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The poetry of Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea: Tradition
and the individual female talent

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The Ohio State University, 1987

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UMI
THE POETRY OF ANNE FINCH, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA:
TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL FEMALE TALENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

BY

Barbara Jeanne McGovern, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1987

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Department of English
For my children, Nick, Brigid, Jim, and Tara, and for Bob, who

... to the World, by tend'rest proof discovers
They err, who say that husbands can't be lovers.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Though Anglo-American feminist criticism has done much in the past two decades to revise the canon of works by female authors, it has not yet focused much attention on literature written before the early 1800s. Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea (1661-1720) is a case in point. Save for an occasional isolated reference in feminist writings and selections of her poetry in several recent anthologies of women's literature, her achievement has remained untouched by the feminist movement.

Lady Winchilsea, whose life and work spanned almost the entire Restoration period, helped usher in the Augustan age.¹ A remarkably talented poet, she was able to overcome the prejudice against her sex and to develop her own poetic voice. Yet despite praise by Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, who were among her circle of friends, and later by William Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold, her work has yet to receive substantive critical attention. No complete edition of her poetry has yet been published. Moreover, the acknowledgment from her contemporaries and from later critics has usually been brief and
seldom analytical. Much of the commentary, indeed, has been confined to perfunctory remarks about the anomaly of a female Restoration poet, reminiscent of Samuel Johnson's response to the notion of a woman preacher: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all" (Boswell I, 309).

But Winchilsea did write well. In an age when much of the literature was particularly antithetical to a feminist view, she wrote poetry that articulated the experience of being a woman. She was an eclectic poet, and her remarkable talent lay in her ability to use a variety of literary genres and conventions so as to achieve a freedom of expression that would not otherwise have been available for a woman.

T.S. Eliot reminded us in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that writers assimilate what their literary predecessors have done, but the canon of recent feminist criticism has made us aware that women writers are part of a literary subculture which differs greatly from the male-dominated literary tradition. Though such critics as Elaine Showalter, Ellen Moers, Sandra M. Gilbert, and Susan Gubar have concentrated primarily upon nineteenth- and twentieth-century women writers, their theories and insights are applicable to the poetry of Lady
Winchilsea. Thus Showalter, in writing of women novelists, comes to the conclusion that

...women have always been self-conscious, but only rarely self-defining. While they have been deeply and perennially aware of their individual identities and experiences, women writers have very infrequently considered whether these experiences might transcend the personal and local, assume a collective form in art, and reveal a history (4).

Winchilsea herself, however, was surprisingly aware of what we call a female literary subculture. In her struggles to develop her own voice, she repeatedly identified with her literary sisters, alluding in her poetry to a diverse range of female writers, from Sappho to Aphra Behn. What differentiates her from most of her contemporaries, then, is her concept that literary tradition is androgynous. Furthermore, she frequently did "reveal a history" by couching even her most personal poetic expressions in rich, morally instructive, and often satirical commentary. That she could do so from her position as one of the earliest of feminist writers is particularly remarkable.

Frequently Winchilsea's poetic voice reveals a dynamic tension created by her awareness of, and rebellion against, a literary and social world of male constructs. That sense of a literary tradition that Winchilsea defined for herself, then, informs the development of her own
individual female talent.

In her introduction to the recent A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers, 1660--1800, Janet Todd notes that women writers of the Restoration and eighteenth century were denied access to public recognition for their literary talent and therefore were limited to such private genres as the verse epistle and the personal occasional poem. Even among the aristocracy, she notes, women "did not stray from the private verse or ballad, the book of instructions to daughters, and the familiar letter of friendship" (2). Yet here, again, Winchilsea stands apart from her female contemporaries, for her poetry is rich in its variety of genres; from nature poetry, songs, and fables, to religious poems and social satires, she demonstrates an eclectic use of literary traditions.

Before beginning any analysis of her poetry, I should like to consider briefly some issues pertinent to any study of Winchilsea and to define, in part, the critical stance I will take in discussing her works. Though feminist criticism has explored such relevant issues as female anxiety of authorship and the difficulty women face in trying to identify with a male-dominated literary culture, it has not yet examined very fully the implications of non-publication, of circulating works in manuscript form, for women writers who feared public scorn, particularly women writers who lived prior to the nineteenth century.
The following passage from Winchilsea's "The Introduction," written at least seven years after she had begun writing poetry, demonstrates her anxiety about public recognition:

Did I, my lines intend for publick view,
How many censures, wou'd their faults persue,
Some wou'd, because such words they do affect,
Cry they're insipid, empty, uncorrect.
And many, have attain'd, dull and untaught
The name of Witt, only by finding fault.
True judges, might condemn their want of witt,
And all might say, they're by a Woman writ.
Alas! a woman that attempts the pen,
Such an intruder on the rights of men,
Such a presumptuous Creature, is esteem'd,
The fault, can by no vertue be redeem'd. (4-5)

We need to remember in looking at Restoration and eighteenth-century female authors that though some women did publish, they were likely to be those who, like Aphra Behn, were praised for writing "like a man," or those who pandered to the popular taste for sentimentality—a taste not unlike what one finds in the Harlequin romance junkies of today.

The issue of audience for women writers is a crucial aspect of that malady I call publication deprivation. What restraints are placed upon the writer who knows, for example, that the only readers she is ever likely to have for her poetry are family members and close friends? How is her possible use of a persona either modified or limited by her restricted audience? And what generic and topic limitations are inherent in non-publishing? While
it is not appropriate to examine such questions at length here, they must at least be raised now. They are some of the cutting tools necessary in forming a prism of critical precepts for evaluating the full spectrum of Winchilsea's literary achievement.

In an age when circulating hand-written manuscripts of one's poetry among friends and relations was common, the distinction between publishing and non-publishing was not as sharp as it is today. One must consider, for example, whether or not the printed work appeared anonymously, and, if it did, whether or not the author's identity was generally known. Furthermore, in that instinctive desire for fame which every writer has (Milton called it "That last infirmity of noble mind"), there are significant degrees even in non-publishing; the difference between circulating a manuscript to family members and having, say, Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift for readers, is enormous.

Given, then, a Restoration/eighteenth-century woman writer for whom the possibility of publication and fame were slight, the issues of audience, of style and tone, and of masking strategies become very complex. We cannot accurately read and appreciate individual poems of Winchilsea without an understanding of their reading audience, whether it be relatives and intimate friends, prominent literary acquaintances, or, as she eventually
came to know it, that larger audience of the printed word.

Another serious disadvantage imposed upon a woman writer for whom publication is not readily available is that she is denied the objectivity that comes only with publishing. Preparing one's work for print compels one to edit and revise. Furthermore, once a work is in print, the comments from critics and the literary world in general afford yet another valuable opportunity for revising. There is surely a great difference between publishing a collection of poems which anyone may read for the purchase price of the book and showing a few poems to one's Aunt Emily. It is therefore necessary to remember when reading the entire body of Winchilsea's verse that we are not seeing the carefully self-edited poems of Pope or one of Winchilsea's other male contemporaries. Instead, we are seeing a collection gathered from a hodgepodge of sources: from a small volume anonymously published, from scattered miscellanies and pirated printings rife with inaccuracies, from private family miscellanies and common books, from personal letters containing appended verse epistles, and from large unpublished manuscripts in various and often unidentified handwritings, sometimes containing differing versions of the same poems.

One additional issue needs consideration. Much feminist criticism has been directed toward documenting a connectedness in the female literary experience.
Consequently, it has resurrected many neglected women writers and has disclosed that there is a substantial body of early English literature by women. If one avoids aesthetic judgments and applies an exclusively feminist interpretation to literature, however, it may lead to a dangerous artistic homogenization of all women's literature. Egalitarianism may be commendable in political theory, but in literary criticism its effects may be less felicitous. We need to discriminate between literature which is mediocre and literature which is truly outstanding, between the writer of limited ability who is of interest exclusively for, say, psychological or sociological reasons, and the superior writer whose work is of lasting value. Let me be specific. I would have Anne Finch appreciated as a woman writer who sometimes expressed feminist views in a forthright manner and sometimes wrote from a perspective positioned in a marginal, undermining relationship to male literary traditions. But I would also have her recognized as the most talented English female poet of the eighteenth century.

Lady Winchilsea deserves a prominent place in literary history, but not because she is a woman, not because she is among the first to challenge and subvert a male-dominated literary tradition, not because she was respected by Swift and Pope and later by Wordsworth and Arnold, and not because the subtext of her poetry is of
interest to scholars of women's studies. While these may be sufficient reasons for acknowledging her worth, Anne Finch deserves recognition because she is a superb poet.

Winchilsea innovatively adapted the literary conventions of her Augustan world to develop her art and to maintain her personal integrity as a woman poet. The intent of this study, then, is to examine her extraordinary ability to manipulate and mold literary traditions for the nurturing of her own individual female talent.

Much of Winchilsea's poetry is rooted in the social and political setting of her day, a setting which was closely interwoven with events in her personal life. A biographical sketch is therefore necessary to my study to help place her poetry in its literary and social milieu. This is followed by an evaluation of the scant and often misleading scholarship that Winchilsea's work has elicited.

The body of this study, however, will consist of an essentially thematic approach to Winchilsea's poetry, including, whenever relevant, discussions of stylistic influences and of her use of literary genres. The standard edition of Winchilsea's work remains the 1903 one by Myra Reynolds, The Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea, though it is far from complete. In preparing her collection, Professor Reynolds was unaware of the existence of an unpublished manuscript containing a significant body of
later Winchilsea poems; consequently, fifty-three poems
from this manuscript are not found in the Reynolds edi-
tion. This manuscript is now deposited in the Wellesley
College Library, and I am grateful to Special Collection
Librarian Anne Anninger and Wellesley College for making
it available to me. 4 Included in the appendix is my
transcription of those unpublished poems that I refer to
in my study.
CHAPTER II

POLITICAL UPHEAVALS AND DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY: 
A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Anne was born in April of 1661 in Sidmorton in the county of Southampton, Kent, the third child of Sir William and Anne Haselwood Kingsmill. Both parents were from old and prominent families, particularly Sir William. The Kingsmills had been in royal service for over four centuries, having assumed the name of Kingsmill since the days when an ancestor, after saving the life of King John during a hunting incident, was given the lease for the Royal Mill at Basingstoke (Cook-Kingsmill, ff. 10-11).

Sir William died only five months after Anne was born, but it is nevertheless tempting to speculate on the possible influence he may have had posthumously on his daughter's early writing. John Eames's recent article, "Sir William Kingsmill (1613-1661) and his Poetry," chronicles the life of Anne's father and reveals the previously undisclosed fact that he was himself a poet. Sir William apparently stopped writing poetry around the time of his marriage, and we do know that he dedicated the
manuscript of his poems to the Marquess of Hertford (later Duke of Somerset) and presented it to him some time before Anne's birth (Eames, 126). The Duchess of Somerset donated the manuscript to Lichfield Cathedral Library some time during the 1670s when the orphaned Anne would have been an adolescent. There appear to be no direct references in her poetry to her father, but this is no evidence that she was unfamiliar with his poems, for her poetry is singularly lacking in any references to her childhood. Moreover, throughout her life she moved among a circle of aristocratic families who would most certainly have known, and related to her, information about her prominent father and his poetic endeavors. One may reasonably speculate, then, that Anne might have been led to pursue poetry at an early age through a sympathetic identification, supported by tradition, with the father she never knew. It is also likely that the young Anne, orphaned at three and apparently shuffled around between the households of several relatives during her childhood, turned to poetry as a refuge, a way of finding out about herself and establishing a self-identity.

