. for H. Herringman, 1674), sig.a4r.
[566] Thomas Gibbons, *Rhetoric: or, a view of its principal tropes and figures* (London: Printed by J. and W. Oliver, 1767).
[567] On this text and other imitations see Abraham Cowley's *CELM* page < http://www.celm-ms.org.uk/introductions/CowleyAbraham.html >.
[568] For a biographical account of Cowley's life during this time see *ODNB* and Nethercot.

countryside, dabbling in scientific experiments. His hobbies were mirrored in his writing, in which his attention shifted from verse to prose, and from love to philosophy.[569] Cowley's essays, primarily written in his retirement, cover a variety of topics from contemplative meditations to political quandaries. Some of his essays also reflect on his literary career and ambitions, and most of them include new pieces of verse that he had written or translations of classical poets like Horace and Martial, quite often both. In the essay *Of Greatness*, first published in the posthumous *Works of Mr Abraham Cowley* (1668), Cowley discusses greatness as an abstract concept, but clearly is reflecting on his own endeavours to achieve prestige for his contributions to literature:

> Since we cannot attain to Greatness (saies the *Sieur de Montagn*), let's have our revenge by railing at it: this he spoke but in Jest. I believe he desired it no more than I do, and had less reason, for he enjoyed so plentiful and honourable a fortune in a most excellent Country, as allowed him all the real conveniences of it, separated and purged from the incommodities. If I were but in his condition, I should think it hard measure, without being convinced of any crime, to be sequestered from it and made one of the Principal Officers of State. But the Reader may think that what I now say is of small authority, because I never was, nor ever shall be, put to the trial; I can therefore only make my Protestation,
>
> *If ever I more Riches did desire*
> *Then Cleanliness and Quiet do require;*
> *If e'er Ambition did my Fancy cheat,*
> *With any wish so mean as to be great,*
> *Continue, Heav'n, still from me to remove*
> *The Humble Blessings of that Life I love.*

[569] E.C. Pettet, 'A Study of Abraham Cowley', *The Journal of the English Association*, 4:21 (1942), 86-89.

> I know very many men will despise, and some pity me, for this humour, as a poor-spirited fellow; but I'me content, and, like *Horace*, thank God for being so.[570]

Cowley begins by suggesting that people who claim they do not have a desire for greatness are those who desire it most, yet perhaps have not been able to attain it or retain it to the degree which they were hoping. He opts for a simple life, rather than greatness, yet his examples show that he seeks his contentment in a similar fashion to great figures like Horace, and later in the essay Seneca, analysing their great works to show their humility, but also painting them as brilliant writers and reminding readers of their famed works. The most eminent authors did not need greatness, according to Cowley, and he endeavours to count himself among these venerated writers, joining Montaigne in railing against greatness as only the greats can.

Cowley in his final years may have concentrated on prose writing, but he nonetheless still considered himself a poet, including short pieces of verse in almost all of his essays, as we can see in *Of Greatness*. One of the more interesting examples of Cowley's late poetry is the Latin epitaph he composed to commemorate his literary legacy at the conclusion of his essay *Of Myself*, 'Epitaphium Vivi Auctoris.'

> *Hic, O viator, sub Lare parvulo*
> Couleius *Hic est Conditus, Hic Jacet*;
> *Defunctus humani Laboris*
> *Sorte, supervacuaque vitâ*.
> *Non* Indecorà pauperie *Nitens*,
> *Et Non* inerti *nobilis* otio,
> *Vanóque dilectis popello*

[570] Cowley, *Works* (1668), sigs.P4v-Q1r.

Divitiis animosus hostis

Possis ut illum dicere mortuum;

En Terra jam nunc Quantula *sufficit?*

Exempta sit Curis, viator,

Terra sit illa Levis, precare.

Hic sparge Flores, *sparge breves* Rosas,

Nam vita gaudet Mortua Floribus,

Hesbisque Odoratis Cornoa

Vatis adhuc Cinerem Calentem.

Here wayfarer, beneath a little roof, here Cowley lies buried, discharged from the lot of human labour and from a useless life. He throve in honourable poverty, he was ennobled by active leisure, and was a bold foe to wealth beloved of the idle populace. That you may know him to be dead, see how small a plot of earth now suffices him! Pray, wayfarer, that this earth may be free from cares and lie lightly on him. Here strew flowers, strew short-lived roses, for a life that is dead delights in flowers, and crown with fragrant herbs the still warm ashes of the bard.[571]

As with his preface to *Poems*, Cowley discusses the topic of literary fame as something to be achieved posthumously, a conventional and unavoidable theme in writing epitaphs. What is less common is an author writing their own epitaph to shape and address their own posthumous legacy. Cowley brings to mind an image of a pantheon of great authors enshrined in the muse's garden with classical and floral imagery. He refers to himself as 'vatis,' a bard or prophet in addition to a poet, delighting in the 'flores' (flowers) and 'rosas' (roses) strewn about his corpse. He also asks that '*Terra sit illa Levis, precare*,' that the earth

[571] Poems, sigs.T2r-v; Lumby/Tilley, pp.115-16.

lies lightly on him, reflecting a desire to be kept near the surface rather than buried deep and forgotten. In his 'Motto' Cowley acknowledged that to achieve fame an author needs an elegy to commemorate his legacy. He writes his own, in order to reveal how he wants to be remembered, as humble, active and a poet, but most importantly, he wants to be remembered, that his reputation and literary fame not lie buried with his mortal corpse.

