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senceless, stigmatik, ballad Balderdash : the political construction of Sir John Suckling as Cavalier poet

Simon Nicholas Morgan-Russell
Lehigh University

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AUTHOR:

Morgan-Russell,

Simon Nicholas

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"senceless, stigmatik, ballad Balderdash":
The Political Construction of Sir John Suckling
as Cavalier Poet.

by

Simon Nicholas Morgan-Russell

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~~Chair of Department~~

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Abstract.

From the mid-1640s, Sir John Suckling has been represented as the one of the two poets "most typical of the hedonistic Cavalier" (Miner, 78). However, an investigation of his reputation as a popular poet in the Court of Charles the First during the 1630s reveals that he was less well-known for his writing abilities than for his licentious and profligate lifestyle. The purpose of this thesis is to trace the development of the posthumous construction of Suckling's image during the early 1640s, from his initial presentation by Parliamentarian propagandists as an archetypal Royalist, to the re-inscription of this political caricature as a writer representative of the Caroline Court by the pro-Royalist publisher Humphrey Moseley. Ultimately, I suggest, Suckling's canonisation as Cavalier poet was a posthumous, political construction engineered in 1646 as a piece of Royalist propaganda.

Introduction.

We are used to thinking that the author is so different from all other men, and so transcendent with regard to all languages that, as soon as he speaks, meaning begins to proliferate, to proliferate indefinitely.

The truth is quite the contrary: the author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses.

(Foucault, 118-9)

In his assessment of Sir John Suckling's prose, Charles L. Squier notes that while a review of his letters gives some indication of the extent of Suckling's social circle, "it is difficult to discover in the letters what might be called his private world or something of the actual self, the 'real' John Suckling" (Squier, 33). The expression of such a difficulty, the quest for the "real" Sir John, acknowledges the presence of author in just the terms that Foucault, in the quotation which forms the epigraph to this introduction, seeks to refute; indeed, when Squier comments that the letters "can be used to provide insights into Suckling not to be found in his poetry and plays" it is uncertain what the term "Suckling" has come to represent. Is Squier referring to "Suckling the Author" or "Suckling the Canonical Text?"

This elision of the distance between author and text evidenced in Squier's statement is characteristic of Suckling scholarship, even, Michael P. Parker claims, as early as "within a decade of Suckling's death in 1641"

(Parker, 341).¹ The notion that there was a "real" Suckling that preceded the "Incomparable Peeeces" collected and published by Humphrey Moseley in 1646--a Suckling, moreover, that is accessible through an analysis of this text--has been fused with the belief that reference to the substantial, and colourful, biography of this "real" figure informs a reading of the text. To speak of "Suckling scholarship," therefore, is to refer to a critical conflation of life and works, each aspect supporting its counterpart.

My attempt to break out of this self-perpetuating cycle does not lie in a New Critical detachment of text from authorial referent. Arthur F. Marotti comments on the interaction of text and context in the coterie poetry practised by, amongst others, Suckling; he claims of the sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney's Astrophel and Stella:

[d]isengaged from their coterie context, particularly when read by post-Renaissance readers, such lines lost the precise biographical and social matrices that enlivened their meaning, becoming conventional Petrarchan attitudinizing.
(Marotti, 11)

My purpose in this study is not, therefore, to attempt to separate Suckling's writing from any biographical context, but to call into question the validity of what has been assumed to constitute this contextual authority. I would like to suggest that "Suckling the Author" does not precede "Suckling the Canonical Text," but that the term "Suckling," with its blurred distinction between--and

conflation of--text and author, is a deliberate construction of the 1640s. In the first chapter I will attempt to re-examine Sir John Suckling's position as a representative Court poet during the 1630s, and in chapters two and three I will suggest the process by which Suckling's biography, and his canon, was constructed and subsequently re-inscribed during the final years of the reign of Charles I.

Chapter One.

Sir John Suckling as Caroline Court Poet.

Thinke of a Courtier void of shifts,
That scornd to live by Almes or guifts,
Whose language could dissolve at once
A nunnery of Virgin Zones:
Yet in his courtshipp still thought fitt
To exercise more grace then witt
"Epitaph upon Sir John Suckling."

In a letter dated 3rd June, 1634 to Mr. Philip Warwick in Paris, James Howell writes of the readiness of a "gallant Fleet-Royal" to protect the passage of commerce to and from the shores of England, the spectacular defeat of the Swedish Army at the Battle of Nördlingen, and the fact that

[t]he Court affords little news at present, but that there is a love called platonic love, which much sways there of late; it is a love abstracted from all corporal gross impressions, and sensual appetite, but consists in contemplations and ideas of the mind, not in any carnal fruition. This love sets the wits of the town on work; and they say there will be a masque shortly of it, whereof her Majesty and her maids of honour will be part.
(Howell, 60-1)

Yet, four months after Howell's statement about the atmosphere of the Caroline Court, John Digby apparently attempted to make "corporal gross impressions" of another sort--with a cudgell--on Sir John Suckling for his persistent (and unwanted) courtship of Anne Willoughby, an action which provoked a retaliatory rapier attack in an alley outside Blackfriars Theatre.² London's wits had, perhaps, other issues on their minds besides the

contemplation of platonic love. This disparity between the idealised and "soothing blandishments of the courtly love cult" (Parry, 197) and the stark practicality of more mercenary, political motivations behind marital arrangements is hardly an original observation, but Suckling's and Digby's notorious exchange raises the question of the extent to which Suckling lived up to his characterisation as a popular courtier and as a popular Court poet of the 1630s. Though John Aubrey's memory is somewhat selectively reliable, he notes in his Brief Lives that Suckling

grew famous at Court for his readie sparkling witt; which was envyed....[h]e was incomparably readie at repartying, and his Witt most sparkling when most sett-upon and provoked. (Aubrey, 287)

It is only towards the conclusion of this character sketch, after a number of gaming and drinking anecdotes, that Aubrey makes reference to Suckling's career as a writer, and then only in passing:

When his Aglaura was put on, he bought all the Cloathes himselfe, which were very rich; no tinsell, all the lace pure gold and silver, which cost him...I have now forgott. He had some scaenes to it, which in those dayes were only used at Masques. (290)

Yet despite Aubrey's minimal representation of any apparent literary reputation in deference to more sensational and extravagant justifications of his popularity, Kathleen M. Lynch, in The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy, attributes to Suckling "a distinguished place" (Lynch, 55) among the ranks of Court poets such as

Waller, Lovelace, and Carew, "with whom he joined in popularizing the queen's French tastes" (56). Similarly conflating social and textual popularity, Earl Miner, in The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton, notes that the "two poets regarded by their contemporaries or ours as most typical of the hedonistic Cavalier" (Miner, 78) are Carew and Suckling. Miner also assumes here that Suckling's reputation as a poet amongst the followers of the Caroline Court is synonymous with his reputation in the latter half of the twentieth century--a supposition which, I think, may be debated. In attempting to locate Suckling's position as a writer relative to the Court of the 1630s, this chapter, then, seeks to examine the validity of Miner's statement of the poet's seventeenth-century critical estimation.

Like much of the verse produced by courtiers at this time, Suckling's poetical excursions were circulated principally in manuscript form and thus had to be collated from the "Papers in the several Cabinets of his Noble and faithful Friends" (Clayton, Works, 6) for posthumous publication by Humphrey Moseley. In "A Session of the Poets" (Clayton, Works, 71-6) Suckling characterises himself as a gentleman-amateur, claiming that, in the contest for the Bay, "of all men living he [Suckling] cared not for't," preferring a "lucky hit at bowls" before any literary commendation. Indeed, only a few of Suckling's works were published during his lifetime--poems of praise for William

D'Avenant's Madagascar (1638) and Henry Carey's translation of Malvezzi (second edition, 1638), and Aglaura (1638)-- though the latter attracted some less than complimentary attention from, amongst others, the playwright Richard Brome. Engaged in the "'second war of the theaters,' being waged between the courtiers and the professional dramatists" (Kaufmann, 151), Brome attacked the gentleman-amateur dramatists of the Court for their lavishly produced, and--in his opinion--vacuous, plays. Suckling's edition of Aglaura, elaborately printed with wide margins (according to Thomas May, "Like bottle beere the most is froth" [Clayton, Works, 203]) is severely derided. "This great Voluminous Pamphlet may be said," mocks Brome, "To be like one that hath more haire then head,/ More excrement than body" (Clayton, Works, 202), and he ultimately concludes that "These empty Folio's onely please the looks." To Brome, a professional dramatist operating outside the Court, Suckling's work seems to have appeared in quality much like that of his fellow amateurs' ventures into the expensive novelty of Court drama.³ But the view of an outsider like Brome should not be presumed to represent, necessarily, the estimation of the quality of Suckling's writing amongst his immediate Court compeers.