Two other children were born to Sir William and his wife prior to Anne's birth: Bridget, in 1657, and William, in 1660. A year following Anne's birth and the death of her father, her mother married Sir Thomas Ogle of
Suffolk. From that union came Dorothy, the half-sister with whom Anne formed an intimate friendship that inspired such poems as "Some Reflections: In a Dialogue Between TERESA and ARDELIA." and "To my Sister Ogle." In 1664 their mother died, and though her will named Sir Thomas the guardian of all her children, there is no evidence that any of them ever lived with him between then and the time of his own death in 1671. Dorothy, his daughter, became a ward of Sir Richard Campion, and an entry in the diary of William Haselwood, the children's uncle, suggests that the other children were a part of his household immediately following their mother's death. Haselwood's diary for 1671-72, however, reports that though William was still under his care, Anne and Bridget no longer were. Court of Chancery records for January of 1670 indicate that the two girls were sent to Lady Kingsmill, their paternal grandmother, but her will, read upon her death in 1672, makes no mention whatever of the girls, so it is possible that they were under the custody of other relatives.

There is very little known about Anne's early life. The first clear factual information we have about her after she was orphaned at the age of three is that in the year 1683 she was attached to the court of Charles II and residing at St. James's Palace as Maid of Honor to Mary of Modena, second wife of the Duke of York, who two years
later would become King James II. Agnes Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England* quotes the original document of Gregario Leti, official historian and biographer of Charles II, who lists Anne Kingsmill as among the six maids of honor of Mary Beatrice in 1683 (IX, 119).

However, since she would have attained legal independence from her guardian when she became twenty-one, there is a strong likelihood that she joined the court some time around April of 1682.⁴

Most notable of the other five maids of honor is Anne Killigrew, the talented poet and painter whose untimely death from smallpox was mourned by John Dryden in his "Ode to Mistress Anne Killigrew." Though the extent of the friendship of these two young women is unknown, Strickland writes that both were "much beloved" by Mary of Modena, "were ladies of the most irreproachable virtue, members of the Church of England, and alike distinguished for moral worth and literary attainments" (IX, 147).

Through her position in the royal household, Anne was thrust into the midst of an exciting environment that included many of the most prominent literary figures of the day. Both Charles II and James II surrounded themselves with a coterie of spirited writers who earned for themselves the epithet of "The Court Wits." Their most famous (and infamous) member, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, set the tone for the group. He died just
shortly before Anne joined the court, but the lively conversation of the other wits, men such as Sir George Etheredge, Sir Charles Sedley, Sir Charles Sackville, and William Wycherley, must have provided a most stimulating intellectual milieu for the young Anne. Furthermore, though evidence is lacking, Dryden's inclusion in the relatively small court circle and his at least casual acquaintance with Anne's companion maid of honor, Anne Killigrew, make it highly probably that Anne knew the foremost writer of the age, the man about whom she would later write: "We'll grant like thee none ever writ before" ("Under the picture of Mr. John Dryden").

Anne's earliest known poems date from this period. As stimulating as this court environment may have been, however, it would be misleading to imply that it was anything other than hostile towards women who made any claim to literary talent. In "The Preface," a prose work Winchilsea wrote in 1702 and affixed to the privately circulated folio manuscripts of her poems but withheld from publication during her lifetime, the following poignant statement appears:

> itt is still a great satisfaction to me, that I was not so far abandon'd by my prudence, as out of a mistaken vanity, to lett any attempts of mine in Poetry, shew themselves whilst I liv'd in such a publick place as the Court, where every one wou'd have made their remarks upon a Versifying Maid of Honour; and far the greater number with prejudice, if not contempt. (7-8)
Certainly the treatment of her court companion Anne Killigrew, supports the accuracy of her judgment. The pain of thwarted ambition, coupled with the shame of being wrongly accused of plagiarism, sears through the lines of Killigrew's very personal poem, "Upon the Saying that my Verses Were Made by Another." Encouraged at first by the good words of a close confidant or two ("I writ, and the judicious praised my pen: / Could any doubt ensuing glory then"), Killigrew bitterly records the results of her ensuing bid for recognition:

Emboldened thus, to fame I did commit
(By some few hands) my most unlucky wit.
But ah, the sad effects that from it came!
What ought t'have brought me honour, brought me shame!7

For Winchilsea, however, court life proved to be most serendipitous to her literary career as well as to her personal life, for it was at St. James's Palace that she met Heneage Finch, the man "whose constant passion found the art/ To win a stubborn, and ungratefull heart" ("A Letter to Dafnis April: 20, 1685," 20). When Anne first met Heneage he was captain of the King's halberdiers and Gentleman of the Bedchamber to James. Though a son of the second Earl of Winchilsea, Heneage was not next in line to inherit the title from his father. He was, however, a commoner who, like Anne, was respected because of his prestigious family. And also like Anne, he had strong Tory principles, with staunch allegiance to the Church of
England and the monarchy—principles that would shortly cause both of them great distress and traumatic upheaval.

Anne and Heneage never had any children, but from all indications the Finches sustained during the entire thirty-six years of their married life a passionate, happy, and fulfilling relationship. It is impossible to emphasize too greatly the role that Heneage played in Anne's development as a poet. First, he gave her the love and domestic tranquility that she found so essential to her writing. But beyond that he was in a very real sense her literary helpmate and greatly encouraged his wife in her writing, as poem after poem attests. "To Mr. F. Now Earl of W.,” for example, is addressed to Heneage, who, as the subtitle tells us, "going abroad, had desired Ardelia [the pen-name she frequently used for herself] to write some Verses upon whatever Subject she thought fit, against his Return in the Evening" (20). Moreover, his commitment to editing her works was life-long. A good portion of the privately-kept octavo manuscript of her poems, begun in the early years of their marriage, is in Heneage's handwriting, as is the entire lengthy folio manuscript (with the exception of occasional corrections in Anne's hand), which was begun probably around 1694 and meant for distribution to friends and relatives. 8 In addition, the latter part of the Wellesley manuscript, containing some of the last poems Anne wrote, is in his hand. 9 And as yet
one further piece of evidence, we have Heneage's own words in his will, expressing his hopes for

reprinting of all my dear wife's poems
which have been already published, with
the addition of all the rest of her
finished poems which are yet in
manuscript.... And this is what I would see performed myself, if it shall please God to spare my life. (Buxton, 177)

Following their marriage on May 15, 1684, Anne left the service of Mary of Modena, but the couple maintained close ties with the court through Heneage's position and resided at Westminster for the next few years. With the accession of James in February of 1685, Heneage's stature in court increased; in addition to his position as Gentleman of the Bedchamber for the new king, he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in the Coldstream Guards, was for three years a deputy-lieutenant of Kent, and sat in Parliament for Hythe for one year (Reynolds, xxvii).

Many of Anne's poems from this period deal with love. Some, such as the verse epistles to her husband, are personal, while others, including some of the songs, are of a more general nature. But all reflect the deep joy she found in married life. Particularly beautiful is the song "Love, thou art best of Human Joys," written within the early months of their marriage:

Love, thou art best of Human Joys,
Our chiefest Happiness below;
All other Pleasures are but Toys,
Musick without Thee is but Noize,
And Beauty but an empty Show.
Heav'n, who knew best what Man wou'd move,
    And raise his Thoughts above the Brute;
Said, Let him Be, and let him Love;
That must alone his Soul improve,
    Howe'er Philosophers dispute. (131)

The joy of the new couple was short-lived, however, for in 1688 came the Revolution, sending James II into flight and bringing William and Mary to the throne. The highly principled Finchers remained loyal to the House of Stuart, and for his refusal to take the Oath of Allegiance Heneage was exiled from court, cut off from a promising career, and forced to suffer, with his wife, the prospect of a future of persecution and poverty.

The effect that the Bloodless Revolution had on the lives of the Finchers is incalculable. For several years the forlorn couple sought refuge with friends and relatives about the country, temporarily residing at such places as Kirby, Eastwell, Godmersham, Hothfield, and Wye College (Reynolds, xxviii). Anne's poems written during this period are strongly political in nature and suggest the tremendous unrest and upheaval experienced by those loyal to James II. Her elegy "On the Lord Dundee," for example, shows her sympathy with the Jacobite struggle:

    Fame, shall the gloomy Tyrant disposess,
  And bear you, on her golden wings,
    You, that have borne the cause of Kings.... (82)

Other poems from 1689 which have heavy political overtones include "Caesar and Brutus," a lament for the betrayal of friendship, and "The Change," which contains the following
bitter lines:

No Love, sown in thy prosp'rous Days,
Can Fruit in this cold Season raise:
No Benefit, by thee conferr'd,
Can in this time of Storms be heard. (85)

The grief of Anne during this time was heightened by the arrest of Heneage on April 29, 1690 while on his way to France, apparently in an attempt to join James II. The enormous impact of this incident upon Anne's poetry has not been considered, perhaps because Reynolds, who is still considered the authoritative source (by virtue of being the only readily available one), does not even mention Heneage's arrest. The events of the preceding months had probably convinced Heneage and his wife that the situation was desperate: the Jacobite cause had met with repeated failures, William had brought England into the Grand Alliance in his growing war against France, and the deprivation of "Non-jurors" in February 1689/90 meant that those who refused to swear allegiance to William were now subject to persecution, including fines and imprisonment (Ashley, 178-182). Luttrell's A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714 records the following entry: "Several persons made their escape at Hith in Kent, in order to goe for France: col. Finch was amongst them, but he was taken, and so sent up hither prisoner" (II,38). An entry in the Calendar of State Papers from Whitehall dated May 2, 1690, indicates that he was brought to the office of the Earl of Shrewsbury in
London and from there was sent to the Lord Chief Justice in the custody of an official (II, 4). Some time following that he was apparently released on bail, for there are other entries in Luttrell indicating that he appeared before the court of the king's bench under his own recognizance on June 2 and again on July 9, with his case being carried over each time until the next term (II, 50, 73). On November 28 he was finally discharged (Luttrell, II, 135), probably for insufficient evidence. Entries in both Luttrell and the Calendar of State Papers, with the numerous charges of treason and the frequent severe sentences imposed during this period, are sufficient to suggest the extreme anguish that Anne must have endured for months. The titles of most of the poems she wrote during that year are in themselves a testimony to her state of mind: "On Absence," "The Losse," "To Death," "A Song on Greife," "The Consolation," "Ardelia to Melancholy," "A Preparation to Prayer," "Gold is try'd in the fire," and "On Affliction."

Some time then or shortly after the ordeal of Heneage's prosecution for Jacobitism, the Finches found a permanent home. Heneage's nephew Charles had succeeded his grandfather in 1689 as Earl of Winchilsea, and he invited the couple to reside with him permanently at Eastwell, his estate in Kent. In the prose piece "The Preface," Anne credits "the solitude, & security of the
Country" at Eastwell, as well as the gracious encouragement of her sensitive and learned host, with her serious commitment to writing (8). For the remainder of her life, then, Eastwell was to be her home, though in their later years she and Heneage spent increasing amounts of time at their town house in Cleveland Row in London, particularly in the winters.