Conclusion

Cowley's reputation has declined greatly since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[572] Yet in his lifetime, and for over a century afterward, he was read, admired, imitated and re-printed.[573] His reputation today is only a fragment of what it was in the seventeenth century, but he still finds his way into select anthologies and he is a poet whose works and influence cannot easily be removed from studies of the clearly canonical Donne, Milton, Dryden, Pope and Johnson. In terms of self-canonisation, Cowley involved himself in the process of publishing and printing his works, most notably his juvenilia collection *Poetical Blossoms* in 1633 and *Poems* in 1656. His works and career shed some light on the relationship between stationers and the authors who endeavoured to widely disseminate their works and shape their own reception and legacy. Cowley deliberately selected and justified each of the works he chose to publish, and many of his individual works in verse and prose demonstrate his interest in self-promotion, attaining fame and influencing English literary tastes about poetry, genre conventions and authorial reputation. Cowley has influenced and engaged in intellectual debates about literature with many of the most prominent authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries including Crashaw, Davenant, Philips, Milton, Dryden, Pope and Johnson. He wrote in and critiqued a number of literary genres, including

[572] I argue there are a number of factors that contribute in to this decline, most importantly his classification as a metaphysical poet, but that is outside of the parameters of this study which is interested in Cowley's attempts to self-canonise rather than his reception in the nineteenth and later centuries.
[573] See Jean Loiseau , *Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England* (Paris: Henri Didier, 1931) for examples of Cowley's reputation from his lifetime into the twentieth century.

the lyric poem and the epic, and contributed to the development of English literary criticism, most notably with his work to define wit a century ahead of Addison and Johnson. His career reveals an interest in shaping the English literary canon, even if he never uses the term 'canon' in this context, and draws connections between classical precept and English vernacular practice. Modern scholarship has relegated Cowley to a minor position within the canon, yet I hope that in this chapter I have demonstrated the many ways in which the author is an ideal focal point when thinking about the shape, content and development of the mid-seventeenth century English literary canon.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to reveal the ways seventeenth-century writers, publishers and readers thought about literary merit, authorial fame, the preservation of literature and the value of English poetry and prose prior to the application of the term 'canon' to vernacular English literature, demonstrating that the concept of an English literary canon was very much alive and evolving prior to the eighteenth century. I argue that the English literary canon that can be recognised in the eighteenth century has earlier roots than most scholars of literary canons appreciate, and that understanding this is critical, not only to revitalise studies into the development and purpose of the literary canon, but in order to engage more effectively with English writing prior to the eighteenth century. I approached this topic because the impact of canonicity and the role of literary canons on readers, writers, educators, scholars, editors and publishers has always been of undeniable importance regarding the influence, reach and purposes of English literature.

Presently the majority of discussions about the seventeenth-century canon do not take into consideration seventeenth-century authors' thinking about ideas relevant to creating, influencing and promoting an English literary canon. In 1994 Bloom published his somewhat controversial *The Western Canon*, asserting unquestionably which 26 authors are central to the western literary canon. According to Bloom, he selects these authors for 'their sublimity and representative nature,' for their 'strangeness,' but ultimately because they have survived and influence what comes later.[574] His canon does not particularly consider the thoughts and actions of the medieval and early modern writers on his list, but focuses instead on the impact that these writers have had on the modern literary canon, their ability to withstand the test of time. As John Lyon argues, the test of time is one in which the 'jury will always be out' and primarily only establishes that literature has survived without offering enough information

[574] Bloom, pp.1-11.

about why this is the case.[575] All canons, as Lyon suggests, must have an irrelevant function. As long as criticism persists, our canons and tastes are free to change; one day even Shakespeare may fall into oblivion. Yet, for the purpose of historical study, arbitrary limits provide manageable confines in which to promote understanding about the contexts and mentalities within which literature has been produced. Moreover, current intellectual engagement with English literature relies on acknowledging certain limitations, and on provoking questions in addition to providing answers. The qualms of scholars critical of literary canons, including Frank Kermode and Robert von Hallberg, relate to the biased and exclusive nature of canons; academics and writers arguing in favour of complete literary canon eradication might be equally satisfied by a more objective canon. In spite of this, the idea of a more inclusive early modern canon ignores the fact that what we are analysing is a period rife with gendered, racial and religious exclusions. A fair and inclusive canon might be more irrelevant and impossible to realise than a timeless one, as that canon, even if achievable, must completely ignore the historical circumstances of literary production. It is why in this study I argue there is greater value in analysing thinking about literary canons.

There are studies, like Richard Terry's *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past: 1660-1781*, that do express an interest in understanding writers' thoughts about literature, but still argue more persuasively for the achievements of writers like Joseph Addison, Giles Jacob, Samuel Johnson, Alexander Pope and Joseph Warton during the eighteenth century. Part of this might be because, as Terry argues, the motives for canonising poets and dramatists changes in the eighteenth century: 'The idea of fame, indispensable to the excavation of the literary past during the seventeenth century, becomes less persuasive in the eighteenth.'[576] Yet this is part of what I argue is problematic with many studies about the English literary canon prior to the eighteenth century; when thinking shifts, it is discounted as

[575] John Lyon, 'The Test of Time: Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne', *Essays in Criticism*, XLIX, 1 (1999), 1-21 (p.2).
[576] Terry, p.3.

inferior or cast aside as unrecognisable in comparison to the ideas about authorship and literary value that emerge in the eighteenth century and later. In order to appreciate the development of the English literary canon in its present form, and to understand and interpret the works of pre-eighteenth century authors, we must recognise that in the seventeenth century an English literary canon was neither a foreign concept, or an inferior and less formed version of both the eighteenth-century and modern English literary canons.

Throughout this study I endeavoured to show the contributions made in this period to the development of ideas in various kinds of writing and textual activity: the compilation and publication of printed collections in verse and prose, literary criticism and theory, the life of the poet, commendatory poetry and the process of self-canonisation, the latter in large part through an assessment of the career of Abraham Cowley, but also through an evaluation of the works of writers like William Davenant and John Dryden. I selected case studies that are clearly, as this thesis has shown, influential on ideas relevant to an emerging English literary canon, despite many of these works receiving minimal attention by modern scholars of literary canons. Currently studies about canons focus on its contents, the extent and shape, who and what to include, and whether or not we should, or even could, reject the idea of having a canon altogether. There are a number of factors that influence the shape and content of the English literary canon: cultural, social, religious and moral, political and economic. In this thesis I was most interested in demonstrating the active role played by seventeenth-century writers in the development and establishment of the conception of an English literary canon, in contrast to the critical tendency to view canon-formation as largely a function of literary reception. Where many scholars like Bloom, Gorak and Kramnick treat the literary canon as a retrospective artefact, I argue that it is also a progressive activity.