The Court of Charles I, as J. B. Fletcher has pointed out, was dominated by the influence of his French wife, Henrietta Maria. The power exercised over James I by his favourites Robert Carr and George Villiers was superceded in

his son's Court by the "Queen and her intimate Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle" who "at once assumed direction of court life" (Fletcher, 125). Henrietta Maria was a précieuse; she subscribed to the code of behaviour established by the Marquise de Rambouillet in her Parisian salon in 1615. Founded in "direct protest against the crudities of speech and conduct at court" (125), the Hôtel de Rambouillet attempted "the purification of the language and of relations between the sexes," and Fletcher suggests that its implementation in the English Court refined what he defines as the "grossness" (120) of Jacobean court life. The salon was conducted according to a series of principles prescribed by Honoré D'Urfé's L'Astrée, a pastoral romance extensively defining platonic love and "capable of regulating even the most trivial aspects of polite conduct" (Lynch, 46). While the first English translation of this text was published by John Piper in 1620, the introduction, and subsequent popularity, of the cult of platonic love was championed by Henrietta Maria and practised at the English Court in earnest around 1633/4.⁴ Certainly, the 1630s are littered with plays which pander to the whim of the Court; playwrights such as D'Avenant, the "unwavering" Lodowick Carlell, Henry Glapthorne, Thomas Killigrew and William Cartwright--to name but a few--all strove, with varying degrees of skepticism, to represent the platonic code in their drama.⁵ Lynch also notes the preponderance of

platonic love poems at this time, amongst which she includes William Habington's Castara (1634), Sir Francis Kynaston's Amorous Sonnets (1642), and the work of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Waller, Lovelace, and Carew.

The location of Suckling's work in the précieux tradition is eminently debatable. Both Fletcher and Lynch suggest that Suckling is a significant figure in the literature of platonic love; Fletcher maintains, of Suckling's letters to "Aglaura," that "[o]ne may draw up from these letters...almost a code-book of Platonic love" (Fletcher, 137). Furthermore, Lynch proposes that the promise of the best scenes in the platonic drama of Cartwright, a playwright who won an "especial share of the royal favor" and who knew "how to drive home each article of the Platonic creed" (Lynch, 66), was only fully realised in the "far more important" plays written by Suckling. Yet, despite these attempts by Fletcher and Lynch to establish Suckling as superlative practitioner of the platonic form, it might also be suggested that poet's work is not consistently representative of this tradition. This latter view is advanced by Fletcher Orpin Henderson, who points to the presence of the French "movement" of libertinage current in England at the same time as Henrietta Maria's précieuse influence. Taking Montaigne as their immediate ancestor, the libertins, "centering around taverns and cabarets such as the Pomme de Pin,....would gather to drink too much wine

and recite their skeptical and indecent verses" (Henderson, 278). Henderson maintains that Suckling had ample opportunity, during his continental travels during the late 1620s, to come into contact with this cynical movement, and traces the source of Suckling's translation of "Desdain" and of "Profer'd Love rejected" to French recueils of this period. Thus, in his dealings with the subject of fruition and its proposed delay, Suckling's "observations are not those of a précieux, but of a sophisticate" (294). To Suckling "Woman is no more than a good dinner" (290), continues Henderson, and "[i]t may be appetite which makes the eating a delight, but he always has the eating in mind" (295). Henderson's thesis is extended by Michael P. Parker, who claims that Suckling defines himself as a libertin in

both the specific and generic senses of the word: as "one who leads a dissolute, licentious life"; and, in poetry, as "one who follows his own inclinations and goes his own way." (Parker, 367)

If, indeed, Suckling "goes his own way" in poetry, one must suppose that his work departs from the established convention in which his fellow courtier-poets participated. Lynch cautions that "[m]odern critics are likely to forget the fame of Suckling in his own age" (69). However, she endorses her statement of his popularity by citing Pepys's observation of the Restoration revivals of Brennoralt (1639) in 1661, 1667, and 1668, and Aglaure (c.1637) in 1662 and 1668. This presupposes, of course, that the critical estimation of the 1660s was congruent with that of the

1630s, a claim, I suggest, which is not particularly defensible. Perhaps a more reasonable reflection of Suckling's reputation as a writer amongst his contemporaries--and the extent to which he functioned in contradistinction to the préciosité of the Court--might be discovered in the reactions to his work by other notable Court poets. There are several poetic "answers" to those poems of Suckling's which have been assumed by Lynch to espouse the sentiment of platonic love, including responses by Edmund Waller and Henry Bold. Waller's "In Answer of Sir John Sucklins Verses" refutes the statements of Suckling's "Against Fruition I" one by one in the form of a "Pro" and "Con" argument, while Henry Bold attempts a more spirited attack.⁶ Bold's response to the concluding lines of "Against Fruition I" reveals a singular lack of confidence in Suckling's performance as a platonic love poet:

Suckling's final couplet

They who know all the wealth they have, are poor,
Hee's onely rich that cannot tell his store.
(Clayton, Works, 38)

is acidly countered by Bold's

He that hath store to tell must needs be rich,
He's only poor, that know's not, which is which.
(Clayton, Works, 184)

For practitioners of the cult of platonic love like Waller--who was, after all, responsible for numerous poems to Lady Dorothy Sidney, as "Sacharissa," in the period 1634-8, a verse affair presumed, beyond "reasonable doubt" by

Fletcher (135-6) to constitute a platonic courtship--
Suckling's "attitude towards love was not a popular one"
(Parker, 367).

Further evidence of the unfashionable nature of
Suckling's verse in the 1630s can be found in his treatment
of Lucy Hay (née Percy), Lady Carlisle. Extolled for her
beauty and wit, Lucy Hay was particularly influential in the
Caroline Court, with Henrietta Maria, and, apparently, with
individuals as diverse as the Earl of Strafford and John
Pym. Sir Toby Matthews, in A Collection of Letters (1660),
reports of the "Character of the Most Excellent Lady, Lucy,
Countesse of Carleile" who would

freely discourse of Love and hear both the fancies
and powers of it; but if you will needs bring it
within knowledge, and boldly direct it to her
self, she is likely to divert the discourse, or,
at least, seem not to understand it. By which,
you may know her humour, and her justice; for,
since she cannot love in earnest, she would have
nothing in Love. (Parker, 351n)⁷

But despite, or perhaps even because of, Lucy Hay's
"flirtatious" (Parker, 351) modus operandi--she became the
"principal salon-leader" (Fletcher, 134) of her time, and
attracted the poetic attention of Carew, D'Avenant, Herrick,
Waller, and, significantly, Suckling. Though several of the
poems to Lucy Hay purport to commiserate the loss of her
husband, they frequently labour over her physical and
intellectual virtues. In mourning she is, for Waller, "A
Venus rising from a sea of jet!" (Waller, 22) and "like
Phoebus so divides her light,/ And warms us, that she stoops

not from her height" (26). D'Avenant claims that her "kind influence/ Is all the pretious stock" able to "feed the flame of our eternall fire" (D'Avenant, 113). Yet, while Carew deifies her as "Lucinda" and spurns the praise of other poets, which is "cheape and vulgar" by comparison with his own devotion (Carew, 32-3), Raymond A. Anselment suggests that, as "the Stuart court well knew," Lucy Hay "hardly warranted Carew's effusive praise," exhibited in, presumably, "To the New-yeare, for the Countesse of Carlile" and "A New-yeares Sacrifice: To Lucinda" (1633). She is subject to similar opprobrium from Alfred Harbage in Sir William Davenant, Poet Venturer 1608-68, who describes her as "beautiful, though far from irreproachable" (56).