Secluded from public life and from direct involvement in the turbulent world of politics, the Finches once again led lives of domestic bliss and relative tranquility. In the library of Charles's Elizabethan mansion, Heneage, who was something of a noted antiquarian scholar (Reynolds, xlvi-l), now had time to pursue his interests; Anne's delightful "An Invitation to Dafnis" makes note of her husband's scholarly studies in history, geography, literature, and mathematics. On the other hand, Anne now had the leisure to take long walks in the lovely park at Eastwell and to wander about the countryside of Kent, garnering those rich nature images that would find expression in such poems as "A Nocturnal Reverie" and "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat." Once she was settled securely at Eastwell, the despair and grief evident in her poems of the preceding couple of years, soon gave way to the sort of playfulness of the seduction poem to her husband, "An Invitation to Dafnis," or the charming song for her brother-in-law, "For my Br. Les: Finch. Upon a Punch
Bowl." Moreover, we can see in some poems from this period, such as "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," that strong satirical impulse that became more evident in her later poetry and that marks much of her work as truly Augustan.

There are many indications that life at Eastwell was most pleasant. The family circle surrounding Charles was apparently a warm and congenial one, and the number of close friendships which the Finch family had with other families certainly contributed to Anne's contentment there. Numerous poems speak to the high value which she placed upon friendship, with the names of such families as the Thanets, the Thynnes, and the Twysdens figuring prominently in her verse. Many of these poems are either verse epistles to specific friends or are dedicated to them, and they range from lofty elegies ("On the Death of Hon. James Thynne") and verses marking public celebrations ("On the Marriage of Edw. and Eliz. Herbert"), to poems of a very personal nature ("An Epistle to Mrs. Catherine Fleming At Coleshill," Wellesley, 79). Some of her more significant works, such as "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat," are inscribed to friends, though she could also be inspired to write by such small joyful experiences as receiving a ten-year-old girl's first letter ("To the Rt Hon. the Lady C. Tufton").

In 1691, shortly after settling in Kent, Anne began to publish a few songs and religious poems in scattered
collections. The first poem to appear in print was the song "'Tis strange, this Heart," and it appeared in the song-book *Vinculum Societatis*. Over the next few years, several other songs appeared in print in such places as Gentleman's Journal, including one that was set to music by Henry Purcell and was popular enough to be reprinted several times. These were followed in 1696 by six poems in a miscellany of religious poetry. Then in 1701 she had her first significant publication—her pindaric ode "The Spleen" appeared in Gildon's Miscellany, a prestigious collection containing the work of such notables as Dryden, Matthew Prior, Nicholas Rowe, and Richard Steele.\(^{10}\) Though all her poems were printed anonymously (always ascribed to "a lady" or "an unknown hand"), "The Spleen" did help establish her reputation; it was reprinted numerous times, including at least one pirated edition, and was considered so medically accurate that it was prefixed to a major medical treatise on spleen (Sena, "Melancholy in Anne Finch and Elizabeth Carter," \(\text{110}\)).

Though still nameless to the general public, her reputation and identity undoubtedly now spread beyond the small circle of acquaintances amongst whom her manuscripts had circulated. It must have afforded her no small pleasure to be recognized by a growing number of literary people as the author of such a popular poem. "The Spleen" became her best-known work during her lifetime and throughout the
eighteenth century.

In 1712 Anne Finch became Countess of Winchilsea. When Heneage's nephew Charles died unexpectedly and without issue, Heneage acceded to the title as fourth Earl of Winchilsea. The changes in the couple's lives as a result of their new positions, however, were probably minimal, save for increased financial difficulties. Charles had been willing to comply with the government sufficiently to be given public appointments of some value by both King William and, later, Queen Anne. As his friend Jonathan Swift had said, "Being very poor he complied too much with the party he hated" (Correspondence, I, 138). Heneage, however, would not take the oath to support William and Anne that Charles had been willing to take. As a non-juror, then, he could not be seated in the House of Lords and had to continue his retirement from political activity. Furthermore, his financial situation was still not good, for his inheritance was quite small, and the Eastwell estate was involved in lengthy court cases (Cameron, 155-156).

In 1713, just a year after Heneage inherited his new rank, a small volume of Anne's verse, Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions, was published. The title page at first indicated only that the poems were "Written by a Lady," though three subsequent title pages printed for this single edition volume, did bear the name "Lady
Winchilsea." It is unavoidable to speculate on the possible relationship between Anne's new title and her finally seeking publication. Ann Messenger notes in her article "Publishing without Perishing: Lady Winchilsea's Miscellany Poems of 1713," that "A countess had less to fear from a largely hostile public than a plain 'Mrs.'" (28). However, while her new title undoubtedly offered a new source of privilege, in my view it was not the compelling factor in her decision to publish. One might even argue that in a position of prestige she would have been more vulnerable to ridicule as a woman poet, a possibility to which she would have been very sensitive. Consider, for example, her remarks in "The Preface" about her reluctance to show her poems to anyone while "in such a publick place as the Court" because of the "prejudice, if not contempt" she felt would be shown towards a "Versifying Maid of Honour" (7-8). Her reluctance apparently disappeared once she left court and was no longer a maid of honor but simply "Mrs." Finch, for we know that around that time she began to circulate her poems in manuscript to friends and to publish a few poems in various journals and miscellanies. We must remember, too, that those individually published poems and the book were all first printed anonymously, presumably under her instructions. The important factor in the growth of her literary career was not, I think, her becoming suddenly titled, for she had always
been an intimate part of aristocratic circles anyway. Her decision to publish at all was due, most likely, to the influence and encouragement of such important literary acquaintances as Nicholas Rowe, Jonathan Swift, and Alexander Pope.

Rowe was acquainted with Winchilsea's work in manuscript, and his poem "An epistle to Flavia, On the sight of two Pindaric Odes on the Spleen and Vanity. Written by a Lady, her Friend," pays her extravagant homage:

> Since she alone of the poetic crowd  
> To the false gods of wit has never bow'd,  
> The empire, which she saves, shall own her sway,  
> All Parnassus her blest laws obey.  
> (Chalmers, IX, 468)

Though he approved of her discretion in keeping her poems from public view, his unqualified praise must have been most heartening to her. Their relationship of apparent mutual admiration must have continued over the years, moreover, for we know that some time in the 1690's he sent down to Eastwell a copy of some of his imitations of Horace's odes. In addition, in 1713 she wrote "An Epilogue to the Tragedy of Jane Shore" with a subtitle indicating that the verses were to be spoken by the actress Mrs. Oldfield following the performance of Rowe's play—yet further evidence of their continued literary relationship.
More significant was her acquaintance with Pope and Swift. Swift was a friend of Charles, third Earl of Winchilsea, and probably first met Anne at Eastwell. In any event, we know from Swift's account books that some time around 1708 he played piquet with her (Ehrenpreis, II, 306), and that his affection and concern for her welfare inspired the following remarks to Stella upon Charles's death in 1712:

Poor Lord Winchilsea is dead, to my great grief. He was an worthy, honest gentleman, and particular friend of mine; and what is yet worse, my old acquaintance, Mrs. Finch, is now Countess of Winchilsea, the title being fallen to her husband but without much estate." (I, 55)

Earlier, in a letter to Robert Hunter dated January 12, 1708/9, Swift had written, "I amuse myself some times with writing verses to Mrs Finch" (I, 121). While we do not know what other verses Swift may have written to her, one charming poem remains: "To the Honourable Mrs Finch (Since Countess of Winchilsea), Under the Name of Ardella." This sixty-four line homage is much more than the traditional elaborate tribute that Rowe's poem is, for it contains a humorously argued thesis--one that most likely had a profound effect on Anne's literary future. In his delightful poem, Swift portrays Apollo as enchanted with the lovely young Ardella (again, the name Anne took for herself) and attempting to seduce her. Ardella, however, is not to be outwitted, and she coyly asks that
he bestow a gift upon her by putting the Muses at her disposal. This granted, she quickly calls upon Thalia, the Prude, to aid her, thus thwarting Apollo's advances. Unable to revoke his gift, Apollo takes his revenge by inflicting upon her such modesty and pride that she will not make her verses public:

Let stubborn Pride possess thee long,  
And be thou negligent of Fame;  
With ev'ry Muse to grace thy Song,  
May'st thou despise a Poet's Name.  

(Poems, I, 78)

Apollo's final vengeful curse is that Ardelia may at last know fame, but only by yielding finally to the plea of one whose political leanings she despises: "May you descend to take Renown,/ Prevail'd on by the Thing you hate,/ A Whig, and one that wears a Gown." (Swift, an Anglican clergyman, may have been twitted by Anne for his Whig propensities; he became a Tory shortly after this poem was written.) The wit and gentle affection of these lines are unmistakable, and it is not difficult to imagine the effect such a persuasive argument might have had upon the hesitant Anne. Having one of the foremost writers of the age publish a highly complimentary poem urging her to publish, must have done much to help Anne eventually overcome her reluctance; it was within two years of the appearance of Swift's poem in print that Anne brought her own volume of verse before the public eye.
There is yet one final chapter in the relationship between Anne and Swift. In the Wellesley manuscript (96) is a curious poem, never before published, which contains obvious references to Swift. Cameron does not date it other than to place it within the last twenty years of her life, but on the basis of internal evidence (particularly the final stanza), I believe that the poem was written some time around 1714. Swift's literary career had brought him regularly to London every year, and particularly frequently once he became involved in politics as a Tory journalist, but 1714 marked the beginning of his retirement--one might almost say exile--to Dublin. Bitter and frustrated at not gaining the bishopric he had so long hoped for, Swift had been dealt a cruel "drubbing" by his appointment the previous year as Dean of St. Patrick's, and the fall of the Tories from power in 1714 was the coup de grace. I quote the poem in its entirety because it contributes further to an understanding of the friendship of these two writers, and also because it is a very fine poem:

The misantrope

Life at best
Is but a jest
A face a glass a fiddle
A shew a noise
Makes all its joys
Till worn beyond the middle
Age is worse
The doatards curse
Consumed in endless story
In tales of tubs
In treagues and drubs
Retold by Grandsires hoary

Who wou'd then
Converse with men
More then his needs enforce him
Since tedious fools
Or boys from Schools
Are most that do discourse him

These to fly
Retired lyie
Unknown and all unknowing
And think't enough
Not nonsense proof
My own I am not shewing.

The allusion to The Tale of a Tub, a work for which Swift had come to be known as a blasphemer and apostate, but also as a misanthrope (long before the publication of Gulliver's Travels), is unmistakable. The references to "intreagues" and "drubs" I take to be possible references to the political battles and disappointments Swift had recently endured. The concern with retirement in the final stanza is also pertinent to Swift's situation, particularly since Anne's treatment of it here is so unlike her usual treatment of retirement in poems such as "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat," where it is portrayed as an idyllic respite, a temporary retreat to a pastoral setting.