Implications and Next Steps

In my introduction I provided the parameters of this study, identifying what I argue is the most useful way to approach a discussion about the development of the English literary canon in the seventeenth century, as well as why this discussion is of academic and cultural value. In this study I concentrate primarily on the appearance and content of the emerging English literary canon alongside seventeenth-century thinking about authorship, literary posterity and the criteria for influential and celebrated literature. My introduction briefly surveyed several examples of modern thinking about the English literary canon, including studies by Bloom, Gorak, Guillory and Kramnick; however, my case studies primarily concentrated on identifying and analysing seventeenth-century thinking and literary theory. Future studies might go further in drawing parallels between modern and early modern thinking about canons, applying key precepts of modern literary canon theory to seventeenth-century texts. For instance, Guillory's reconsideration of the core curriculum certainly has implications relevant to the study of seventeenth-century literature. He recognises that the canon negotiates between the modern and historical, either presenting older works in translation or removing them entirely to make space for newer texts. His analysis suggests that "Canonicity is not a property of the work itself but of its transmission" and that what is included in educational curriculum reflects the culture of a specific university.[577] Guillory's focus is on the manner in which modern scholars make space for and interpret older literary works and authors; yet, I argue that more can be done to include older texts and authors in debates about the English literary canon. Authors like Cavendish, Cowley, Davenant and Dryden have clearly contributed to the conversation about the shape and content of the English literary canon. I propose the modern canon debate would be richer, and offer greater insight into notions about literature in the seventeenth century and earlier, if we included these conversations in the corpus of works about the literary canon. Similarly, although the

[577] Guillory, pp.50-56.

predominance of royalist case studies in this thesis is coincidental, further research into this period could certainly consider the impact of the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration on canon-formation more specifically, both in regards to royalist and non-royalist influences. Studies like Wilcher's historicise the royalist experience of conflict, war and exile, offering insight into the contexts in which writers like Cowley, Davenant, Denham and Waller were working and writing. New studies could do more to tie these experiences more specifically to thinking about literary canons and literary critical theory. In this study I have attempted to do some of the initial work necessary to demonstrate how seventeenth-century thinking might fit into modern scholarship about literary canons and literary criticism, and, more importantly, the contribution this type of work would offer to both studies about canons and seventeenth-century English literature.

This project endeavours to be the beginning of the much larger task of re-evaluating how we approach studies about English vernacular canons, particularly literary canons in the early modern period and earlier. In this study I concentrated on a number of genres, rather than a particular genre, to demonstrate that notions of canonicity can be found in a variety of works across the period, and reflect the efforts and interests of various writers, publishers and readers. I also demonstrated that many authors in this period attempted to influence ideas of canonicity in a number of ways, usually by writing and theorising in several genres. While the case studies I analysed are representative, and arguably the strongest examples of the contributions of different kinds of writing to the inception and development of the English literary canon, more can be done to understand early thoughts and terminology surrounding the construction of a literary canon from the mid-seventeenth century. Similarly, while my study rolled back the period boundaries in which we discuss the emergence of the English

literary canon, the canon does not begin here. Again, re-iterating Ross, canon-making begins with authorship and authorship does not begin in the seventeenth century.[578]

There are two main reasons why the parameters of this study concentrate on the mid-to-late seventeenth century, rather than an earlier period. First, by concentrating on this period in the second half of the century – a period which has received some critical attention in recent studies about English literary canons, criticism and poetry, such as the work of Richard Terry, Trevor Ross and Michael Gavin – I am able to shed light on both the benefits and weaknesses of current scholarship about ideas of canonicity in the seventeenth-century. In doing so I am able to reveal new ways of examining English literature and thinking about literature within the context of studies about literary canons prior to the eighteenth century. This includes appreciating how genres such as commendatory poetry or life writing contribute to influencing literary tastes, genre conventions, notions of authorship and literary immortality, all of which are relevant themes in thinking about literary canons. Second, I am able to draw parallels with what modern scholars recognise as the English literary canon that emerges in the eighteenth century. The canon in the seventeenth century is recognisable, as I have demonstrated throughout this study, and emphasising these areas of familiarity is essential in indicating why this is a significant moment in which to consider the conception and development of the English literary canon. The nascent idea of what a literary canon might be in the sixteenth century, or even the eleventh century, might be very different from the emerging canon I have traced from the mid-seventeenth century, just as this seventeenth-century canon is at times hard to recognise from a modern perspective. I contend that a gradual rolling back of the boundaries in which mainstream criticism analyses the English literary canon is necessary. Before scholars can appreciate the contribution of a much less familiar English literary canon in the eleventh century they must first recognise and

[578] Ross, p.26

acknowledge the contribution of the seventeenth-century which is still clearly overlooked in most studies about the English literary canon at present. I hope that this study will contribute greatly to changing how we recognise and approach seventeenth-century ideas about literature and literary canons, which will motivate future research to more fully investigate literary canons in the sixteenth century and earlier.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were consulted using *EEBO* and *ECCO*.

PRIMARY

Francis Bacon, *The Twoo Bookes of Francis Bacon of the proficience and aduancement of Learning, diuine and humane* (London: Printed for Henrie Tomes, 1605)

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beavmont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley, 1647)

Richard Brome, *A Jovial Crew: Or the Merry Beggars* (London: Printed for E.D. and N.E., 1652)

Thomas Brown of Shifnal, *Miscellanea Aulica: or, A Collection of State-Treatises, never before publish'd* (London, 1702).

Margaret Cavendish, 'An Epistle To my Readers', in *Natures Pictvres* (London: Printed for Martin and Allestyre, 1656), sigs.c1r-c1v

—— *The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince William Cavendishe* (London: Printed by A. Maxwell, 1667)

—— *The Life of William Cavendish Duke of Newcastle*, ed. by C. H. Firth (London, New York: George Routledge & Sons, Dutton & Co**,** 1906)

Certain Verses Written By severall of the Authors Friends (London: 1653)

The Character of A Town-Gallant (London: Printed for Rowland Reynolds, 1680)

John Cotgrave, *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1655)

—— *Wits Interpreter, the English Parnassus* (London: Printed for N. Brooke, 1655)

Abraham Cowley, '*Letters by the famous Mr. Abraham* Cowley (*then Secretary to my Lord* Jermyn) *during King* Charles *the Second's Exile; written from* Paris *to Mr.* Henry Bennet, *afterwards Earl of* Arlington*'*, in *Miscellanea aulica: or, a collection of state-treatises, never before publish'd* (London: Printed for J. Hartley, 1702), sigs.K1v-L8v.