But if the Stuart Court, indeed, "well knew" about Lucy Hay, it was only Sir John Suckling, of all the Court poets, who refused to ignore the indiscretions tactfully avoided by her platonic admirers. In fact, in "A Sessions of the Poets," Suckling characterises the aforementioned Sir Toby Matthews as a "whispering" (Clayton, Works, 73) busybody, whose Court advancement is simply a result of his "sorry Lady Muse" Lucy Hay's intervention. Suckling also devotes a longer poem, "Upon my Lady Carliles walking in Hampton-Court garden," (Clayton, Works, 30-2) to the criticism of Lucy Hay. The poem is structured as a dialogue between "J. S." and "T. C."--generally accepted to represent John Suckling and Thomas Carew, though Thomas Clayton and Rhodes Dunlap

concur in the opinion that the text is exclusively of Suckling's authorship.⁸ In Suckling's characterisation, Carew advances a distinctly platonic reaction to the appearance of Lady Carlisle; the garden becomes a "place inspir'd" by her presence, and she is elevated as a "thing so near a Deity." J. S. refuses to accept this; where T. C. finds "rare perfumes," J. S. denies them, and while T. C. observes Lady Carlisle's near divinity, J. S.'s thoughts are in the realm of "flesh and blood" and he admits

I had my Thoughts, but not your way
.....
And was consulting how I could
In spite of masks and hoods descry
The parts deni'd unto the eye;
I was undoing all she wore,
And had she walkt but one turn more,
Eve in her first state had not been
More naked, or more plainly seen.

While Suckling's poem is somewhat uncomplimentary about Lucy Hay--the final couplet "There to be lost why should I doubt,/Where fools with ease go in and out?" refuses to acknowledge the platonic nature of Lucy Hay's favours--it is also critical of the mode of Court poetry practised by Carew and other Caroline poets. In "Upon Lady Carlile," J. S. claims that "I pass't o're the self same walk" without finding any evidence of Lucy Hay's inspirational influence, and he maintains that the flowers T. C. claims were brought to blossom by her passage "had all their birth from you [T. C.]." Suckling refuses to acknowledge one of the leading figures in the préciosité of the Caroline Court in the terms

which the fashion of the Court prescribed, and, thus, his position as a popular Court poet in the 1630s might be called into question. And in his open criticism of the nature of platonic inspiration--and his refusal to recognise or partake of it--Suckling places himself in a position distinct from the popular mode of love poetry, despite the fact that he, too, was a member of the "self same" Court as Carew and Waller.

Suckling may, indeed, have been "the greatest gallant of his time, and the greatest Gamester," and his fame at Court might well have been a result of his "readie sparkling witt." But, on the basis of what appears to have been his reputation as a writer in the 1630s, it is not clear that he was as much a success as a poet as he was as a bowler. In fact, his own comments and attitudes toward the popular conventions of Court poetry reveal, perhaps, that he did not much care for such literary distinction. While Humphrey Moseley's claim, in his address "To the Reader" in the 1646 edition of Fragmenta Aurea, that Suckling's "Incomparable Peeeces" constitute a "Garden of ravishing variety" that is "sacred to Art and Honour," is undoubtedly motivated by his desire to sell the book, Suckling's reputation must have undergone a significant renovation since the 1630s in order to be able to sustain such praise with any degree of credibility. If Suckling's lifestyle attracted attention in the 1630s, then his flight from England in 1641 following

the exposure of the Army Plot prompted a proliferation of anti-Royalist pamphleteering, which had less to do with his rôle as author than his reputation as profligate Cavalier.

Chapter Two.

Plots, Pamphlets, and Parliamentary Propaganda.

Thinke on a schollar without pride,
A Souldier with much bloud un-dyed,
A Statesman, yet noe whit ambitious,
A Libertine, and yet not vitious,
Thinke to the heigth, if man could bee,
Or ere was perfect, this was hee:
"Epitaph upon Sir John Suckling."

In an attempt to disable the power of the King's adviser, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, in March 1641, the House of Commons, headed by John Pym, advanced charges of treason on the basis of his Irish government. The charges were difficult to uphold, and Colonel George Goring's revelation that Charles had licensed an armed force for Strafford's rescue and protection proved to be significant in Pym's campaign. On 5th May 1641, in the midst of the proceedings against Strafford, Pym chose to reveal to the Commons his knowledge of what became known as the First Army Plot, claiming that the army was to be set against Parliament on the instigation of several courtiers close to Henrietta Maria, and that the French were amassing an invading force to be directed, it was thought, at Plymouth. The news inevitably caused some consternation in the House, and a resolution was passed to the effect that "any person helping to bring a foreign force into the kingdom, 'unless it be by command of his Majesty, with the consent of both Houses,' should be adjudged to be a public enemy" (Gardiner, IX, 358). An indication, perhaps, of the

tension at this stage in Strafford's trial is the Commons's reaction to an unfortunate, and innocent, mishap that occurred on the same day:

[a]s the House was in full debate, a board in the floor of the gallery cracked under the weight of two very stout members. Sir John Wray, with the thought of a second Guy Fawkes on his mind called out that he smelled gunpowder. Members who were near the door rushed out into the lobby. Strangers loitering in the lobby rushed out into Westminster Hall. Some of them shrieked out that the parliament-house was falling, and that the members were killed. (359)

Clearly, accusations of high treason and revelations of plots were taking their toll on the assembled members of the House, and, indeed, on the City itself; on 8th May it was generally believed that the aforementioned French invasion had been launched, and, since Henrietta Maria was suspected of arranging the whole affair, Whitehall was besieged by an angry, anti-Catholic mob.

It was unfortunate for Sir John Suckling that he was implicated in the Army Plot, and it was undoubtedly the furor surrounding Strafford's trial that prompted him to flee the country on 6th May. In the preceding December, Suckling had written, in "To Mr. Henry German, in the beginning of Parliament, 1640," "That it is fitt for the Kinge to doe somethinge extraordinary att this present, is not onely the opinion of the wise, but their expectation" (Clayton, Works, 163), and, in the early months of 1641, he conspired with Jermyn to secure control of the army for the purposes of supporting Charles in his immediate difficulties

with Parliament. They were not, however, the only supporters of the monarchy prepared to take military action; another group of conspirators, headed by Henry Percy, had similar ideas, and Percy initially managed to persuade Charles to reject the plans of Suckling and Jermyn in favour of his own. Although some attempt was made, at the King's suggestion, to amalgamate the two groups through a number of meetings in Percy's lodgings in Whitehall,⁹ Charles, ultimately, rejected the plans of both groups, and, according to Gardiner, claimed of Suckling's own idea: "All these ways...are vain and foolish, and I will think of them no more" (317). As Gardiner remarks of Suckling, "[p]olitical wisdom was not to be expected from a fribble" (312).

An opportunity to amass an armed force in London was to present itself to Charles in the form of a request for aid by the Portuguese ambassador. Taking advantage of the breakdown of the Spanish monarchy, Portugal, under the control of the House of Braganza, had declared independence and was attempting to negotiate an alliance with England. Charles used the mustering of troops for the Portuguese cause as a cover for his own levying purposes, and it is interesting to note that Suckling--with the aid of Captain Billingsley--was in charge of recruiting. On 2nd May, Billingsley took a number of men to the Tower in what was presumed to be an attempt to rescue the Earl of Strafford,

but the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir William Balfour, denied him entrance. On the same day it was reported that Suckling was seen at the White Horse Tavern, Bread Street in the company of sixty armed men, whom he dismissed with orders to return the following evening.