Of primary interest in this poem is the persona Anne adopts. The speaker's voice is that of a man, one who by retiring from society in middle age has escaped the fate
that all aged men are threatened with: becoming hoary grandsires whose only companions for conversation are "tedious fools" and schoolboys. In other words, the persona is very like Swift, if not Swift himself, and in her subtle and sympathetic identification with him, Anne is at once both honest and compassionate. It is likely that she felt a kinship with a fellow writer who, like herself, experienced exile for political reasons. Furthermore, through her clever handling of the rhythm, she achieves in these sportive sestet stanzas, an additional softening of misanthropy that might be leveled against the poem's speaker. How sadly ironic that her description of aged dotards was prophetic of what would become of Swift years later in the throes of Meniere's Syndrome.

Anne's friendship with Pope, which began in the last decade of her life, has been greatly misunderstood, since several critics, unfortunately relying on Myra Reynolds as their source, have perpetuated the false notion that at various times Pope's relationship with Anne was anywhere from ambiguous to downright antagonistic. The fact is that Pope was a friend of the Finch's and called upon them on a number of occasions in their London townhouse; that he admired Anne's poetry, encouraged her in her writing, and published her; and that he himself wrote and published a poem in tribute to her.
Reynolds's misunderstanding began with a sentence which she took out of context from one of Pope's letters, and which she also misquoted just enough to make its meaning more compatible with her interpretation. In the letter, dated 15 December [1713], Pope is explaining to his friend Caryll why it is that on Caryll's last day in London, though he had heard Caryll was "so kind as to stay at Common Garden Coffeehous a considerable time" expecting him, Pope was unable to meet him. Pope writes:

The truth was this: I was invited that day to dinner with my Lady Winchelsea, and after dinner to hear a play read, at both which I sat in great disorder with sickness at my head and stomach. As soon as I got home which was about the hour I should have met you, I was obliged to goe directly to bed. (Correspondence, I, 203-204)

Reynolds misquotes the first of these sentences, deleting the emphatic "that day" as well as making other less serious changes, and she leaves off the second sentence all together, undercutting Pope's obvious intent to explain his seeming neglect of his friend Caryll, rather than to criticize Anne (Reynolds, lvi). Furthermore, she concludes, with no more evidence than this letter, that it was one of her own plays which Anne read (Love and Innocence), that Pope was an unwilling listener, and that the play was the direct cause of his illness--all of which are most spurious conclusions.

One additional piece of evidence which Reynolds offers for what she sees as "certain serious lapses from
this attitude of friendship" on the part of Pope (xvii) is the play Three Hours after Marriage, which he anonymously co-authored with Gay and Arbuthnot. She assumes that a minor character from the play, Phoebe Clinket, is a satirical portrait of Anne, even though Phoebe is spoofed for her eagerness to have her play performed (Anne never sought performance for her plays) and in general bears little resemblance to Anne. There are, moreover, two indications that Pope's relationship with Anne during 1717, the year this play was performed, was on the best of terms. One is that he included her poem "To Mr. Pope" in a miscellany he edited that year for publication: Words on Several Occasions: By His Grace the Duke of Buckingham, Mr. Wycherley, Lady Winchilsea, Sir Samuel Garth, N. Rowe, Esq.,; Mrs. Singer, Bevil Higgon, Esq.; and other eminent Hands. And yet one further piece of evidence of their continued friendship is found in another letter to Caryll--this one written August 6, 1717, just six months after the Drury Lane performance of the play that Reynolds claims attacks Anne personally. Explaining to Caryll how busy his days are, Pope mentions that he has recently been at Lord Winchilsea's, as well as at the homes of several other friends, and he comments that "All these have indispensable claims to me, under penalty of the imputation of direct rudeness, living within 2 hours sail of Chiswick" (I, 417-418). It is most unlikely that Pope and
Heneage would have such ties of friendship if Pope had just recently insulted his wife publicly in a satirical play.

Like Swift and Rowe, Pope also wrote a complimentary poem for Anne: "IMPROMPTU, To Lady WINCHILSEA. Occasion'd by four Satyrical Verses on Women-Wits, in the RAPE of the LOCK." As the poem indicates, Pope apparently showed Anne the manuscript for The Rape of the Lock which he was busy revising, and a friendly dispute developed involving four lines which have subsequently been identified by Butt (121) as probably part of the invocation of the goddess Spleen in canto iv:

Parent of Vapour and of Female Wit,
Who give th' Hysteric or Poetic Fit,
On various Tempers act by various ways,
Make some take Physick, others scribble Plays.

(59-62)

Herself splenetic and noted for her poem "The Spleen," Anne appears to have taken up the quarrel on behalf of women writers in general, justifying them by citing "Poetic Dames of Yore." Pope was inspired by the good-natured dispute to compose "Impromptu to Lady W," a lovely poetic tribute to Anne, whose talent, he writes, when measured beside that of other female poets such as Sappho, outshines all others as the sun outshines the stars:

In vain you boast poetic names of yore,
And cite those Sapphos we admire no more:
Fate doom'd the fall of every female wit,
But doom'd it then, when first Ardelia writ.
Of all examples by the world confess'd,
I knew Ardelia could not quote the best;
Who, like her mistress on Britannia's throne,
Fights and subdues in quarrels not her own.
To write their praise you but in vain essay;
E'en while you write, you take that praise away:
Light to the stars the sun does thus restore
But shines himself till they are seen no more.

(VI,120)

Anne responded with her own poem, "The Answer to Pope's Impromptu," gently admonishing him to "sooth the Ladies."
The tone of her poem, including her affectionate address of him as "Alexander," speaks to the cordial, if gently bantering, nature of their friendship. And, incidentally, Pope's poem to Anne and her "Answer" are the only two poems in the Wellesley manuscript which had previously appeared in print. Their inclusion in a manuscript apparently meant to preserve Anne's unpublished work, suggests the degree of pride and pleasure which Anne must have taken in their friendship.

For most of her life Winchilsea was afflicted with melancholy, that ailment whose symptoms she described so accurately in the poem that was to become her most famous during her lifetime--"The Spleen." There are a number of references in her poetry to this malady, and the "temper frail and subject to dismay" that she wrote of in a poem dated February 6, 1717/18 ("A Suplication for the joys of Heaven," Wellesley ms., 108), indicates that the nervous disorder of melancholy apparently plagued her even in her later years. We know, moreover, from references in
several of her early poems, that she had periods of ill health even in the first years of her marriage, for she wrote of taking the waters at Tunbridge Wells for her health. Then in 1715, at the age of fifty-four, she suffered some serious illness whose exact nature is not disclosed, except that she wrote of being "Snatch'd from the verge of the devouring grave." Her recovery inspired two very personal religious poems found in the unpublished Wellesley manuscript—"Written after a violent and dangerous fit of sickness in the year 1715" (from which the above quotation is taken) and "An Hymn of Thanksgiving after a Dangerous fit of sickness in the year 1715." Just as Anne's personal suffering during the 1688 Revolution was reflected in the themes of a number of poems from that period, so, too, her illness in 1715 seems to have influenced strongly her poetry from that time until her death five years later. Though poems of personal friendship ("An Epistle to Mrs. Catherine Fleming"), gentle humor ("The puggs"), public commemoration ("On the Death of the Queen"), and biting satire ("Sir Plausible") continued to be written even in the last two years of her life, the majority of her later verse in the Wellesley manuscript is marked by a predominance of religious themes. A listing of some of the titles is sufficient to speak to the depth of her piety: "A Prayer for Salvation," "An Act of Contrition," "Mary Magdalen at our Saviour's
Tomb, a Fragment," "No Grace," "A Suplication for the joys of Heaven," "The happynesse of a departed soul," and a number of poems such as "On these Words, Thou hast hedg'd in my way with thorns" that are reflections on Biblical passages.

Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, died on August 5, 1720 at her London home and was, according to her own wishes, buried at Eastwell. The following poignant words from her husband's private journal are an eloquent and fitting tribute with which to close this biographical sketch:

To draw her Ldysp's just character requires a masterly pen like her own. We shall only presume to say she was the most faithfull servant to her Royall Mistresse, the best wife to her noble Lord, and in every other relation public and private so illustrious an example of all moral and divine virtues: in one word a Person of such extraordinary endowments both of Body and Mind that the Court of England never bred a more accomplished Lady nor the Church of England a better Christian.

(Reynolds, li)
CHAPTER III
WINCHILSEA'S CRITICAL REPUTATION

Lady Winchilsea's poetry has yet to receive the critical attention which it deserves. As a writer whose life marks a transition between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, she is eclectic in her use of genres and styles, as well as in her variety of poetic themes. Too often, however, her poetry has been scrutinized solely for its ability to fit into a specific school or literary stream. Thus on the basis of a few poems she has for almost two centuries been praised for being an early precursor of Romanticism, to the exclusion of almost the entire body of her work. Even today, with the exception of some recent feminist criticism and a few collections of literature by early women writers, she is still categorized and anthologized as a nature poet. What Northrop Frye said of William Blake is perhaps even more true of Winchilsea: she has been "a victim of anthologies" (4).
The first important posthumous recognition of Winchilsea's work was in Thomas Birch's General Dictionary (1734-41). He included six of her poems, only one of which, "The Spleen," had appeared in her 1713 Miscellany; they were, in addition to "The Spleen," "An Epilogue to the Tragedy of Jane Shore," "To the Right Honourable the Countess of Hertford, with her volume of Poems," "The Prodigy," "To a Fellow Scribbler," and "Lady Winchilsea's Answer to verses by Mr. Pope." Birch, who knew some of the people who had been personally acquainted with Winchilsea, also included a brief biographical sketch. It is worth quoting in its entirety, particularly since it indicates the popularity of "The Spleen" and the importance of the support she had from some contemporary authors such as Nicholas Rowe:

Winchelsea, (Anne, Countess of), A Lady of excellent genius, especially in Poetry, was daughter of Sir William Kingsmill of Sidmton in the county of Southampton Knt. She was maid of honour to the Duchess of York, second wife to King James II; and was afterwards married to Heneage, second son of Heneage Earl of Winchilsea by Lady Mary a second daughter of William Seymour Duke of Somerset which Heneage was, in his father's lifetime, Gentleman to the Bedchamber to the Duke of York, and, afterwards, upon the death of his nephew Charles succeeded him in the title of Earl of Winchelsea. One of the most considerable of the Countess of Winchelsea's Poems was that upon the Spleen, printed in A new Miscellany of original Poems on several Occasions, published by Mr. Charles Gildon at London 1701 in 8 vo. That Poem
occasioned another of Mr. Nicholas Rowe's intitled, An Epistle to Flavia on the sight of two Pindaric Odes on the Spleen and Vanity written by a Lady to her Friend. A Collection of her Poems was printed at London 1713 in 8 vo. containing likewise a tragedy never acted, intitled Aristomenes. A great number of her poems still continue unpublished in the hands of the Reverend Mr. Creake, and some in the possession of a Lady of distinguished quality and merit [the Countess of Hertford]. The Countess of Winchelsea died August the 5th 1720 without issue, as the Earl her husband did September the 30th 1726. (178-180)

A dozen of Winchelsea's poems also appeared in 1755 in an anonymous collection entitled Poems by Eminent Ladies, a collection popular enough to go through four editions during the century. Wordsworth was later to criticize the choice of Winchelsea poems included in this anthology as "unjudicious" (his 1830 letter to Dyce is discussed later in this chapter), but the selection is probably an accurate reflection of eighteenth-century taste. In addition to "The Spleen," there were other poems of a somewhat didactic nature, including eight fables. Also included was "To Mr. Pope, in Answer to a Copy of Verses" (printed in Reynolds as "The Answer [To Pope's Impromptu]"), a poem which apparently enjoyed a fair amount of popularity, since it was printed both in Pope's own Miscellany and in Birch's General Dictionary.