—— *The Mistresse, or seuerall copies of love-verses* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1647)

—— ‘To Sir William D’Avenant, upon his two first Books of GONDIBERT, finished before his Voyage to *America*’, in *A Discourse upon Gondibert* (Paris: Matthew Gvillemont, 1650), sigs.A3r-A3v

—— ‘TO S^{R} WILL. D’AVENANT, UPON HIS TWO FIRST BOOKS OF GONDIBERT, FINISH’D BEFORE HIS VOYAGE TO *AMERICA*’, in Sir William Davenant’s Gondibert, ed. by David F. Gladish (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp.270-271

—— *Poems* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1656)

—— *Poems* ed. by A.R. Waller (Cambridge: CUP, 1905)

—— *Poetical Blossoms* (London: Henry Seile, 1633, 1636, 1637)

—— *The Works of Mr Abraham Cowley* (London: Printed by J.M. for Henry Herringman, 1668)

William Davenant, *Gondibert* (London: 1650, 1651)

—— *The Platonick Lovers* (London: 1636)

—— *The Works of S^{r} William Davenant* (London: Printed by T.N. for Henry Herringman, 1673)

John Denham, ‘On Mr. Abraham Cowley: His Death and Burial Amongst the Ancient Poets’, in *Poems and Translations with the Sophy* (London: Printed for H. Herringman, 1668)

—— ‘On Mr. John Fletcher’s Workes’, in Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beavmont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley)

John Dryden, *Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders 1666 An Historical Poem* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1667)

—— *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1668)

—— Epigram on Milton, in John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Printed by Miles Flesher for Jacob Tonson, 1688)

—— ‘To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve, On His COMEDY, call’d, The Double-Dealer’, in William Congreve, *The Double-Dealer, A Comedy* (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1694), sig.a2r-a3v

Richard Flecknoe, ‘To the Duke of *Newcastle*; On my Lady-Dutchess writing of his LIFE’, *Euterpe Revived. or, Epigrams Made at Several Times* (London: 1675), sig.C1r

John Fletcher, *The Wild-Goose Chase* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1652), Wing B1616

Thomas Fuller, *The history of the worthies of England* (London: printed by John Grismond, William Leybourne and William Godbid, 1662)

Benjamin Furly, *The Worlds Honour Detected* (London: Printed for Robert Wilton, 1663)

Thomas Gibbons, *Rhetoric: or, a view of its principal tropes and figures* (London: Printed by J. and W. Oliver, 1767)

J.G. (John Gough), *Academy of Complements* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1640, 1641, 1645, 1650, 1658)

Thomas Hayward, *The Quintessence of English Poetry: Or, a Collection of all the Beautiful Passages in our Poems and Play: From the Celebrated Spencer to 1688* (London: Printed for Olive Payne, 1711)

Robert Howard, *The Great Favourite, or, the Duke of Lerma* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1668)

Richard Hurd (ed.) *The Essays of Abraham Cowley* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1868)

Samuel Johnson, *The lives of the English poets; and a criticism of their works* vols 1-3 (Dublin: printed for Messrs. Whitestone et al, 1779-81)

Ben Jonson, 'To the memory of my beloued, The AVTHOR Mr. William Shakespeare: AND what he hath left vs', *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories & Tragedies* (London: Printed by Isaac Iaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623)

George Lisle Knight, 'To the memory of my most honoured kinsman, Mr. *Francis Beaumont*', in Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies* (London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley, 1647)

Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (London: Printed by L.L. for George West and Henry Clements, 1691)

—— *Momus Triumphans: or The Plagiaries of the English Stage* (Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society, 1971, originally 1688 [1687])

Letters and Poems In Honour of the Incomparable Princess, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle (London: Printed by Thomas Newcombe, 1676)

Ben Maers, in Abraham Cowley, *Poetical Blossomes* (London: for Henry Seile, 1633), A1v

Andrew Marvell, '*On Mr.* Milton's *Paradise Lost*', in John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Printed by S. Simmons, 1674), sig.A3r-A3v

Edward Millington, *A Choice Catalogue of the Library of John Parsons, Esquire*, (London: 1682)

John Milton, *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton* (Amsterdam: 1698)

—— *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. by John Carey, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 1997)

—— *Paradise Lost* (London: Printed by Samuel Simons, 1667)

—— *Poems of Mr. John Milton* (London: Moseley, 1645)

Edward Phillips,*Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum* (Canterbury: Printed by Simmons and Kirkby, 1800 first 1675)

Henry Playford, *Luctus Britannici, or, the Tears of the British Muses for the Death of John Dryden, Esq.* (London: Printed for Henry Playford and Abel Roper, 1700)

Alexander Pope, *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace, Imitated* (London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1737)

George Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie* (London: Printed by Richard Field, 1589)

Henry Scougal, *The Compleat English Secretary And Newest Academy of Complements* (London: Printed for C. Brown and T. Norris, 1714)

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Troades* trans. by Edward Sherburne (London: Printed by Anne Godbid and John Playford for Samuel Carr, 1679)

Robert Shiells, *The lives of the poets of Great Britain and Ireland* II (London: Printed for R. Griffiths, 1753)

Sir Phillip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London: Printed for Henry Olney, 1595)

—— *The Defence of Poesie* (London: Printed for William Ponsonby, 1595)

Edmund Spenser, *The Works of that Famous English Poet Mr. Edmund Spenser* (London, Printed by Henry Hills for Jonathan Edwin, 1679)

Thomas Sprat, 'An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Abraham Cowley Written to Mr M. Clifford', in *Poems* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1656), sigs.A1r-e2r

Richard Tottel, *Songes and Sonettes 2nd edn* (London: 1557)

Richard Twiss, *Chess*, 2 volumes (London: printed for G.G. J & J. Robinson, and T. & J. Egerton, 1787), vol.2