Suckling's involvement in this escapade led, ultimately, to his downfall. Called before the Commons on 3rd May to explain why he had mustered his men, Suckling initially managed to satisfy his examiners that the troops had been raised for Portugal. However, further investigations were undertaken. Clayton, in his biographical study of Suckling, quotes from a letter by Arthur Brett to the Earl of Middlesex:

his [Suckling's] answere was, that hee hadd undertaken the profession of a shouldier and that his fortunes called him to itt; having gott Leave from his Majesty to rayse a Regiment, hee was For Portiugale; receaveing commicions from the Embassador whereupon hee was dismist; notwithstanding they found him faulty in his answere, yett tooke noe notice; They sent to the Embassadore, [to] know the certainty who returned answere, hee neither hadd, nor expected any Commission to that end. (Clayton, Works, lvi-ii)

On Thursday 6th May, Suckling was called to appear, once more, before the Commons. But fortunately--for him--he had escaped from London on the previous night, in the company of Percy, Jermyn and William D'Avenant,¹⁰ and he sailed from Portsmouth in the Roebuck on 6th, arriving in Paris, with the Earl of Carnarvon on 14th.

Suckling's disappearance did not pass unremarked. A

mention of the "Running Disease," initially started by Sir Francis Windebank, Secretary of State, and John, Lord Finch, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal in December 1640, but contracted by the conspirators of the Army Plot in 1641, is made in connection with Suckling in "Keep thy head on thy shoulders," a ballad written after the execution of Strafford in May 1641:

What strength hath an infant
To doe any harme
So long as the keeper
Doth it over see
Its fit that a Sucklin
Were led by the arme
But what is all this to thee or to me?
(Rollins, 129)

Little is known of Suckling's movements after his flight, though there is evidence, as I will show, of much contemporary speculation. After the execution of Strafford on 11th May, Pym headed a committee to uncover the details of the Army Plot, resulting in charges being brought against Suckling and his fellow conspirators on 26th July, and the verdict of high treason returned against Suckling, Jermyn, and Percy on 13th August. Meanwhile, in Paris, in a letter which has been dated [May] 1641, the Countess of Leicester reports to her husband in London "From Sukling we receive many visitts, who is good companie but much abaited in his mirthe."¹¹ Biographers generally suppose that Suckling died in Paris during 1641, though this supposition is difficult to substantiate. Two popular accounts of Suckling's death dating from the seventeenth century are in

existence--one "originating with the Earl of Roscommon and told to Dean Knightly Chetwood, was in turn given to Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, who apparently passed it on separately to Pope and William Oldys" (Clayton, Works, lix), and the other published by John Aubrey in Brief Lives. Both accounts are of dubious reliability, but the former, especially in view of its circuitous route of transmission, is generally considered by biographers of Suckling to be the more apocryphal: Roscommon's account details the plot of Suckling's servant, who, to facilitate the theft of a portmanteau, had driven a nail up into one of Suckling's boots in order to hinder pursuit. Despite recovering his portmanteau, Suckling was badly wounded and his foot became infected. He fell, consequently, into a fatal fever. Aubrey's account is less sensational and somewhat less heroic:

[h]e went into France, where after sometime, being come to the bottome of his Found, reflecting on the miserable and despicable condition he should be reduced to, having nothing left to maintaine him, he (having a convenience for that purpose, lyeing at an apothecarie's house in Paris) tooke poyson, which killed him miserably with vomiting. He was buried in the Protestants Churchyard. This was (to the best of my remembrance) 1646.

(Aubrey, 290)

After the execution of Strafford a little over a year passed before the outbreak of the Civil War, though the opposing sides had been polarised some time before August 1642. Gardiner claims that, as early as the latter part of 1641,

two names, destined to a wide celebrity, were heard for the first time. The high-mettled gentlemen sneeringly applied the appellation of Roundheads to the short-haired apprentices who had rejected the unloveliness of lovelocks. Their adversaries retorted by speaking of the officers as Cavaliers--a word which carried with it a flavour of opprobrium, as implying a certain looseness and idleness of military life.

(Gardiner, X, 121)

The classifications of "Roundhead" and "Cavalier" became significant terms in the war of propagandist pamphleteering that was waged between the Royalist and Parliamentary presses during the 1640s. In "Archetypal Mystification: Polemic and Reality in English Political Literature, 1640-1750," T. N. Corns, W. A. Speck, and J. A. Downie claim that in the course of this process

[e]ach side constructed a scarecrow--an exorbitant caricature of its opponents--which it advanced as a genuine archetype of a cavalier or roundhead...and with which it associated all oppositional activity. (Corns, 2)

Corns, Speck and Downie quote from several anti-Royalist pamphlets of the early 1640s, in which the archetypal Cavalier--from a Parliamentary perspective--is described.¹² In Nocturnall Occurrences, or Deeds of darknesse committed by the Cavaleers in their rendevous (London: 1642), an infiltrator to the Royalist camp at York notes that

I perceived many of these Cabalieros richly deck'd with long shag hair, reaching down to their heels...the Coronet bearing these words in the Banner, Damme we'll win the day. (Corns, 3)

The Cavaliers are further characterised by their

outrageous and licentious behaviour. In Sad and Fearful Newes from Beverley (London: no date) it is claimed that, in the vicinity of Cavalier camps "we have scarce a good Maid within ten miles...we can scarce keepe our wives from being overrun" (Corns, 3), while it was supposed that Lord Wentworth--son of the late Earl of Strafford--urged his troops to "ravish their Virgins; force the timorous maides to clip you in dalliance, and wreake your utmost spleen upon the roundheads" in A barbarous and inhumane Speech spoken by the Lord Wentworth (London: 1642). Parliamentarian propagandists also pointed to the supposedly mercenary nature of the Royalist enterprise in a number of pamphlets. In The Wicked Resolution of the Cavaliers... (London: 1642), a Cavalier remarks that

you may remember, that though we say, we fight for the King, yet we respect nothing but our own private pockets, and plundering of houses for gold, for it is fitter that we that are men of metall, and know how to spend money in a most damnable manner, should have plenty of gold and silver.¹³ (Corns, 3-4)

But if the pamphlets described the archetypal Cavalier, they also sought to present individuals as "representing in extreme forms the general characteristics" (Corns, 4) by which the Royalists were constructed. Sir John Suckling, implicated in the anti-Parliamentarian Army Plot, evidently became a natural target for anti-Royalist criticism; as Clayton suggests, "he became one of the chief objects of vilification for Roundhead pamphleteers" (Clayton, Works,

lxvi). Clayton lists sixteen anti-Royalist tracts published in 1641 which mention Suckling by name, and some of them refer to him exclusively. But if Parliamentary propaganda constructed the archetypal Cavalier as an "exorbitant caricature," then the circumscription of Suckling within this archetype similarly betrays an anti-Royalist political strategy. In the light of Suckling's contemporary critical estimation discussed in the previous chapter, it is interesting to observe the ways in which he is represented in a series of pamphlets; he is almost exclusively characterised by his profligacy and flight from England, and his construction as a predominantly political caricature suggests that his abilities as a writer were not widely acclaimed. As Clayton points out, Suckling's literary works were "either denigrated or completely ignored" by pamphleteers, and, on the rare occasions when comment was passed on his writing, it is his reputation as a playwright rather than as a poet that was discussed.