Biographical and critical references to Winchelsea appeared frequently throughout the century, almost always singling out for praise those poems of a strong moral tone
which the nineteenth century ignored entirely—particularly "The Spleen."¹ John Duncombe in his 1751 *Feminead or Female Genius* praised her "great wit and genius" (11), and the following year, George Ballard's *Memoirs of several Ladies who have been celebrated for their writings or skill in the learned languages, arts, and sciences* cited her answer to Pope's "Impromptu" as especially noteworthy (431). Then one year later, Theophilus Cibber declared in his *Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland to the time of Dean Swift*, that there was "seldom to be found any thing more excellently picturesque" than "The Spleen" (III, 321). Making his judgment solely on the basis of the six poems in Birch, Cibber paid Winchilsea the following tribute:

> If all her poetical compositions are executed with as much spirit and elegance as these, the lovers of poetry have some reason to be sorry that her station was such as to exempt her from the necessity of more frequently exercising a genius so furnished by nature to have made a great figure in that divine art. (325)

But fame, as the Fates so frequently reminded us, is short-lived. By the nineteenth century, Winchilsea was so forgotten that even Sir Walter Scott, widely recognized as a well-read scholar, could not identify the author of her poem "Life's Progress." The poet Anna Seward had memorized the verses as a young girl, having heard her mother recite them. She quoted the poem in its entirety
in 1763 in a letter to a friend which Scott included in
his edition of Seward's *Poetical Works*. It remained for
an unidentified J.H.R., writing in *The Gentleman's
Magazine* in 1812, to attribute the poem correctly to
Winchilsea.²

William Wordsworth rescued Winchilsea from obscurity.
In his 1815 "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," printed
with the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth made the following
extraordinary statement:

Now it is remarkable that, excepting the
'Nocturnal Reverie' of Lady Winchilsea, and
a passage or two in the 'Windsor Forest' of
Pope, the poetry intervening between the
publication of the 'Paradise Lost' and 'The
Seasons' does not contain a single new
image of external nature, and scarcely pre-
sents a familiar one from which it can be
inferred that the eye of the Poet had been
steadily fixed upon his object, much less
that his feelings had urged him to work
upon it in the spirit of genuine
imagination. (III, 73)

It is understandable why Winchilsea's reputation
throughout the nineteenth century and much of the twen-
tieth has been based almost entirely upon that statement,
occuring as it does in a supplement to such an influen-
tial piece of literary criticism. Of significance in
Wordsworth's comment is not only the emphasis upon images
of external nature, but also upon "feelings" and "genuine
imagination," Romantic terms whose concept was alien to
the Augustan world of Winchilsea. It is no surprise,
then, that the nineteenth century admired altogether
different poems of hers from those singled out in the eighteenth century.

Wordsworth's eagerness to acquaint others with her poetry led him to prepare a manuscript in 1818 for Lady Mary Lowther which contained extracts from sixteen of Winchilsea's poems. The majority of the poems he selected, predictably contained tributes to external nature and rustic retirement ("Petition for an Absolute Retreat," "A Nocturnal Reverie," "The Tree," and "Enquiry After Peace: A Fragment") or centered around themes compatible with the Romantic sensibility's penchant for the somber and funereal ("To Death" and "On the Death of the Honourable Mr. James Thynne"). Of interest is not only the choice of poems for inclusion, but also the deletions of certain lines from these poems, since Wordsworth edited freely. Winchilsea's most popular poem in the eighteenth century, "The Spleen," had only eight of its 150 lines that he found suitable for quoting:

\begin{quote}
Whilst in the Muses Paths I stray,
Whilst in their Groves, and by their secret Springs
My Hand delights to trace unusual Things,
And deviates from the known, and common way;
    Nor will in fading Silks compose
    Faintly th'inimitable Rose,
    Fill up an ill-drawn Bird, or paint on Glass
\end{quote}

Clearly his attraction was to the passage dealing with nature, and the remainder of this richly philosophical and
didactic ode he ignored. In "The Cautious Lovers," a pastoral poem cast as a dialogue between two lovers, it was, conversely, only eight lines which Wordsworth cut, and these are part of the ironic and grimly realistic reply of Silvia to her hesitant lover (ll. 33-40). Irony and satire, we are reminded, were not (with some notable exceptions) endemic to the Romantic sensibility. And again, in "A Nocturnal Reverie," the poem he singled out in his supplementary essay and which subsequently formed the cornerstone of her reputation for more than a century, Wordsworth could not bring himself to quote four lines: two of them (17-18) are the only mildly satirical lines in the entire poem, and the other two (19-20) contain a tribute to "Salisb'ry" which is very much in the tradition of eighteenth-century poetic compliments to friends. In other poems, such as "Petition for an Absolute Retreat" and "Life's Progress," Wordsworth omits references to Old Testament figures and classical allusions which were probably too neoclassical for his taste. And with "Enquiry After Peace" he simply omits the last half of the poem, its "vanity of human wishes" theme apparently either too moralistic or not poetic enough for him.

In 1825, Alexander Dyce included some of Winchilsea's poems in Specimens of British Poetesses. This collection occasioned a letter from Wordsworth requesting that he be consulted on the Winchilsea selections if there were a
second edition. While he never received the opportunity, Wordsworth did write several letters to Dyce in which he evaluated her work, clarifying his preference for such nature poems as "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat" and "A Nocturnal Reverie" as being "of much superior merit" to "The Spleen."\(^4\)

Others in the nineteenth century shared Wordsworth's preference for her nature poetry, including Leigh Hunt (Men, Women and Books, 1847) and Jane Williams (Literary Women in England, 1861). Robert Southey's Specimens (1809), for instance, includes lines from only one poem—"Petition for an Absolute Retreat"—as evidence of her poetic talent.

Toward the end of the century, Edmund Gosse picked up the torch as Winchilsea's champion. His contribution to Winchilsea scholarship is important because he brought to attention the unpublished folio manuscript of her poems, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library. This manuscript, which he purchased at a sale in 1884, was, along with the 1713 Miscellany, the primary source for Myra Reynolds's edition of her poems. Gosse was also responsible for the inclusion of a selection of Winchilsea poems in Ward's The English Poets, as well as for writing the introduction to those poems. As a result of his efforts, Matthew Arnold discovered her and expressed to Gosse his praise for her work. In an essay on Winchilsea in his 1891 Gossip in a
Library, Gosse writes that after the publication of her poems in Ward's anthology, "Mr. Matthew Arnold told me that its greatest revelation to himself had been the singular merit of this lady" (122). Yet Gosse, like others before him, touted her as a prophetess of romantic sensibility who kept the true faith during an age of neoclassical heathenism. In Gossip in a Library he concludes a highly fanciful biographical sketch with the following estimation of her "idyllic" life: "It is a little oasis of delicate and pensive refinement in that hot close of the seventeenth century, when so many unseemly monsters were bellowing in the social wilderness" (128). (So much for Dryden and Swift!)

The view of Winchilsea as a Romantic born before her time is one which prevailed throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century. Even today, standard eighteenth-century anthologies such as Bredvold's, Bernbaum's, or Tillotson's include only those few atypical poems of hers which are deemed most "Romantic." The perpetuation of the notion that a large body of eighteenth-century literature existed solely as a precursor for Romanticism leads to a misreading of individual poems of many eighteenth-century writers, and often a disregard for the entire body of a writer's work. Reuben A. Brower, in an essay that will be referred to shortly, humorously termed such a notion an eagerness to find " intimations of
"Worldsworth" everywhere (61). Certainly Winchilsea has been the frequent object of such a search.

In her lengthy introduction to the 1903 edition of the poems, Myra Reynolds slips into that time-worn rhetoric of critics of "pre-Romantic" literature. Because her edition of the poems is still the standard text and her commentary the most frequent source for Winchilsea criticism, she is undoubtedly as responsible as Wordsworth for the continued miscasting of Winchilsea as a misplaced Romantic. In her "attitude toward external nature," writes Reynolds, Winchilsea "was so far in advance of her age as to be isolated from it." She claims, furthermore, that this attitude toward external nature is "her principal claim to the notice of posterity" (cxxi).

Reynolds gives no close examination of specific works or styles in Winchilsea's poetry. The diverse range of the poet's subject matter and use of genre is overlooked by Reynolds, as is any change or development in her handling of style, despite the fact that Winchilsea wrote over a period of almost forty years--a period which marked a transition from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century in literary style. Furthermore, Reynolds persists, even while acknowledging that Winchilsea did write satirical verse, in focusing on only those qualities in her poetry that she deems "Romantic." Only a very small portion of Winchilsea's total literary output consists of
nature poetry, yet Reynolds emphasizes those half a dozen poems that deal exclusively with "external nature."

Reynolds continued to write of Winchilsea in later critical studies, confining her attention to the nature poetry and never modifying her view of her as a "pre-Romantic." In The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760, published in 1920, Reynolds offers a final evaluation of Winchilsea's poetry as being for the most part worthy of oblivion and writes: "her literary importance to-day rests not so much on the amount or variety of her work, as on the fact that in an age of didacticism and satire she delicately foreshadowed tastes that ruled in the romanticism of a century later" (152).

Seven years following the appearance of the Reynolds collection, Edward Dowden revealed the existence of a manuscript containing 56 unpublished poems by Winchilsea (the manuscript now in the possession of the Wellesley College Library which I have referred to simply as the Wellesley manuscript). Dowden discusses some of these unpublished poems in "A Noble Authoress" from his Essays Modern and Elizabethan, but his reading is as romantic as Wordsworth's or Reynolds's. It is primarily those poems and passages dealing with nature or displaying a gentle charm which interest him, and his evaluation of the total contents of the manuscript is less than enthusiastic.
In 1928 J. Middleton Murry published *Poems by Anne, Countess of Winchilsea*, a small volume containing 38 poems from the 1903 collection. His 17-page introduction, which is largely a summary of Reynolds's introduction but gives no acknowledgment to her, is yet one more evaluation of Winchilsea as a minor Romantic poet. Praising her "distinctly felt emotion," Murry writes that Wordsworth was needed to create the "taste" for such poetry (20). The chapter on Winchilsea in his later *Countries of the Mind*, published in 1931, similarly contains a highly fictionalized biographical sketch and a romanticized reading of her poetry. On the whole, the only value in Murry's collection is that he does include a few of her fables in addition to the melancholy and nature poems that are usually anthologized as representative of her work.

A more extensive collection of Winchilsea's poetry appeared in Hugh L'Anson Fausset's *Minor Poets of the Eighteenth Century*, a now out-of-print Everyman's edition which contained 117 pages devoted to her verse. Fausset's introduction is still in the Romantic tradition and is, moreover, tinged with anti-feminism. Asserting that Winchilsea and her contemporaries were divided from Nature and experienced a "divided grief," he then goes on to explain that in Winchilsea's case, "because perhaps [sic] she was a woman, the malady of a divided being never became serious" (xviii). Equally disturbing is his
insistance that her poetry bears no Augustan traits. He writes, for instance, that there was "little in common between Lady Winchilsea's cool and graceful temper and Pope's hard mental incandescence, between her delicate simplicity of heart and his sophisticated head" (xv)—a statement I certainly intend to refute when discussing her satires and the politicization of some of her verse.