Edmund Waller, 'To Sir William D'Avenant, upon his two first Books of GONDIBERT, finished before his Voyage to *America*', in *A Discourse upon Gondibert* (Paris: Matthew Gvillemont, 1650), sigs.A2r-A2v

—— 'TO S^{R} WILL. D'AVENANT, UPON HIS TWO FIRST BOOKS OF GONDIBERT, FINISH'D BEFORE HIS VOYAGE TO *AMERICA*', in Sir William Davenant's Gondibert, ed. by David F. Gladish (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp.269-270

Horace Walpole's *A catalogue of the royal and noble authors of England, With LISTS of their WORKS*, 2 vols (Printed at Strawberry-Hill, 1758)

Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Dr John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr Richard Hooker, Mr George Herbert* (London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb for Richard Marriott, 1670)

Joseph Warton *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1756)

Samuel Wesley, *Maggots: or, Poems on Several Subjects* (London: Printed for John Dunton, 1685)

William Winstanley, *The Lives of the most Famous English Poets* (London: Printed by H. Clark for Samuel Manship1687)

—— *The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets* (1687), facsimile reproduction (1963) with introduction by William Riley Parker <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15461/15461-h/15461-h.htm > [accessed 9 September 2013]

The Woman turn'd Bully. A Comedy (London: Printed by J.C. for T. Dring, 1675)

Anthony Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses: An Exact History of all the Writers and Bishops who have had their Education in the most ancient and famous University of Oxford* (London: Printed for Tho. Bennet, 1691)

W.P, '*The Wits Academy: or, the Muses delight* (London: 1677)

SECONDARY

Gavin Alexander (ed.), *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesie' and selected Renaissance Literary criticism* (London: Penguin Books, 2004)

Annals of English Literature 1475-1925 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936)

John H. Astington, 'Dramatic Extracts in the Interregnum', *RES* 54:217 (Nov 2003), 601-614

Irene Backus, *Life Writing in Reformation Europe* (Ashgate: Hampshire, 2008)

John Barnard, 'Creating an English literary canon, 1679-1720: Jacob Tonson, Dryden and Congreve', in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book* ed. by Simon Eliot, Andrew Nash and Ian Willison (London: British Library, 2007), pp.307-22

Elizabeth Scott Baumann, *Forms of Engagement: Women, Poetry and Culture, 1640-1680* (Oxford: OUP, 2013)

Peter Beal, 'Abraham Cowley', *CELM E* <www.celm-ms.org.uk/introductions/CowleyAbraham.html>

—— 'Notions in Garrison: The Seventeenth-Century Commonplace Book', in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985-1991*, ed. by W. Speed Hill (Binghamton NY, RETS, 1993), pp.131-147

James P. Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poets' War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001)

Maureen Bell, 'Booksellers without an Author, 1627-1685', in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: OUP, 2007), pp.260-85

Barbara Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996)

Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 3rd edn (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2004)

Gerald Bentley, 'John Cotgrave's "English Treasury of Wit and Language" and the Elizabethan Drama', *Studies in Philology*, 40, 2 (1943), 186-203

David M. Bergeron, *Textual patronage in English drama, 1570-1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Stephen Bernard (ed.), *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons* (Oxford: OUP, 2015).

James Biester, 'Gender and Style in Seventeenth-Century Commendatory Verse', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33:3 (Summer, 1983), 507-522

Mark Bland, *A Guide to Early Printed Books and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)

Peter Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks', in *A New History of Early English Drama* ed. by John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp.383-422

Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994)

James T. Boulton (ed.) *Dryden of Dramatick Poesie An Essay* (Oxford: OUP, 1964)

Andrea Brady, *English Funerary Elegy in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

Jennifer Brady and Early Roy Miner (eds.), *Literary Transmission and authority: Dryden and other writers* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993)

Colin Burrow ‘Combative criticism: Jonson, Milton, and classical literary criticism in England’, in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism III: The Renaissance* ed. by Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 485-499

John Butler ‘The Life of Katherine Philips’, *Luminarium* (15 Apr 2003) <http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/philips/>

John Butt, ‘Izaak Walton’s Methods in Biography’, *Essays and Studies* 19 (1933)

Tanya Caldwell, ‘John Dryden and John Denham’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 46, 1 (2004)

Thomas O. Calhoun, ‘Cowley’s Verse Satire, 1642-43 and the Beginnings of Party Politics’, *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991), 197-206

Thomas O. Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth, Allan Pritchard and J. Robert King (eds.), *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, Volumes 1 and 2 Part 1 (Newark, London and Toronto: University of Delaware Press and Associated University Presses, 1989)

Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2008)

Hero Chalmers, ‘Dismantling the myth of “mad madge”: the cultural context of Margaret Cavendish’s authorial self-presentation’, *Women’s Writing* 4:3 (1997), 323-340

Wayne A. Chandler, *Commendatory verse and authorship in the English Renaissance* (Lewiston, N.Y: Edwin Mellen, 2003)

Warren Chernaik, ‘Books as Memorials: The Politics of Consolation’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 21, Politics, Patronage and Literature in England 1558-1658 Special Number (1991), 207-217

—— ‘Katherine Philips’, *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>

George B. Churchill, ‘The Relation of Dryden’s “State of Innocence” to Milton’s “Paradise Lost” and Wycherley’s “Plain Dealer”: An Inquiry into Dates’, *Modern Philology* 4:2 (October 1906), 381-388

Danielle Clarke, ‘Life Writing’ in *The Oxford Handbook to English Prose 1500-1640* ed by. Andrew Hadfield (Oxford: OUP, 2013)

Brian Corman, ‘What is the Canon of English Drama?’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 26, 2 (1992-1993), 307-321

Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz (eds), *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish* (Massachusetts: Rosemont Publishing, 2003)

Thomas N. Corns, *A History of Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007)

—— (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry, Donne to Marvell* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983)

—— *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature* 1640-1660 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)

Brian Cummings and James Simpson (eds.), *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford: OUP, 2010)

Gary Day and Jack Lynch (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of British Literature 1660-1789* Volume I A-El (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015)

Stephen B. Dobranski, 'The Birth of the Author: The Origins of Early Modern Printed Authority', *DQR Studies in Literature* 43:1 (2008), 23-45