The ballad "Keep thy head on thy shoulders" is not the only source of reference to Suckling's flight. John Taylor, in The Liar (London: 1641) relates that "Sucklin, Davenant, and Percy ere accused as traytors, and fearing to be hanged, fled for it beyond the Seas" (Berry, 363).¹⁴ Many pamphleteers, however, are keen to make the most of Suckling's flight. In Times Alteration or a Dialogue betweene my Lord Finch and Secretary Windebanke (London:

January 1641/2), the renegade ex-Secretary of State claims he has heard that Sir John "is gon with a troope of horse to Portugall, to ayde the King there," but Finch, in a rare acknowledgement by the Parliamentarian pamphleteers of Suckling's writing, characterises Suckling's flight in terms which mock his literary reputation:

he had beene a great while studdying a new play,
and the Plot being none of the best, he was forced
to run off stage, and durst not stay to see the
first Act. (Berry, 364)

In A Cobby of Generall Lesley's Letter to Sir John Suckling (1641), Lesley supposedly addresses Suckling in terms of his flight--"your heeles were as swift for any action as your head"--which is seen to represent Suckling's earlier contribution to his cause during the Bishops Wars: "And if you shewed your Countrey a paire of faire heeles, you seconded but your action at Newbourne" (Berry, 366). Suckling's destination, the subject of some speculation, is turned to anti-Royalist, anti-Catholic, purposes in Newes from Rome (1641), in which the Pope laments

...they are gone, th'are fled, I know not where,
My Goldfinch, Windebanke, my Suckling young
Who could so well pray in our Roman tongue
Are gone for feare of chiding, O they would
Have elevated me, if that they could. (369)

Suckling's status as the quintessential Cavalier is, perhaps, best exemplified in a broadside published in 1641, called The Sucklington Faction: or (Sucklings) Roaring Boyes. The tract makes no further direct reference to Sir John beyond its title, but, nevertheless, the connection

between Suckling and the Cavalier lifestyle is made explicit; not only is Suckling characterised as a Cavalier by the authors of this tract, but as the nominal leader of a "Faction," the epitome of the "scum of ungodliness from the seething pot of iniquity" (in A Mappe of Michiefe, 1641, cited from Clayton, Works, lxvi). A woodcut which forms part of the tract illustrates two members of the "Faction" earnestly engaged in their Cavalier pursuits (Fig. 1).¹⁵ Seated in what appears to be one of the "Tavernes" which the text accuses them of haunting--the table-top they play upon is supported by a barrel, and a broom lies beneath it--or, at the very least, a private den of iniquity, Suckling's Roaring Boys have all the tools of their trade: drink, pipes, a paper of tobacco, dice, cards, even a curtained bed in the back corner of the room. They are also lavishly dressed and wear their hair long, in a style antithetical, we have seen, to Roundhead tastes. This caricature is further developed in the tract's text, in which the Cavalier is criticised for his indulgence in "wine and women, horses, hounds and whores, dauncing, dicing, drabbing, drinking," his "ryots," his "revels," and his visitation to "a Play-house, or a Bawdy-house." There are numerous references to the unbridled consumption and expenditure:

[w]ith the debauched Gallants of these lascivious and loose-living times, he drawes his patrimony through his throat, bequeathing the creatures to consumption for consummation of his intemperate voracity, delicate luxury, and wastefull prodigality, spending all either upon his belly or

his backe, following the proud, apish, anticke,
and disguised fashions of the times, to present
themselves a painted Puppet on the stage of
vanity.

Suckling's dissolution of his own patrimony, and his
infamously lavish output for the equipping of his "Hundred
Horse" and for the costumes for the Court production of
Aglaura spring readily to mind. Moreover, the Cavalier is
represented, in this tract, as the prodigal son "flying in a
dudgeon and discontent from Gods household." Turning from
God, turning to the Devil, the Cavalier follows "Popish
Innovations" with "Idolatrous Ceremonies," and becomes one
of the "superstitious Romanists." The accusation of Popery
had frequently been levelled at Royalist supporters, and at
Suckling specifically in the section from Newes from Rome
which I quoted above. Suckling was, evidently, not a member
of the Roman Catholic church; in a letter to William Wallis,
dated 5th May, 1630, Suckling writes of the Catholic faith

it is a thing I cannot say much of, as having not
sufficiently dived into it. Yet as far as I
conceive of it, it would suit well enough with us
young men. If a man be drunke overnight, it is
but Confessing it next morning or when he is
sober, and the matter proves not Mortal....And you
may jumble as many wenches as you please upon
bedds, provided you will but mumble as many
Avemaries upon beads. (Clayton, Works, 117)

Despite his estimation of the Catholic faith as a
"good, and a Joviall one," he was later to write An Account
of Religion by Reason (1637), a discourse which, Suckling
maintains in his dedicatory epistle to Edward Sackville,
Fourth Earl of Dorset, would have "made me an Atheist at

Court" (Clayton, Works, 169). An Account is written in support of Socinianism, a "flexible body of contemporary Biblical-Unitarian doctrine" (Clayton, Works, 337), which claims Squier "places Suckling within a clear current of contemporary religious thought and with a group of loyal Royalists who espoused a moderate religious position" (Squier, 46). This affiliation with moderate or flexible religious beliefs, coupled with his association with the Court of Charles I and its supposed domination by the Catholic Henrietta Maria, was probably enough to classify Suckling as a "Romanist" for the purposes of anti-Royalist, Protestant propaganda.

But if Suckling was represented as the epitome of "Antichristian vanities, fopperies, and trumperies" by some of the output of the Protestant press, other pamphlets manipulate this popular construction. Newes from Sir John Suckling (1641)¹⁶ relates the elaborate tale of Suckling's "conversion from a Papist to a Protestant," and, also, "what Torments he endured by those of the Inquisition in SPAIN" (Hazlitt, Works, Vol. 2, 275). Rewriting the incidents following Suckling's flight from England, the author of the pamphlet describes how Suckling meets the Protestant Lady Damaise in Paris, who requires him to "purge himselfe of all popish dregs, whatsoever....To which hee most willingly condescended, and thereupon renounced the Pope with all his Complices" (Hazlitt, 278). Persecuted by his rival, the

jealous Lord Lequeux, and falsely accused by him of conspiring to kill the Pope and the King of Spain, Suckling is kidnapped by the Arch-Priest, and is subjected to the "Spanish Strapado" and "sharpe needles" of the Spanish Inquisition until he "recant from any intent to doe injury unto the Church of Rome" (Hazlitt, 279). Fortunately, Lord Lequeux is "struck downe" (280) and the charges against Suckling and his Lady dismissed, and the account ends happily with the assurance that

Sir John and his Lady are now living
at the Hague in Holland, piously
and religiously, and grieves
at nothing, but that
he did the King-
dome of Eng-
land wrong.

In order for the conversion of Suckling to Protestantism, and his accompanying sensation of guilt at having betrayed his country--presumably--for the King, to function successfully as Parliamentary propaganda, the author of Newes from Sir John Suckling effectively trades on the construction of Suckling as the epitome of the Cavalier.

The popular conception of Sir John Suckling in the early 1640s, rather like that of the 1630s, had little to do, then, with his literary career. It is perhaps too great a claim to suggest that Suckling was solely responsible for the shaping of the Parliamentary notion of the archetypal Cavalier, or that the archetypal Cavalier directly determined the Parliamentary construction of Suckling's

character. But it is evident that the representation of Sir John Suckling and of the Cavalier in anti-Royalist propaganda become closely linked, or even conflated. The relationship of the concept of a "real" Suckling to the Parliamentary construction is largely irrelevant (especially in those pamphlets which purport to detail the events of Suckling's life after his flight from England); what becomes important is the way in which this fabrication is used, by Royalist and Parliamentary alike, in Civil War propaganda. Newes from Sir John Suckling demonstrates how the anti-Royalist pamphleteer is able to manipulate the construction for the Parliamentary cause, and this manipulation itself testifies to the power of the Parliamentary characterisation of Suckling as Cavalier. The subsequent Royalist inscription of Suckling as Cavalier poet necessitates some acknowledgement of this anti-Royalist caricature; in fact, it is my suggestion that Humphrey Moseley's publication of Fragmenta Aurea (1646) uses this caricature in the process of Suckling's canonisation. Since Suckling's construction, hitherto, has largely ignored his writing, Moseley's production of the volume conflates the fictional life--Suckling as essential Royalist--with a body of works that, in both content and assembled order, support Charles's cause in order to create a suitably representative Royalist author. If Parliamentary propagandists demonised Suckling only, as we saw above, to convert him in the name

of their cause, then what better Royalist counter-measure than to elevate the caricature as a focus for Stuart nostalgia? Suckling's transformation from lovelocked ding-thrift to the "Ornament of our Age....Sacred to Art and Honour" (Clayton, Works, 3) is achieved in the 1640s, as we shall see, by the increasingly acceptable practice of published authorship.

Chapter Three.

Royalist Revisions.