The first to question the validity of viewing Winchilsea as an early Romantic was Hoxie Fairchild, whose Religious Trends in English Poetry, published in 1939, categorizes her as essentially a religious poet rather than a poet of nature. Fairchild writes,

> Of course a woman who began to write verses in about 1685 can hardly be in revolt against the neoclassical tyranny of the eighteenth century. It is simply that she carries from her reign of James II into the reign of Queen Anne ways of thinking and writing which by the latter period were temporarily out of fashion. (236)

Unfortunately, the cataracts of anti-feminism distort his vision, so that he dismisses much of her poetry as "the Prattling of a noblewoman" (241).

One of the most significant critical studies of Winchilsea's poetry to date is Reuben A. Brower's 1945 article in Studies in Philology, "Lady Winchilsea and the Poetic Tradition of the Seventeenth Century." Drawing upon a thorough knowledge of seventeenth-century literary traditions, Brower produces an essay of admirable scholarship that should lay to rest forever the notion of
Winchilsea's work as essentially Romantic. His close analysis of several of her poems reveals an abundance of metaphysical traits and an affinity with Donne, Herbert, and especially Marvell. He also finds some of her poetry characteristic of the melancholy verse being written at the turn of the century by Prior and Young, and he demonstrates that in her handling of nature she is far closer to Milton and Marvell than to Wordsworth. While providing us with a sound basis for refuting Romantic claims for her verse, however, Brower's essay overemphasizes these seventeenth-century influences and fails to recognize the impact of Winchilsea's early Augustan contemporaries. Furthermore, he ignores entirely the Elizabethan and Jonsonian strains in her poetry, strains which are fully as prevalent as the Metaphysical and Miltonic ones, particularly in some of her earlier poems. Most disappointing of all, however, is his willingness to relegate her, presumably because she was a woman, to the status of an amateur. Despite his high praise for her competence and for the originality of some of her verse, he regards her ultimately as simply a useful tool for the literary historian who would better understand the period, rather than a poet of worth in her own right. She is, he declares, "an interesting figure to a student of the English poetical tradition," for her "status as an amateur and the ease with which she lent herself to diverse
influences make her a nice case for studying a change in poetic taste" (62).

John Buxton has written of Winchilsea in both an article in *Life and Letters* that appeared in 1950, and an essay in his 1967 book, *A Tradition of English Poetry*. Both are slight in substance and offer nothing new to Winchilsea criticism. He calls her "the first English woman to write poetry that no man could have written" (*Tradition*, 157), but his very cursory analysis of her poems ignores her strongly feminist verse while focusing again on her love of nature.

In the 1979 *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets*, edited by Gilbert and Gubar, Katharine Rogers has a perceptive essay titled "Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea: An Augustan Woman Poet," which complements Brower's earlier essay. Her title is somewhat misleading, perhaps, since she is primarily concerned with placing Winchilsea in a Restoration literary milieu and has little to say about what is truly Augustan in her poetry. One serious disadvantage of such attempts as those of Brower and Rogers to see her poetry as a whole is that by ignoring the large body of unpublished poems which she wrote in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, no recognition of the increasing Augustan influences in her work is possible. Concentrating upon her love poetry and her feminist poems (particularly those dealing with
the plight of women writers), Rogers defines Winchilsea's personal tone with great acumen. Her strongly feminist reading is so slanted, however, that it distorts Winchilsea's sense of a public voice. This leads Rogers to assert, for example, that

This distinctively personal tone in Winchilsea's poetry results in large part, I believe, from her being a woman—one who could not see herself as a public spokesman. Women would not feel it appropriate to voice institutional attitudes, because they were excluded from organized intellectual activity. (45)

Here Rogers is, I think, very much in error. I do not intend to minimize the considerable contribution which she has made to Winchilsea criticism, yet the fact remains that much of Winchilsea's poetry is rooted in the social and political setting of her day and that she did see herself as a public spokesperson, one who couched even her most personal poetic expressions in rich, morally instructive, and often satirical commentary.

The same year that her article appeared, Rogers published a thin volume of selected Winchilsea poems, all taken from the 1903 Reynolds edition and containing many identical footnotes. Because the reprint of the 1903 edition which AMS brought out in 1974 is rather expensive, Rogers has performed a real service by making some of the poetry more accessible to modern readers. It is regrettable, however, that she includes none of the later poetry and that she relies so heavily on the sometimes inaccurate
Reynolds biographical information, repeating, for example, the Reynolds misreading of Pope's letter to Caryll regarding dinner with the Finches.

The best critical essays on Winchilsea to date are those by Ann Messenger. "Selected Nightingales" from her 1986 collection His & Hers: Essays in Restoration & 18th-Century Literature examines Winchilsea's "To the Nightingale" as part of an ongoing pastoral tradition, while also demonstrating what is original in the poem. In her two-page West Coast Review article "'Adam Pos'd': Metaphysical and Augustan Satire," Messenger argues convincingly that Winchilsea's poem has far more affinity with Augustan satire than with the metaphysical satire of John Donne. Her most ambitious study of Winchilsea, "Lady Winchilsea and Twice-Fallen Women," examines her views on education and the position of women in general and contains a perceptive analysis of several poems. However, the poems she focuses on are not always representative of Winchilsea's views and include almost none of her later works and nothing from the Wellesley manuscript. Her conclusion, with which I do not concur, is that one cannot "draw all her poems together into a coherent system of ideas that commits her to a single stance on the questions of the relationship between men and women and on the position of women in general" (97).
Little has been done with Winchilsea's unpublished poems. A 1929 article in London Mercury by Helen Sard Hughes, "Lady Winchilsea and her Friends," examined both published and unpublished poems for biographical information about her friendships. Two poems from the Wellesley manuscript which are referred to are transcribed in their entirety, though the transcriptions contain some minor errors. More recently, in a 1980 special issue of Women's Studies, Elizabeth Hampsten compiled five unpublished poems from the Wellesley manuscript for inclusion. Unfortunately, her transcriptions also contain errors, the most serious occurring in "A Tale," where the line "To each he cry'd your mind subdue" is rendered an incoherent "To each he irg'd you mind subdue." The poems are printed without analysis or explanatory footnotes. Hampsten's one page introduction, in addition, contains erroneous information about Winchilsea's first publications and about the manuscript itself.

Several unpublished works are devoted to Winchilsea, the most scholarly and readable of which is William J. Cameron's 1951 thesis for Victoria College in New Zealand, "Anne, Countess of Winchilsea: A Guide for the Future Biographer," referred to several times in the previous chapter. His discussions of the poems are perceptive and probing, and his scholarship is refreshingly thorough and accurate. His thesis is also valuable for its complete
chronological listing of all the poems, including the unpublished ones. Another thesis, "Studies for an edition of the poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea, consisting of a bibliography of her poems and a study of all available manuscripts," was completed in 1954 for Oxford University but is unavailable, since Mr. Neill will not now grant permission for Oxford to let anyone read it (though in earlier years he was apparently more willing to do so).

Two dissertations have been written on Winchilsea. Annamarie Mayr Riedenauer's "Die Gedichte Der Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea," submitted in 1964 to the University of Vienna, is, to judge from the abstract, of little value. So ungrammatical and incoherent is the abstract, that it demonstrates a command of the English language too inadequate for any valuable study of English verse to be possible. The other dissertation, "A Preface to an Edition of the Works of Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea," completed in 1978 for the University of Houston by Ann Longknife, is a chronological study of Winchilsea's works. Her thesis is that Winchilsea began writing in a manner typical of many seventeenth-century poets and later developed into a competent writer of early eighteenth-century verse with her own individual voice. There are a number of factual inaccuracies in the chapter on Winchilsea's critical and biographical background and
in passages transcribed from some poems in the Wellesley manuscript; it perhaps seems like nitpicking to point this out, except that after encountering so much sloppy scholarship on Winchilsea, it is difficult not to become irritated when one encounters it in a doctoral dissertation. Much of her analysis of the poems seems rather pedestrian, though she does cover a great deal of material. The chapter devoted to Winchilsea's two plays contains the only known attempt thus far to examine the plays in detail, and she does deal with the unpublished poems as well as those in the Reynolds collection--thus offering two significant contributions to Winchilsea study.

Winchilsea's poems have been by and large inaccessible to the general public and have received poor representation in Restoration and eighteenth-century anthologies, which usually include only three or four of those nature poems such as "A Nocturnal Reverie" and "The Nightingale" that have been deemed most "Romantic." The publication of the Wellesley manuscript, which I am in the process of editing, would do much to further an adequate evaluation of her poetic worth. It is encouraging to note, moreover, that her poetry is at last beginning to be represented in more ample and judicious selections, thanks to the appearance in the last decade and a half of some excellent feminist anthologies and the monumental 1985 Norton Anthology of Literature by Women, edited by Gilbert

What seems evident from this brief survey of Winchilsea criticism, then, is that three of the most significant published studies of her poetry (those of Reynolds, Brower, and Rogers), take diverse views of the predominant characteristics of her verse. None of these takes any note of the large body of her later work contained in the Wellesley manuscript, and none offers a satisfying attempt to evaluate her work in its entirety, since each has its own strongly biased literary slant.
CHAPTER IV
HYMEN'S ENDEARMENTS: THE LOVE POEMS

Lady Winchilsea wrote during an age when much of the literature was particularly antithetical to a feminist view. On the one hand there was the disdain of women evidenced in the verse and plays of the Restoration Court Wits and in the impulse towards antifeminist satire that extended well into the middle of the eighteenth century. The prevalence of these misogynistic views in the literature of that time has been well documented by such scholars as Katharine Rogers, Roger Thompson, and Felicity Nussbaum. At the other extreme, but just as debilitating, was the sentimental concept of women, a concept that prevailed as the female image which Virginia Woolf later termed "the angel in the house." One source for part of this image was the large number of seventeenth-century miscellanies containing poetry in the Petrarchan convention. The traditional deification of women in these
Petrarchan conceits, moreover, was analogous to the portrayal of women in the literature of sensibility that developed towards the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. This sentimental image is expressed in an essay that appeared in that widely-popular periodical The Spectator in 1711, just two years prior to publication of the only volume of Winchilsea's poetry to appear during her lifetime. All a woman "has to do in this World," wrote Richard Steele, "is contained within the Duties of a Daughter, a Sister, a Wife, and a Mother." Furthermore, "a right Woman," he continued, "should have gentle Softness, tender Fear, and all those parts of Life, which distinguish her from the other Sex, with some Subordination to it, but such an Inferiority that makes her still more lovely" (No. 144, Aug. 15, 70).