—— (ed.), *Milton in Context* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009)

Lara Dodds, *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2013)

Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011)

—— 'Perishing and Surviving: The Poetry of Donne and Johnson', *Essays in Criticism* 51:1 (2001), 68-8

Cornell March Dowlin, 'The First Edition of *Gondibert*: Quarto or Octavo?', *The Library*, 4:20 (1939-40), 167-79

Katherine Duncan-Jones (ed.), *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works* (Oxford: OUP, 2002)

Quintus Horatius Flaccus, 'II To Antonius Iulus', Odes Book 4, *The Collected Works of Horace* trans. by Lord Dunsany and Michael Oakley (London, New York: J.M. Dent and E.P. Dutton, 1961)

Alvin I. Dust, 'The "Seventh and Last Canto of Gondibert" and Two Dedicatory Poems', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 60:2 (April 1961) 292-285

Timothy Dykstal, 'The Epic Reticence of Abraham Cowley', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 3:1 (Winter, 1991), 95-115

Joshua Eckhardt and Daniel Starza Smith, 'Introduction: Emergence of the English Miscellany', *Material Readings in Early Modern Culture: Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England* (Farnhah: Ashgate, 2014), pp.1-15

Mary Edmond, 'Sir William Davenant (1606-1668)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2009) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7197>

Encyclopedia Britanica < http://www.britannica.com>

Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (eds.), *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003)

James Fitzmaurice, 'Margaret Cavendish (1623-73)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2009) < http://www.oxforddnb.com /view/article/4940>

—— 'Margaret Cavendish on Her Own Writing: Evidence from Revision and Handmade Correction', in *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700: Volume 7 Margaret Cavendish*, ed. by Sarah H. Mendelson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.21-34

—— 'Margaret Cavendish's *Life of William*, Plutarch, and Mixed Genre' in *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish* ed. by Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz (Massachusetts: Rosemont Publishing, 2003), pp.80-102

Alastair Fowler, 'Genre and the Literary Canon', *New Literary History* 11 (1979), 97-119

—— *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982)

Marcie Frank, *Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism: From Dryden to Manley* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003)

David Frost, 'Shakespeare in the Seventeenth Century', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 16:1 (Winter, 1965), 81-89

John Frow, *Genre* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Michael Gavin, *The Invention of English Criticism 1650-1760* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015)
—— 'Politics of Parnassus', in *The Invention of English Criticism 1650-1760* (Cambridge, CUP, 2015), pp.50-73

A.H. Gilbert (ed.), *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1940)

Stuart Gillespie, *Digital Miscellanies Index* <http://digitalmiscellaniesindex.org/featured/?id=06>.

David F. Gladish, *Sir William Davenant's Gondibert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)
Jan Gorak (ed.), *Canon vs Culture*, (New York, London: Garland, 2001)

Jan Gorak (ed.), *Canon vs Culture*, (New York, London: Garland, 2001)

—— *The Making of the Modern Canon: Genesis and Crisis of a Literary Idea* (London and Atlantic Highlands: Athlone, 1991)

Edmund Gosse, *Seventeenth-century Studies: A Contribution to the History of English Poetry* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Co., 1883)

Norman S. Grabo, 'Running the Gauntlet: Seventeenth-Century Literary Criticism', *ELH* 67:3 (Fall, 2000), 697-715

Alfred B. Gough (ed.), Abraham Cowley: The Essays and Other Prose Writings (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1915)

Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2007)

Richard L. Greaves, 'Wild, Robert (1615/16-1679)', *ODNB* (OUP, 2004: Online edn, Jan 2008)

Herbert J.C. Grierson and Sandy Watson, *The Personal Note: Or, First and Last Words from Prefaces, Introductions, Dedications and Epilogues* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946)

Dustin Griffin, *Literary patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996)

Alfred B. Gough (ed.), *Abraham Cowley: The Essays and other Prose Writings* (Oxford: OUP, 1915)

John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: the Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1993)

Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* (Oxford: OUP, 2000)

Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2012)

—— (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose* 1500-1640 (Oxford: OUP, 2013)

—— 'Spenser, Drayton, and the Question of Britain', *RES*, New Series, 51:204 (2000), 582-599

Robert von Hallberg (ed.), *Canons*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984)

Gerald Hammond, *The Metaphysical Poets* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974)

Paul Hammond, *John Dryden A Literary Life*, ed. by Richard Dutton (London: Macmillan, 1991)

Paul Hammond & Blair Worden (eds), *John Milton: life, writing, reputation* (Oxford: OUP, 2010)

Paul Hardacre, 'The Royalists in Exile During the Puritan Revolution, 1642-1660', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 16 (1952-53), 353-70.

Philip Hardie, *Rumour and Renown: Representations of Fama in Western Literature* (New York: CUP, 2012)

Brendan O Hehir, *Harmony from Discords: A Life of Sir John Denham* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968)

Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983)

M. Thomas Hester, 'The Epigram', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. by Dennis Flynn, M. Thomas Hester, and Jeanne Shami (Oxford: OUP, 2011), pp.105-121

Mary Hobbs, 'Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellanies and Their Value for Textual Editors', *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, ed. by Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths, vol 1 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 182-210

—— *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1992)

Edward N. Hooker, H.T. Swedenberg, et al (eds.) *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956-2000)

Frank Livingstone Huntley, 'On the Persons in Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy', *Modern Language Notes* 63:2 (Feb 1948), 88-95

Richard Hurd (ed.), *The Essays of Abraham Cowley* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1868)

Randall Ingram, 'First Words and Second Thoughts: Margaret Cavendish, Humphrey Moseley, and "the Book"', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30:1 (Winter 2000), 101-124

Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998)

Jonathan Jones, 'Get real. Terry Pratchett is not a literary genius', in *The Guardian* (31 August 2015)

Yuji Kaneko (ed.), *Of dramatick poesie, an essay* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Dennis Kay, *Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1990)

William R. Keast, 'Johnson's Criticism of the Metaphysical Poets', *ELH* 17:1 (March 1950), 59-70

W.H.Kelliher, 'John Cotgrave (bap. 1611?, d. in or after 1655), *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6388>

—— 'John Denham (1614/15-1669)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6388>