Thinke who securely can withstand
The love and envy of a land;
Envyed he was else pitty twere,
Of envy worth nere lost her share,
He that lackes enemies is poore,
And begging lyes at pittys doore:
"Epitaph upon Sir John Suckling"

When the Folio of Ben Jonson's Works was published in 1616, Jonson had the fortune to be able to oversee its production, an operation which generated some criticism directed to his presumption as a "self-crowned laureate."¹⁷ Suckling, in fact, criticised him for this reason; in "Sessions of the Poets," Suckling's "good old Ben" claims that he deserves the Bay before other poets because "his were call'd Works, where others were but Plaies" (Clayton, Works, 72). However, writers who were published posthumously--notably Shakespeare (1623), Donne (1633), and Suckling (1646)--had very limited control over the ways in which their texts, and their images as authors, were presented. Recent analyses of Shakespeare's Folio and of the 1633 edition of Donne's verse have attempted to examine the methods by which the notion of "author" has been constructed by each text's production. A similar approach, I suggest, may be taken towards Humphrey Moseley's collection of Suckling's works, published as Fragmenta Aurea in 1646.

The construction of the 1623 Folio of Shakespeare's

Works is the subject of Leah S. Marcus's Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and its Discontents. Marcus claims that the Folio constructs Shakespeare as "transcendent author" through, amongst other things, an elision of all reference to localising details--such as names of actors and dates of production--and Jonson's poetic address to the reader.¹⁸ She suggests that

Jonson's poem sets readers off on a treasure hunt for the author: where is the "real" Shakespeare to be found? In "his Booke." It is there, in language rather than physical presence, the little poem assures us, that we will locate the Man Himself. (Marcus, 19)

The search for the "real" Shakespeare, the poem suggests, results, as does Squier's search for the "real" John Suckling amidst his letters, in a conflation of life with works. In other words, "Shakespeare is the book" (19), to the extent that, as Jonson's poem indicates, the reader of the Folio must look beyond the mere representation of Shakespeare's "face" to the essential "wit" that cannot be made physically manifest in "brasse."

It is, perhaps, because the publication of Donne's collected verse in 1633 came very soon after his death in 1631, that he had some control over the way he was to be re-constituted by his text. Donne effectively stage-managed his own image for posterity; by this time Dean of St. Paul's, he posed, in the midst of his illness, in a funeral shroud for an illustration of his sermon Death's Duel, which was published, posthumously, in 1632. This attempt to

establish his identity as "Doctor Donne" was respectfully maintained in the subsequent publication of his poems in 1633; Arthur F. Marotti, in "John Donne, Author," claims that

[t]he unusual order of the poems in the 1633 edition is the product of the arrangement of verse in the manuscripts used by the editor but also of the desire to locate relatively late in the collection those amorous lyrics that could be damaging to Dean Donne's reputation.

(Marotti, Author, 73)

Furthermore, in the context of a developing respect for the publication of collected works--"it was no longer necessarily a public disgrace for the lyric poetry of a private gentleman to be printed" (75)--Marotti maintains that the 1633 edition of Donne's verse "ultimately wrought the transformation of Donne from a literary amateur into a canonical English author" (74).

The instances of the posthumous publication of Shakespeare and Donne, their construction in and as texts, and their consequent canonisation provide interesting points of perspective for the examination of the 1646 edition of Fragmenta Aurea. Humphrey Moseley's address "To the Reader" at the beginning of the 1646 edition asks, as Marcus suggests does Jonson's address to the reader of Shakespeare's 1623 Folio, where the "real" Suckling is to be located; for those not fortunate enough to have known him in person, those who

have liv'd in so much darknesse, as not to have knowne so great an Ornament of our Age, by looking

upon these Remaines with Civility and
Understanding, they may timely yet repent, and be
forgiven. (Clayton, Works, 3)

Suckling is his book: "his soule being transcendent,
and incommunicable to others, but by reflection," he can be
reconstituted from his writings by the discerning and--as we
shall see later--the genteel reader. This suggestion is
repeated in William Marshall's engraving of Suckling for the
frontispiece of the volume. Suckling's picture is "dull and
unimaginative, and the lacklustre eyes further deaden a
corpulent and expressionless face" (Clayton, "Portraits,"
117), and the last two lines of the commendatory verse
printed beneath state that

Drawne by the Pencill here yow find
His Forme, by his owne Pen his mind.¹⁹

But if the contents of Fragmenta Aurea (1646), like the
contents of Shakespeare's Folio, accurately constitute the
"soule" or the "mind" of its author, then it must be
acknowledged that the edition also constructs the notion of
authorial presence in a similar fashion to that of the 1633
edition of Donne's verse. In his textual introduction to
Suckling's Works, Clayton's cataloging of the order of the
poems reveals that they were not organised chronologically,
and he remarks that the arrangement of the poems in the 1646
edition seems to depend more on the "printer's convenience
or economy" (Clayton, Works, cxxix) than on any consistently
applied scheme. He does admit, however, that "a few poems
were deliberately placed," and the suggestion that the

sequence of the collected "peeces" has been consciously ordered leads to a consideration of the source of this arrangement, and, moreover, the reasons for the implementation of this particular strategy.

Fragmenta Aurea was entered in the Stationer's Register on 24th July 1646 in the name of Humphrey Moseley, a rather prolific printer operating between 1627 and 1661. In a biographical sketch of Moseley, John Curtis Reed notes that before 1644 the Stationer's Register entries in his name "are few and of little importance" (Reed, 64), but that after this date, and particularly in the decade immediately preceding his death, they "record the publication of the best literature of the period." Indeed, a glance at the list of his publications reveals he printed volumes of authors ranging from Waller and Denham to Milton and Crashaw. Yet, despite the apparent diversity in the material he published, Moseley, claims Lois Potter, had distinct, and overtly represented, political sympathies; while

[h]e is remembered as the most prestigious literary publisher of the time....he was firmly royalist throughout his career, and consistently advertised the fact in the prefaces to his publications. (Potter, 20)

Moseley's expression of Royalist sympathy is articulated in several ways. In a number of prefaces to his publications, he makes remarks which support Charles's political decisions, or which, in the case of the preface to

The Tragedy of Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany in 1654, reflect upon the past glory of Charles's reign: his statement to the reader that "I Shall not need to bespeak thee Courteous, if thou hast seen this Piece presented with all the Elegance of Life and Action on the Black-Friers Stage" (Reed, 96), assumes, claims Potter, "a shared set of values on the part of its readers" (Potter, 37), a set of values which are inherently Royalist since it "appeals to nostalgia for a pre-war England which was also a Stuart England." Furthermore, Potter also suggests that Moseley is to be held responsible for the engraver William Marshall's contributions to his publications. The frontispiece to a translation of Malvezzi's Il Davide Persequitato, or David Persecuted (1647), depicts, in what Potter refers to as "the publisher's devious cultural subversion" (Potter, 161), David as King Charles, and the engraving of Milton--so badly executed that it is suggestive of "deliberate sabotage" (Martz, 6)--attempts to convert him "against his will into a crypto-royalist" (Potter, 162). It is difficult to assess the success of Moseley's subversive activity, but, Potter remarks, "[i]t remains true that Milton never used Moseley as his publisher again."

For the publication of Fragmenta Aurea in 1646, Moseley's political sympathy is not, then, insignificant. The topicality of his publication of the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio in 1647 has been remarked upon by P. W.

Thomas in his biography of Sir John Berkenhead:

The folio was not...simply a commercial or aesthetic venture: it was also a morale-boosting gesture of defiance, a propagandist reassertion of the Stuart ethic at a crucial moment in the fortunes of the Court. This probably accounts for the haste with which it was produced by its loyal publisher, Humphrey Moseley. (Thomas, 134)

It is possible, I suggest, to read the collection and publication of Suckling's work from a similar standpoint. There are a number of mechanisms designed to evoke nostalgia for the Caroline Court in the volume, including, I think, a specific reference to the Court production of Suckling's Aglaura in 1638. Marshall's engraving of Suckling for the frontispiece of the volume (fig. 2) is derived, Clayton contends, from a painting by Theodore Russel [ante 1646] (fig. 3), which is itself a copy of Van Dyck's portrait [c. 1636-9] (fig. 4), and sports a costume which, uncharacteristic of contemporary fashion, is "almost certainly theatrical" and has been tentatively linked with one of Inigo Jones's costume designs for the Court production of Aglaura (Rogers, 742).²⁰ If Marshall's engraving harks back to the glory of Charles's Court, then it relies, as does Moseley's preface to the reader, on the assumption of a particular readership. Moseley claims that only those excelling in "Art and Honour" (Clayton Works, 3) are qualified as competent judges of Suckling's writing, though, this accepted,

Education in the Censure of a Gentleman, requires
as many descents, as goes to make one; And he

that is bold upon his unequall Stock, to traduce
this Name, or Learning, will deserve to be
condemned againe into Ignorance his Originall
sinne, and dye in it.