Despite these antifeminist elements in much of the contemporary literature, Anne Finch was able to cultivate her individual talent while maintaining her integrity as a woman poet. It is remarkable that she was able to overcome the prejudice against her sex and to write from a forthright feminist perspective. And nowhere is her perspective more sharply defined than in her love poetry, for it is precisely when dealing with the subject of love and marriage that she was most at variance with the attitudes of many of her contemporaries.
In a poem entitled "The Introduction," which she withheld from publication but affixed to the manuscripts she circulated privately among friends, Winchilsea bitterly describes the prevailing male concept of a woman's role:

They tell us, we mistake our sex and way;  
Good breeding, passion, dancing, dressing, play  
Are the accomplishments we shou'd desire;  
To write, or read, or think, or to enquire  
Wou'd cloud our beauty, and exaust our time,  
And interrupt the Conquests of our prime;  
Whilst the dull mannage, of a servile house  
Is held by some, our outmost art, and use. (5)

Mindful of the danger of being relegated to "the dull mannage, of a servile house," Anne nevertheless married, and the fulfilling relationship which she enjoyed with her husband informs much of her love poetry. Yet even her most personal love poems are often rich in social commentary. Sometimes, as in "To Mr. F. Now Earl of W.," expressions of love are couched within satiric verses that offer a grim view of English society. Thus in this early poem to her husband, which will be discussed more fully elsewhere in this chapter, she writes that her love verses must be spoken in private, where "he alone might hear," because "the World do's so despise/ Hymen's Endearments and its Ties" (20). Even her very personal sentiments, then, are frequently delineated against a backdrop of contemporary social views, sometimes reflecting the world and sometimes reacting against it.
The Restoration attitude toward love and "Hymen's Endearments" was probably more cynical, negative, and even openly hostile than during any other period in English history, at least if the literature provides any accurate reflection of the times. As the Court was once again established, the new monarch, notorious for his licentiousness, cultivated a coterie of ribald Court Wits that included Sir Charles Sedley, Charles Sackville (later Earl of Dorset), Charles Cotton, and that naughtiest of all Wits, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. Their love lyrics, unlike those of their Cavalier predecessors, were lusty and often outrageously obscene. A survey of Restoration verse, including the miscellanies of works by minor and obscure poets, reveals, moreover, that the views which the Court Wits published, were widely held by most poets of the time. The Restoration of Charles II in 1660 brought a wave of reaction to the Puritan restrictions and prohibitions of the preceding nearly two decades, and one of the outlets for this reaction was the theatre. The reopening of the playhouses encouraged the writing of numerous lyrics for the stage, particularly for the racy comedies of manners. The poetic form most popular was the song, and many were given musical settings by such eminent composers as Henry Purcell and Henry Playford. John Harold Wilson's The Court Wits of the Restoration, which offers one of the best general studies of that court milieu,
records that over one hundred and fifty song books were published between 1660 and 1700 (88).

Winchilsea's attitude toward her social and literary environment is evident in her poem "The Prodigy." Written in heroic couplets, the poem offers a satirical look at Restoration attitudes toward love. As the lengthy subtitle indicates, its topic is "the admiration that many expressed at a Gentleman's being in love, and their endeavours to dissuade him from it." Drawing on the original meaning of the word "prodigy" as an extraordinary thing from which omens are drawn, Winchilsea opens her poem with a whimsical petition. "Protect the State, and let Old England thrive," she pleads, enumerating those things which might threaten it, and in the preceding few decades already had: the death of crown'd heads (Charles I, England's last monarch to rule by "divine right," was beheaded in 1647); destruction from wind and flame (the Great Fire of 1666 had destroyed about four-fifths of London); destruction of naval fleets (the Anglo-dutch Wars, which lasted until 1667, had threatened English maritime forces); and the Scots (keep "the Scotchmen tame," she adds as a last humorous request, alluding to the long-standing friction between the two countries which was particularly strong during the period of the 1688 Revolution). All these terrible things which might befall the Empire, could be imminent, she continues,
because England has been exposed to a "prodigy": "a man in love!" Not only a man in love, but a man who writes about his love in amorous verses, an act so astonishing that other men view him with pity or with scorn, while "maids so long unus'd to be ador'd/ Think it portends the pesti-
ence or sword."

Dropping her ironic tone, Winchilsea then expresses concern that Englishmen no longer make women the object of their care, "But of indifference arrogantly boast." Such an attitude did not exist in earlier times, she declares, for in the days of poets like Spenser, Sidney, and Waller, love was not thought "the passion lessning to their parts." Though critical of many attitudes prevalent in her day, Winchilsea here, as in numerous other poems, directs her sharpest criticism against those who per-
petuate harmful social views through their writing.

The indifference towards love and the disdain of women which Winchilsea denounces in her poem, are abun-
dantly evident in Restoration love lyrics. William Congreve, in a song from his play Love for Love, writes of a jilted swain and a betrayed nymph who beseech Apollo to tell them if there was ever "a Nymph that was Chaste, or a Swain that was True." Apollo's response is that the only swain whom none will betray, is one "in whom none will Confide," and the only chaste nymph, is one "that has never been Try'd" (Stead, 17). That conviction of the
inconstancy of both men and women seems to underly much Restoration poetry. In exact contrast to Winchilsea's advice to young lovers in "The Prodigy," Sir George Etherege, in his song "Ye happy Swains," warns young men who have not yet been trapped by love's chain; in a series of metaphors of destruction, he warns young lads to "Fly the fair sex," for love can only bring pain:

How faithless is the Lover's joy!
How constant is their Care!
The Kind with Falsehood do destroy,
The Cruel with Despair. (Pinto, 33)

And Rochester, the most harshly sardonic of the Court Wits, begins one of his best-known songs with this quatrain:

Love a woman? You're an ass!
'Tis a most insipid passion
To choose out for your happiness
The silliest part of God's creation.
(Rochester, 51)

The poem is replete with crude images which not only demean women but also degrade love as being nothing but raw carnal lust. Furthermore, Rochester's antifeminism is underscored by a homosexual suggestion in the poem's conclusion: when he can not overcome a base sexual urge, he continues, then he makes use of "a sweet, soft page" who "Does the trick worth forty wenches."

How very different from such verses is Winchilsea's "The Prodigy," which attacks loose morality and cynicism. In decrying contemporary attitudes toward love, however, she does not reserve her admonishments solely for men.
Whether primarily didactic, as in "The Prodigy," or predominantly satiric, as in "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," Winchilsea never allows her feminism to distort her view or to prevent her from making equitable moral pronouncements for women as well as for men. Thus in "The Prodigy" she turns her attention also to young women, giving them the following charge regarding their male admirers:

    Stay 'till their courtship may deserve that name,  
    And take not ev'ry look for love and flame;  
    To mercenary ends no charms imploy,  
    Nor stake their smiles against some rafled toy:  
    For every fop lay not th'insnaring train,  
    Nor lose the worthy to allure the vain. (28-33)

One might contrast this with another poem of advice to women by a contemporary of Winchilsea's, Thomas Southerne. In his song "Pursuing Beauty, Men descry" from Sir Antony Love, or the Rambling Lady, a woman similarly comments on the current state of love, but the attitude which Southerne expresses is wrought with cynicism and covertly contemptuous of women. His metaphor for love is an unexplored land of treasures, so that the "courtship" Winchilsea asks be restored to its old position of value, here becomes nothing but a brutal male drive for sexual conquest. Women, Southerne writes, are "like weak Indians," ignorant and easily bought with "Beads and Baubles," and they stand upon their shores, inviting "The wandring Rovers" to their land. The poem does not call
for reform among either sex in this game of trivial pursuit, nor is there any of Winchilsea's admonishment to women to "Pretend at least to some degree of wit." The poem's persona does tell other females that they must "Be wise," but the form she would have that wisdom take, is to adopt the very sort of ethical nihilism that Rochester exhibits: "do not try," she says, "How he can Court, or you be Won." "Love is but Discovery," she concludes, and once the deceitful explorers have taken possession, they soon find "the Pleasure's done" and quickly move on to other conquests (Barlough, 2).

If many Restoration writers depicted love and courtship in negative terms, their views regarding marriage were even more disturbing to Winchilsea. Almost without exception Restoration comedies savagely attack marriage. The songs and love lyrics from these plays portray marriage as a restrictive social institution marked by mutual deceit, infidelity, and bitter disillusionment. It was not, then, to Etherege, Congreve, Wycherley, or even much of Dryden that Winchilsea could turn for a love poetry compatible with her own views. And certainly not to her most famous literary sister, Aphra Behn, who achieved prominence by proving that she could write works as racy as those of any of her male peers. Poem after poem of Behn's extols the value of inconstancy, whether in men or women, and a reader coming for the first
time upon her song "Ah false Amyntas" from The Dutch Lover or "A Curse upon that faithless Maid" from Emperor of the Moon, would be hard put to tell that it was not a man but a woman who had written them.

Restoration poems condemn "Hymen's endearments and its Ties" in tones that range from a light-hearted masculine jauntiness to a sardonic grimness. From Dryden's well-known "Why should a foolish Marriage Vow," which argues in almost philosophical solemnity for mutual adultery, to minor poet Richard Duke's "To a Roman Catholic Upon Marriage," which warns that "Penance and matrimony are the same" (Barlough, 1), Restoration poets are almost unanimous in their deprecation of marriage. "No, hang me if I ever marry," the rake declares in Charles Cotton's "Was ever man of Nature's framing" (Bullen, 13), and the young man in Sir Charles Sedley's "When first I made Love to my Cloris" declares that he'd "rather Dig Stones in a Quarry" than marry (Stead, 68-69).

In addition, women in these marriage poems are often not only depersonalized, but also brutally dehumanized. Katharine Rogers, commenting on the reaction against Puritanism in the last part of the seventeenth century, finds evidence in the literature of that time of "a rivalry between the sexes which was overtly playful but frequently descended into sadism" (The Troublesome Helpmate, 160). In the Cotton poem just alluded to, every
woman, the poet declares, is but the hulk of a ship in whom he will "tarry" only long enough to "trim and launch her." And, in "Against Marriage," a poem attributed to Rochester, we encounter what has to be the ultimate misogynous poem. After cataloguing all the things which the poet insists marriage destroys (business, pleasure, wit, virtue, wealth, youth, and sleep), he employs a most obscene bit of synecdoche to refer to women, insisting that "a cunt has no sense of conscience or law." But if you must "have flesh," he continues, then find "a generous wench," for though venereal diseases are a danger, "diseases, you know, will admit of a cure,/ But the hell-fire of marriage none can endure" (Rochester, 159).

In *Players' Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration*, an excellent study of Restoration drama that draws heavily upon legal and historical documents of the period, Susan Staves maintains that the apparent hostility to marriage so frequently evident in Restoration comedy is "an essentially moral protest not against marriage itself but against mercenary marriages of convenience" (138). Despite the appeal of her argument, one cannot read much literature of that period, including the comedies and the songs from those plays, and be comfortable with such a distinction with regard to moral intent. The attacks on marriage as against nature and against reason are too frequent, too vehement, and too steeped in the male double
sexual standard for one to believe that the target of these attacks is not marriage itself. Yet the flouting of marriage vows, the flaunting of adulterous behavior, and the indifference towards one's spouse that often degenerated into hatred and abuse—all of which are evident in Restoration literature—were primarily symptomatic of the decay into which the institution of marriage had fallen.