David Kennedy, *The Elegy* (London: Routledge, 2007)

George A. Kennedy (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol 1: *Classical Criticism* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990)

—— ‘The Origin of the Concept of a Canon and Its Application to the Greek and Latin Classics’, in *Canon vs Culture*, ed. by Jan Gorak (New York: Garland, 2001), pp.105-116

W.P. Ker (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden* (Oxford, OUP, 1926)

Joseph Kerman, ‘A Few Canonic Variations’, *Critical Inquiry*, 10 (1983), 107-125

Frank Kermode, *The Classic* (London: Faber, 1975)

—— ‘The Common Reader’, *Daedalus* 112:1 (Winter 1983), 1-11

—— *Forms of attention* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1985)

—— *Pleasure and Change: The Aesthetics of Canon*, ed. by Robert Alter (Oxford: OUP, 2004)

Paulina Kewes, ‘Gerard Langbaine (1656-1692)’, *ODNB* (OUP, 2004: Online edn, Jan 2008)

—— ‘Gerard Langbaine’s “View of Plagiaries”: The Rhetoric of Dramatic Appropriation in the Restoration’, *RES*, New Series, 48 (1997), 2-18

—— ‘“Give me the Sociable Pocket-Books…”: Humphrey Moseley’s Serial Publication of Octavo Play Collections’, *Publishing History* 38 (January 1995), 5-21

James Kinsley and George Parfitt (eds.) *John Dryden Selected Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970)

Jeffrey Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)

Paul J. Korshin, ‘The Theoretical Bases of Cowley’s Later Poetry’, *Studies in Philology* 66:5 (October 1969), 756-776

Jonathan Brody Kramnick, *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700-1770* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998)

Theresa M. Krier, ‘Introduction: Receive Chaucer in Renaissance England’, in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1998), 1-20

Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003)

Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character 1650-1850* (Oxford: OUP, 2000)

John Francis Lazenby, *Hannibal’s war: a military history of the Second Punic War* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1978)

Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: 1964)

Joseph M. Levine, *Between the Ancients and the Moderns: Baroque Culture in Restoration England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999)

Peter Lindenbaum, 'Humphrey Moseley', in *The British Literary Book Trade, 1475-1700*, ed. by James K. Bracken and Joel Silver (Detroit: Gale Research, 1996), pp.177-183

—— 'Publishers' Booklists in Late Seventeenth-Century London', *The Library*, 11:4 (December 2010), 381-404

Literature Online <http://literature.proquest.com/>

Jean Loiseau, *Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England* (Paris: Henri Didier, 1931).

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

Joseph Rawson Lumby (ed.), *Cowley's Essay*, revised by Arthur Tilley (Cambridge: CUP, 1923)

John Lyon, 'The Test of Time: Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne', *Essays in Criticism*, XLIX, 1 (1999), 1-21

Philip Major (ed.), *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and its Aftermath, 1640-1690* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2016, previously Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995)

Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol (eds.), *Print, Manuscript & Performance* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000)

Catherine Martin and Hassan Melehy, *French Connections in the English Renaissance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

Jessica Martin, *Walton's Lives: Conformist Commemorations and the Rise of Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2001)

Charles Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of the Ancient Epic* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1986, 2002)

Thomas F. Mayer and D.R. Woolf (eds.), *The Rhetorics of Life writing in Early Modern Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995)

William McCarthy, 'Davenant's Prefatory Rhetoric', *Criticism* 20:2 (Spring 1978), 128-143

Robert McCrum, 'The 100 best novels written in English', *The Guardian* <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/aug/17/the-100-best-novels-written-in-english-the-full-list> [accessed 2016]

Joshua J. Mcevilla, *An Online Reader of John Cotgrave's The English Treasury of Wit and Language* <http://shakespeareauthorship.com/cotgrave/index.htm>

Kirk Melnikoff, 'Jones's Pen and Marlowe's Socks: Richard Jones, Print Culture, and the Beginnings of English Dramatic Literature', *Studies in Philology* 102:2 (Spring, 2005), 184-209

Sara H. Mendelson (ed.), *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700*: Volume 7 Margaret Cavendish (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009)

John Milton, *Paradise Lost* ed. by Alastair Fowler, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Pearson, 1997, first 1968)

Samuel Holt Monk (ed.), *The Works of John Dryden* Vol.XVII (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971)

Michael Moriarty, 'French criticism in the seventeenth century', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. by Glyn P Norton, vol 3: The Renaissance (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp.555-565

Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structure of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002)

Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005)

Michael Murrin, 'Poetry as Literary Criticism', *Modern Philology*, 65:3 (Feb 1968), 202-207

Peter Osborne, 'Radicalism without Limit? Discourse, Democracy, and the Politics of Identity,' in *Socialism and the Limits of Liberalism*, ed. by Peter Osborne (New York: Verso, 1991)

Arthur H. Nethercot, *Abraham Cowley: The Muse's Hannibal* (London: Humphrey Milford, OUP, 1931)

—— 'The Letters of Abraham Cowley', *Modern Language Notes* 43:6 (June 1928), pp.369-375

Glyn P Norton (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol 3: *The Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999)

Michelle O'Callaghan, 'Textual Gatherings: Print, Community and Verse Miscellanies in Early Modern England', *Early Modern Culture* 8 (2010), 1-36

D.W. Odell, 'Dryden's Epigram on Milton: A New Reading Questioned', *The Explicator* 68:3 (2010), 159-161

Richard Ohmann, *Politics of Letters* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987)

—— ‘The Shaping of a Canon: U.S. Fiction, 1960-1975’, in *Canons*, ed. by Robert von Hallberg (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984)

ODNB < http://oxforddnb.com/>

OED <www.oed.com>

Kevin Pask, ‘Plagiarism and the Originality of National Literature: Gerard Langbaine’, *English Literary History*, 69 (2002), 727-747

—— *The emergence of the English author: Scripting the life of the poet in early modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996)

Annabel Patterson, ‘Biography’, in *Milton in Context* ed. by Stephen B. Dobranski (Cambridge: CUP, 2009)

C.B.R. Pelling, ‘Biography, Greek and Roman’, in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilzation* ed by. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2004), pp.116-118

E.C. Pettet, ‘A Study of Abraham Cowley’, *The Journal of the English Association*, 4:21 (1942), 86-89.