In other words, in order to gain access into the
"Elysium" of Fragmenta Aurea the reader must display the
qualities of a gentleman, and those critics of Suckling's
work whose background and breeding fall short of the mark
expose the "Ignorance" which accompanies the lowness of
their births. Those able to gain admittance into this
"Garden of ravishing variety" are, furthermore, monitored by
Moseley, who claims that he will "withdraw into a shade, and
contemplate who must follow." This challenge to the non-
genteel reader, and the appeal to "knowing Gentlemen" that
"convers'd with him [Suckling] alive," clearly betray an
intended readership, and the order and selection of the
poems and letters within the volume confirms this
hypothesis. The first poem in the collection is "On New-
years day 1640. To the King," which calls for the
tempering of "discords in Your State" and the dispersal of
"ill vapour" that obscures Charles's sovereignty (Clayton,
Works, 85). As Clayton remarks, this poem and the last in
the sequence "Farewell to Love," are "plainly placed as they
are for 'patriotic' and dramatic reasons," with the opening
poem stating a "loyal subject's address to the King" and the
concluding letter, "a royalist's address to Parliament in
1640" (Clayton, Works, cxxvii-iii), calling for, as we saw
in the previous chapter, the physical initiative of the

King. Furthermore, the edition contains Suckling's earlier published poems which might be associated with the Court, such as the songs from Aglaura and the commendatory poems to what Alfred Harbage has called D'Avenant's "state" poem, "Madagascar," while it suppresses or conceals anti-Court material. Thus, while the mildly anti-Platonic poems like "Upon my Lady Carlile" and those derived from French receuils such as "[Loves Siege]" are buried within the middle of the collection of poetry, more obscene poems, including "Upon T. C. having the P.," "His Dream," and, perhaps most extremely, "The Candle," are excluded from this edition. Similarly, Suckling's letters which refer to the Bishop's Wars--two military encounters with the Scots which proved politically embarrassing for the King--are not printed in Fragmenta Aurea (1646), while the "Aglaura" letters, from which J. B. Fletcher has suggested it is possible to draw up "almost a code-book of Platonic love" (Fletcher, 137), are represented in their entirety.

We might ask with what authority the voice of Sir John Suckling, addressing the King in 1640, speaks to the readership of Fragmenta Aurea in 1646. The production of the text at this time, like the subsequent publication of the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio in 1647, can also be seen as a "morale-boosting gesture of defiance" or a "propagandist reassertion of the Stuart ethic." 1646 saw the failure of Charles's military campaign as a result of both financial

and tactical deficiencies, and his captivity. Perhaps not insignificantly, the entry of Fragmenta Aurea in the Stationer's Register in July coincided with a brief resurgence in the King's popularity, brought about, claims Gardiner in The History of the Great Civil War, 1642-49, Vol. III, by the burden of Parliament's increased taxation.²¹ But if, as we saw in the first chapter of this thesis, Suckling's status as a popular Caroline Court poet in the 1630s can be discounted, then how can his collected works function as a instrument of Royalist propaganda?

Sir John Suckling was effectively made notorious by the Parliamentarian, and often overtly Protestant, pamphleteers in the early 1640s as we saw in the last chapter. Furthermore, it is apparent that Suckling's reputation in these pamphlets, as in the 1630s at Court, is hardly grounded in his abilities as a writer, since the pamphleteers are either derogatory or ignorant of his writing career. Suckling's position as profligate, Royalist, Romanist Cavalier was constructed by anti-Royalist pamphleteers from his reputed lavishness, his involvement in the Army Plot, and, speculatively, his post-flight antics. Moseley's 1646 publication can hardly have ignored existing popular constructions such as these; he announces in his preface that "While Sucklins name is in the forehead of this Booke, these Poems can want no preparation" (Clayton, Works, 3) and is trading, no doubt, on a previously established

renown. The suggestion that Suckling epitomised the Cavalier works in Moseley's favour, since it provides him with a context in which to situate his volume. Demonised and constructed by Parliamentary propagandists, Suckling is reinscribed by Moseley to function as a focal point for Stuart nostalgia; the "scum of ungodliness from the seething pot of iniquity" (A Mappe of Mischiefe, 1641) becomes "sacred to Art and Honour" (Clayton, Works, 3), and from Suckling's own "ashes" the canon of his works is put together, at once, through the volume's physical assembly, catering to a remembrance of things past and to the topicality of the Royalist Cause in 1646.

This is the moment, then, that Suckling's life--or what was constructed as his life--and Suckling's writing are conflated. The publication of Fragmenta Aurea in 1646, justified as the Royalist subversion--one might even say attempted containment--of a Parliamentary political caricature, becomes ensconced as "the unimpeached authority" (Beaurline, "Canon," 517) on Suckling's authorship, establishes the "critical formula" (Parker, 341) of Suckling as the poet "most typical of the hedonistic Cavalier" (Miner, 78), secures him, retrospectively, a "distinguished place" (Lynch, 55) among the other poets of the Caroline Court.

William Congreve's Mrs. Millamant refers, in The Way of the World, to "Natural, easie Suckling!" (IV, i, 106), but,

I suggest, the "Suckling" that a Restoration reader possessed was artificial and circuitously constructed. In the case of Sir John Suckling "the author does not precede the works" (Foucault, 118-9); in the production of Fragmenta Aurea (1646) Moseley engineers a piece of Royalist propaganda which attempts to subvert existing Parliamentary rhetoric by conflating a sequence of works with a largely fictional biography. The search for the "real" John Suckling can end, ultimately, only in disillusionment, since the author turns out to be a political re-inscription of an oppositionally political caricature of an unfashionable Court poet of the 1630s. "Suckling"--both life and works--becomes a "functional principle" composed of things "[t]hat never were, nor are, nor e're shall be" (Clayton, Works, 39).

Notes to the Introduction.

1. Parker cites Earl Miner's suggestion that Suckling, along with Carew, is "most typical" of the Cavalier poet, an estimation which Parker traces to the 1640s, and which requires "re-examination" (Parker, 341).

Notes to Chapter One.

2. This episode is well documented; Berry cites George Garrard's letter of 10th November 1634 to the Earl of Strafford, and claims that the "affair was widely celebrated because the parts played by our poet and his cohort in it were spectacularly undistinguished" (Berry, 116). A reference to Suckling's retaliation is mentioned in the pamphlet Four Fugitives Meeting (1641), which will be discussed in the next chapter.

3. Suckling was not the only butt of Brome's satire; Kaufmann maintains that in The Court Beggar (1640) Suckling is satirised as the character Sir Ferdinando the Court favourite, and D'Avenant is portrayed by Court-Wit. Brome's criticism of Caroline Court drama is discussed at length in R. J. Kaufmann, "Suckling's New Strain of Wit," Richard Brome, Caroline Playwright (New York: Columbia U. P., 1961): 151-168.

4. Kathleen Lynch notes several pre-1630 texts which show evidence of the familiarity at Court with D'Urfé's articulation of platonic love, including Sir Kenelm Digby's The Private Memoirs of Sir Kenelm Digby (1627), and Ben Jonson's The New Inn (1629). Nevertheless, the frequency of representation increases markedly in following decade.

5. D'Avenant, perhaps, is the most openly skeptical of the popular dramatists discussed by Lynch. She quotes from D'Avenant's The Platonic Lovers (1635):

'Tis worth my smiles to think what enforc'd ways
And shifts, each poet hath to help his Plays.
Ours now believes the Title needs must cause,
From the indulgent Court a kind applause,
Since there he learnt it first, and had command
T'interpret what he scarce doth understand.
(Prologue, 1-6).

It is perhaps worth noting that while D'Avenant was among the most skeptical of the "platonic dramatists" at Court, there is also some evidence to suggest his relatively

close friendship with Suckling. Suckling, D'Avenant and Jack Young apparently "vacationed" together with D'Avenant's brother, and, in 1640/1, D'Avenant and Suckling were supposed co-conspirators in the Army Plot.

6. Clayton prints the several answers to Suckling's poems in Vol. II of The Works of Sir John Suckling, Appendix A, 181-90. While a copy of Waller's poem appears in the third edition of his poetry, published in 1645 by Humphrey Moseley, the manuscript also used by Clayton is derived from one of the earlier two editions.

7. Sections of Sir Toby Matthew's letter, including this quotation, are also to be found in Fletcher, 134-5.

8. Clayton notes the "stylistic homogeneity of the poem, its parallels with Suckling's other works, and even the final stanza of the manuscript, which gives the last word and laugh to Suckling" (Works, 238) as evidence of single authorship.

Notes to Chapter Two.

9. Suckling was excluded from these discussions, though his case was represented by Goring, the man who was to betray their operations to Parliament. According to Gardiner, "Suckling was in bad odour with all military men, and the officers would not entrust him with their secrets" (316).

10. The extent of William D'Avenant's involvement in the Army Plot is unknown. The only member of this group not to elude capture, D'Avenant was apprehended at Faversham and appeared before the Commons, though he was subsequently acquitted.

11. Quoted from Michael P. Parker's article "Suckling in Paris," Notes and Queries 34 (1987): 316-8. Parker takes this quotation from G. Dyfnallt Owen, ed., Report on the Manuscripts of the Right Honourable Viscount de L'Isle, V. C., Preserved at Penshurst Place, Kent, Historical Manuscripts Commission Report 77, vol. VI (London: HMSO, 1966), 403. Parker's suggestion, in this article, is that Lady Leicester's "mention of Suckling's melancholy--perhaps a sign of his 'reflecting on the miserable and despicable condition he should be reduced to'--provides strong circumstantial support for the tradition that he died as suicide" (Parker, 318) as Aubrey maintains.

12. All quotations from the pamphlets Nocturnall Occurrences, Sad and Fearful Newes, A barbarous and inhumane Speech, and The Wicked Resolution are taken from T. N. Corns, W. A. Speck, J. A. Downie, "Archetypal Mystification: Polemic and Reality in English Political Literature, 1640-1750," ECLife 7(3) (1982): 1-27.

13. Corns, Speck and Downie explain the construction of the Cavalier by the Parliamentarian press as "an appeal to the propertied" (7): "[t]he target reader...is quite plainly a man of property: hence surely, the obsession with plunder, and hence also the suggestion of cavalier profligacy. Puritan probity is to be lost in a dissolute prodigality."

14. Citations for the pamphlets, unless otherwise stated, refer to Herbert Berry, "A Life of Sir John Suckling," Unpublished dissertation (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1953).

15. The Sucklington Faction, 1641, is reproduced by Hazlitt in an appendix to The Poems and Plays of Sir John Suckling (London: 1874). It is from this text that I quote.

16. Hazlitt's edition of Suckling's Works reprints this account in an appendix (Hazlitt, Works, 275-80).

Notes to Chapter Three.

17. This is Richard Helgerson's term. See Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

18. Jonson's address reads as follows:

To the Reader.
This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Graver had a strife
with Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was ever writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.
B.I.

This poem, along with the accompanying woodcut on the Folio's title page, is reproduced in Marcus, Puzzling Shakespeare, 4-5.

19. The engraving, signed "W. Marshall fecit," does not credit the author of the verse, but Clayton locates it in Thomas Stanley's Poems and Translations (1647) and Poems (1651) (Clayton, "Portraits," 117n).

20. In Van Dyck's portrait, Suckling is holding what appears to be a volume of Shakespeare's plays, open at Hamlet. Clayton remarks that "[t]he reflective expression and attitude may have been suggested by Suckling himself, and the Shakespeare volume would certainly have been included at his request" (Clayton, Works, 108-9). He continues to propose that "[i]t is not unlikely that Suckling's portrait was executed for Lady Southcot as a gift, or perhaps even at her request" (110). In any event, the overtly theatrical image and the juxtaposition of the references to Suckling's Aglaure and Shakespeare's Hamlet are more likely attributable to Suckling's self-inscription than to popular conceptions of his reputation as a playwright.

21. I am not, of course, claiming that the publication of Fragmenta Aurea directly influenced this change in Charles's popularity. Nevertheless, the volume, as an instrument of Royalist propaganda, perhaps conveniently contributed to, or perhaps simply found its mark within, the "reassertion of the Stuart ethic" in July 1646.



Fig. 1. From The Sucklington Faction (London: 1641).



Fig. 2. William Marshall. Fragmenta Aurea (London: 1646), frontispiece.

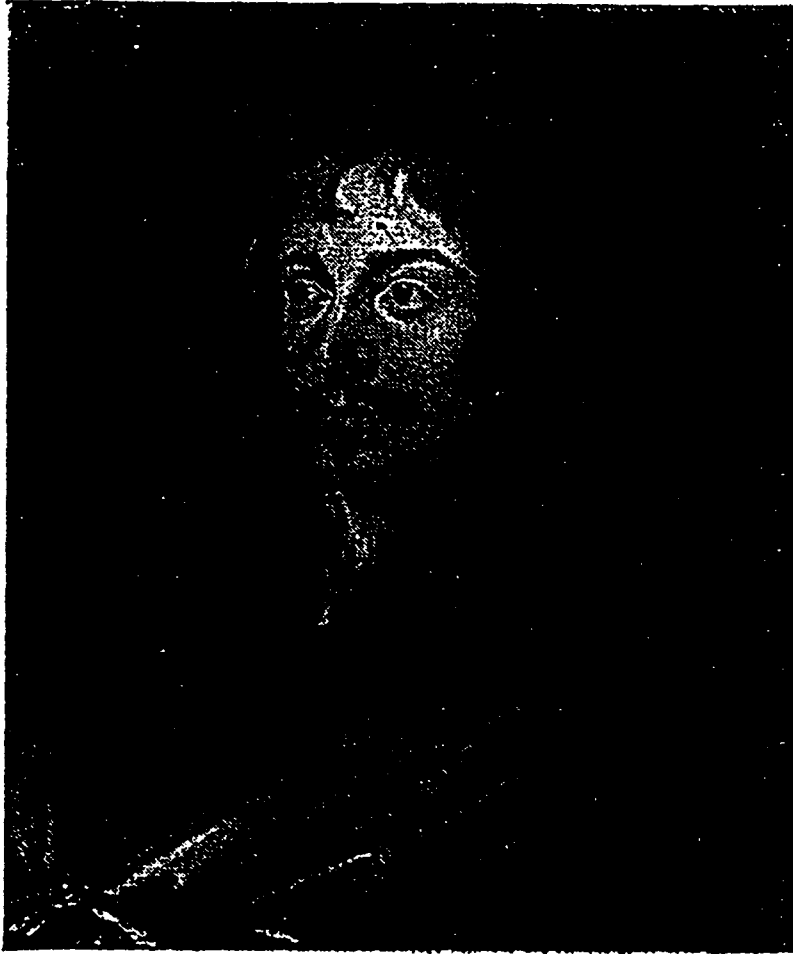


Fig. 3. Theodore Russel. Sir John Suckling, National Portrait Gallery, London.



Fig. 4. A. Van Dyck. Sir John Suckling, c. 1636-9, Frick Collection, New York.

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Curriculum Vitae

Simon Nicholas Morgan-Russell was born in Guisborough, North Yorkshire, England on 7th April 1966, the son of Margaret Anne Morgan and Robert Russell. He attended The Laurence Jackson School, Guisborough, The Prior Pursglove College, Guisborough, The University of Kent at Canterbury-- from which he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and American Literature in July 1989--and he is currently attending Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

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