Elizabeth Pomeroy, *The Elizabethan Miscellanies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973)

Roger Pooley, *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century 1590-1700* (London: Longman, 1992)

Henry Power, ‘“Teares breake off my Verse”: The Virgilian Incompleteness of Abraham Cowley’s *The Civil War*’, *Translation and Literature* 16:2 (2007), 141-159

Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (eds.), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993)

Eoin Price and Ian Cuthbertson, *‘Public’ and ‘Private’ Playhouses in Renaissance England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

Allan Pritchard, *English Biography in the Seventeenth Century* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2005)

Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *Odes 4.2*, in *Horace The Odes*, ed. by Kenneth Quinn (London: Macmillan, 1980)

Timothy Raylor, ‘Exiles, Expatriates and Travellers: Towards a Cultural and Intellectual History of the English Abroad, 1640-1660’, in *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and its Aftermath, 1640-1690*, ed. by Philip Major (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2016, previously Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp.15-43.

John Curtis Reed, ‘Humphrey Moseley, Publisher’, in *Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers*, 2 (1930), 55-142

Representative Poetry Online, <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/my-dear-friend-mr-congreve-his-comedy-calld-double-dealer#47>

Stella P. Revard, ‘Cowley’s “Pindarique Odes” and the Politics of the Inter-regnum’, *Criticism*, 35:3 (summer 1993), 391-418

David Stuart Rhodes, ‘Introduction’, in Gerard Langbaine, Momus Triumphans: or The Plagiaries of the English Stage (Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society, 1971, originally 1688 [1687])

Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal, London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998)

Alan Rudrum, ‘Royalist Lyric’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution* ed. by N.H. Keeble (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1985)

Paul Salzman, ‘Royalist epic and romance’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing the English Revolution*, ed. by N. H. Keeble (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), pp.215-230

J.W. Saunders, ‘From Manuscript to Print: A Note on the circulation of Poetic Manuscripts in the Sixteenth century’, *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society I*, part 8 (1951), 507-28

—— ‘The Stigma of print: a note on the social bases of Tudor Poetry,’ *Essays in criticism* 1 (1951), 139-64

Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991)

Robert Shafer, *The English Ode to 1660: an essay in literary history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1918).

Jeanne Shami, Dennis Flynn and M. Thomas Hester (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Donne* (Oxford: OUP, 2011)

Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000)

Kenneth Sills, ‘References to Dante in Seventeenth-Century English Literature’, *Modern Philology* 3:1 (June 1905), 99-116

William Slights, ‘The Edifying Margins of Renaissance English Books’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 42:4 (1989), 682-716

Adam Smyth, *"Profit and Delight" Printed Miscellanies in England, 1640-1682* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004)

—— 'Such a general itching after book-learning': Popular Readers of 'the most eminent Wits', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 262-272

—— 'Textual Transmission, Reception and the Editing of Early Modern Texts', *Literature Compass* 1 (2004), 1-9

Robin Sowerby, *The Classical Legacy in Renaissance Poetry* (London and New York: Longman, 1994)

Jane Spencer, *Literary Relations: Kinship and the Canon 1660-1830* (Oxford: OUP, 2005)

Joel Elias Spingarn, *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908, 1909)

—— *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1899)

William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004)

Stanley Stewart and Richard Harp (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000)

Nathaniel Stogdill, 'Abraham Colwey's "Pindaric Way": Adapting Athleticism in Interregnum England', *English Literary Renaissance*, 42:3 (Fall 2012), 482-514

Dana F. Sutton, 'Introduction', *Abraham Cowley, Davideos Liber I (1656), The Philological Museum* (Irvine: University of California, 2007) <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/david/>

E.W. Tayler (ed.), *Literary Criticism of Seventeenth-Century England* (iUniverse, 1967, 2000)

Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (eds.), *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007)

Richard Terry, 'Literature, Aesthetics, and Canonicity in the Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 21:1 (1997), 80-101

—— *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past* (Oxford: OUP, 2001)

Janet Todd, 'Aphra Behn (1640-1689)', *ODNB* (OUP, 2004: Online edn, Jan 2008)

Evenly B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993)

David Trotter, *The Poetry of Abraham Cowley* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979)

David Tylden-Wright, *John Aubrey: A Life* (London: HarperCollins, 1991)

Brian Vickers, *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (Oxford: OUP, 1999)

Joseph Wallace, 'True Poetry and False Religion in Abraham Cowley's *Davideis*', *RES* (2015), 895-914

Richard Waswo, 'The rise of vernaculars' in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism III: The Renaissance* ed. by Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp.409-416

George Watson (ed.), *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays, vol.1* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1962)

Scott Wayland, 'Religious Change and the Renaissance Elegy', *English Literary Renaissance* 39:3 (2009), 429-459

Karen Weisman (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy* (Oxford: OUP, 2010)
Anthony Welch, 'Epic Romance, Royalist Retreat, and the English Civil War', *Modern Philology* 105:3 (February 2008), 570-602

Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1598-1602: A Catalogue*, vol.4 (Oxford: *OUP*, 2014)

Robert Wilcher, 'Moseley, Humphrey (b. in or before 1603, d.1661)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19390>

—— *The Writing of Royalism 1628-1660* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001)

Franklin B. Williams Jr, 'Commendatory Verses: The Rise of the Art of Puffing', *Studies in Bibliography* 19 (1966), 1-14

Kelsey Williams, 'Canon before Canon, Literature before Literature: Thomas Pope Blount and the Scope of Early Modern Learning', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 77:2 (2014): 177-199

W. K. Wimsatt Jr and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: a short history* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957)

D.H. Woodward 'The Manuscript Corrections and Printed Variants in the Quatro Edition of *Gondibert* (1651)', *The Library*, 5:20 (1965), 298-309

Blair Worden, *The English Civil Wars 1640-1660* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009)

R.V. Young, 'The Elegy', in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. by Dennis Flynn, M. Thomas Hester, and Jeanne Shami (Oxford: OUP, 2011), pp.134-148

Steven N. Zwicker, *The Cambridge Companion to John Dryden* (Cambridge, CUP, 2004)