While some Restoration literature is undoubtedly a tongue-in-cheek mocking of Puritan sobriety, nonetheless the popular view of marriage had become very negative. So strong was the double standard in the Restoration attitude toward wenching and in the acceptance of a man's adulterous behavior that young women were advised discretely to disregard their husband's illicit liaisons. Thus Sir George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, gave the following advice to his twelve-year-old daughter in a letter written in 1688:

You are to consider you live in a time which hath rendered some kind of frailties so habitual, that they lay claim to large grains of allowance. The world in this is somewhat unequal, and our sex seemeth to play the tyrant in distinguishing partially for ourselves, by making that in the utmost degree criminal in the woman, which in a man passeth under a much gentler censure. . . . Remember, that next to the danger of committing the fault yourself, the greatest is that of seeing it in your husband. Do not seem to look or hear that way: If he is a man of sense, he will reclaim himself . . . if he is not so, he will be provok'd, but not
reformed. . . . Such an undecent complaint makes a wife much more ridiculous than the injury that provoketh her to it.

*(Miscellanies by Halifax, 17-18)*

So popular was this letter, published as *The New-Year's-Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter*, that it had gone through fifteen editions by 1765 (Day, 47).

The mercenary motives behind marriage arrangements were responsible for much cynicism. Though arranged marriages had existed in England for centuries, there is evidence that pecuniary inducements became more predominant during the Restoration (Staves 58-60). The rise of mercantilism toward the end of the seventeenth century brought about a shift in the wealth, which had previously resided almost exclusively with the aristocracy. Thus many members of the aristocracy, finding themselves increasingly unable to maintain their style of living, competed more aggressively for the dowries of eligible wealthy women. Just how important money and property had become as bargaining tools in seventeenth-century prenuptial agreements is suggested by a phenomenon which Hilda Smith notes in *Reason's Disciples, Seventeenth-Century Feminists* (27-29). Smith demonstrates that by the Restoration, for the first time in English history a gentleman might marry below his social status with no stigma attached. In other words, the family of a young gentleman might save itself from financial disaster by
arranging a marriage with the daughter of a wealthy mercantile family from the rising middle class, thus allowing that family to "buy up" socially. The crass bartering for title and social position on the part of many mercantile nouveau riche and for money on the part of many aristocratic nouveau pauvre had devastating effects on arranged marriages, as Hogarth's "Marriage a la Mode" series was so grimly to document a few decades later.

To put Restoration and early eighteenth-century attitudes toward marriage into proper perspective, an explanation of the legal restrictions regarding marriage might be helpful, particularly with regard to their implications for women. And in examining these laws, we need to remember that since marriages among the upper class were customarily arranged, a marriage such as that of the Finches, based upon companionship and love, was a rarity. There is ample evidence that both Anne and Heneage, even in their youth, were fiercely independent individuals with a strong sense of personal integrity. Furthermore, Anne was an orphan, and Heneage, as the second son of a man who was himself a second son, had little promise of title or inheritance, so that both were "free agents," unencumbered by any parental pressures for a marriage of convenience.

It is a great irony of late Restoration and early eighteenth-century English law that in an age marked by frequent proposals for legal reform, the inferior status
of married women remained virtually unchallenged and unchanged. Indeed, despite the reinterpretation of the relationship between sovereign and subjects from sacred terms of divine right to contractual terms following the 1688 Glorious Revolution, and despite the resultant call for rigorous reform on a number of levels, the legal restrictions of matrimonial laws continued throughout the eighteenth century to reduce women to a state of abject servitude. Any promise of increased independence for women which the spirit of rationalism and revolution might have offered was clearly meant only for *feme sole*, which included widows as well as spinsters, and not for *feme covert*, who had no legal rights apart from their husbands. As Janelle Greenberg concludes in her article "The Legal Status of English Women in Early Eighteenth-Century Law and Equity," it was only married women who were denied any legal status.

If most Restoration marriages were not made in heaven, neither, then, were they dissoluble on earth. Despite Milton's impassioned pleas for revision of the divorce laws, there was little reform in the Restoration, or, indeed, in most of the eighteenth century. The ecclesiastical courts, which had been abolished during the interregnum, once again had jurisdiction over matrimonial affairs, though the temporal courts began increasingly to circumvent the ecclesiastical ones. The only way in
which ecclesiastical courts could end a marriage was
annulling it by proving that the marriage had never
existed. During the Restoration it became possible to
dissolve marriages by an act of Parliament, but the very
limited grounds which the law allowed for divorce and the
great expense and time involved, militated against its
effectiveness even in extremely dire cases. Alan
Macfarlane notes in his recent work, *Marriage and Love in
England: Modes of Reproduction 1300--1840*, that by 1857,
nearly two centuries after the initiation of Parliamentary
divorces, only a little over two hundred such dissolutions
had been granted (225). What Macfarlane does not mention,
however, is that no woman was able to obtain a parliament-
ary divorce in England until the beginning of the nine-
teenth century.6

The crass greed in many prenuptial arrangements,
coupled with the virtual impossibility of any recourse for
those trapped in intolerable relationships, was undoubt-
edly responsible for the decline in marriages in the late
seventeenth century.7 For women, however, the conjugal
risks were far greater than for men.8 Once she married,
all a woman's independence and rights were abrogated, and
any children her marriage might produce belonged legally
to her husband. She could not own property, testify in
court, make a valid contract, serve on a jury, or make out
her own will. Even her personal possessions such as
Clothing and household items were considered her husband's property. As Moira Ferguson succinctly notes in her introduction to First Feminists, women themselves became virtually the personal property of their husbands (3).

The only financial interests a married woman had were tied to protection against possible widowhood in the form of either dower's rights or jointures. These one-third dower's rights came increasingly during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century to be replaced by jointures, which at least had the potential for guaranteeing a larger share of the deceased's husband's estate (Smith, 27-30). In John Gay's The Beggar's Opera, the words of Peachum to his daughter Polly regarding a jointure settlement probably owed much of their grim humor to the high degree of their accuracy:

"The comfortable estate of widow-hood, is the only hope that keeps up a wife's spirits. Where is the woman who would scruple to be a wife, if she had it in her power to be a widow whenever she pleas'd?"

(1, X)

It is small wonder that the period saw a decline in the number of marriages and that more women were opting for later marriages, for "common law" living arrangements, or for a single life (Leslett, 131-132). Some contemporary women writers such as Mary Astell in her book Some Reflections on Marriage, or Mary Davys in her play The Northern Heiress, or the Humours of York, advocated celibacy for women as a preferable alternative to the
all-too-common tyranny of marriage. Anne Finch herself was by her own acknowledgment very reluctant to marry, and only the persistent pleading from her future husband convinced her eventually to abandon her commitment to spinsterhood. (See her poem "A Letter to Dafnis April: 2d 1685" for brief references to this.)

The way in which English law perceived women undoubt-edly had a great impact upon the way in which society as a whole viewed them. Judicial decisions, for example, were frequently based upon theological or biblical justifications for the inferiority of women, as in the widely-publicized Restoration case known as Manby v. Scott. Justice Hyde, commenting on this case, averred that "the judgment of Almighty God" was "inflicted upon women for being first in the transgression." Furthermore, the relationship between husband and wife, which the courts repeatedly defined as analogous to the relationship between sovereign and subject, helped to reinforce the inequality of the sexes in marriage and to rationalize the total subjugation of wife to husband. The interpretation of this analogy led to some bizarre laws. For instance, throughout the seventeenth century, women found guilty of killing their husbands were charged with treason, just as if they had committed an act against the state, though husbands who killed their wives were charged with simple murder (Staves 112). For their crimes these
women were burned alive, though as the century progressed they were granted the dubious mercy of being executed before they were burned——apparently a legislative acknowledgment that, as Swift was to note in another matter, "some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice . . . as a little bordering upon cruelty." It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that Parliament finally passed an Act discontinuing the practice of burning women.

I have said that Lady Winchilsea offers a unique feminist perspective on love and marriage, for in dealing with this subject she was frequently at variance with much of her contemporary literary and social milieu. What I wish to stress, however, is that her poems are remarkable not only for what she has to say, but also for how she says it. Through innovative use of prosody, exploitation of generic traditions such as the pastoral, and experimentation with masking strategies and dramatic techniques, Winchilsea continually and successfully struggled to achieve, as a woman, the greatest possible freedom of artistic expression.

In many of her most bitter and sharply satirical poems, Winchilsea makes effective use of a persona or employs dramatic devices to convey her views. Indirection was one means by which she might speak openly about topics
presumed to be acceptable only for men, or to employ a tone of voice that would traditionally be considered inappropriate for a woman. One such poem which deals with marriage is "Ralph's Reflections," a narrative portrait cast almost entirely in the form of a dramatic monologue delivered by a man on the occasion of his wedding anniversary. Here, as in a number of poems, Winchilsea demonstrates that the dramatic impulse which led her to write two verse plays could serve her well in poetry.

After introducing Ralph in the opening line of the poem, the poet withdraws, leaving Ralph on stage to offer his reflections; and, as in a dramatic monologue, we gain special insight into his nature because we see him at a moment of heightened awareness:

This day, sais Ralpho, I was free,  
'Till one unlucky hour  
And some few mutter'd words by me,  
Put freedom past my pow'r. (150)

Ralph's initial remarks seem at first to be no more than a statement of personal discontent, perhaps even a half-hearted utterance of the male stereotypical ball-and-chain metaphor about marriage. Even the metrical feeling created in this quatrains, with its iambic alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines and the feminine rhyme of its second and fourth lines, lends a slight element of levity to the opening of the poem. The next three lines also offer nothing to suggest a more profound utterance on the part of Ralph as he recites for himself some phrases
from the marriage ceremony: "For better or for worse,
Till death us part...." Suddenly, however, the monologue
takes a different turn, for in remembering his vow ("I
take thee Nell"), Ralph acknowledges to himself that what
he took in reality was "a Purse."

Winchilsea does not limit her poem to a didactic
reflection upon the hypocrisy and greed which were the
basis of many Restoration marriages, nor does she limit
her portrait of Ralph to a simplistic one. As the
monologue unfolds, the poet probes the depths of a mind
that is trapped in its own ambivalence. Ralph begins to
rationalize his own motives in agreeing to the marriage,
by attributing similar avarice to the rest of the world.
If he compromised himself, he observes, then so did all of
those who partake in such wedding ceremonies: the priest
who demands his fee, the clerk who for his payment would
as soon authorize an execution as a wedding, and the
friends themselves who hypocritically endure a tiresome
and meaningless ceremony in order that they might enjoy
some wine and refreshments afterwards. Ralph has
attempted to excuse himself by drawing into a circle of
universal greed the Church, the State, and even his per-
sonal friends, and he concludes his monologues with an
ironic exclamation: "Oh! happy state of human life,/ If
Mariage be thy best!"
In the final lines of this poem the poet again intercedes, stepping back outside of Ralph's mind to offer this terse observation: "Poor Ralpho cry'd, yet kiss't his Wife,/ And no remorse confess't." Through use of the narrative voice, Winchilsea offers the reader a double-angled objectivity. We know that Ralph is rationalizing, yet there is enough truth to his reflections to make us consider their larger implications for the society that fosters such cupidity and that manipulates an institution which forms the basis of the family structure. While we may find Ralph weak, at least initially, the poet has let us feel keenly his pain, and we empathize with him. His anguish, conveyed through his own words, is intensified by the brief authorial comment. Ralph remains trapped—a silent, self-justifying individual; yet his quiet compliance and dutiful kiss signify that he will probably try to make the best of an unfortunate marriage. The poet's final words, then, that he "no remorse confess't," echo in our ears in poignant and rich ambiguity.

Another poem that deals with the frequently devastating effects of marriage is "The Cautious Lovers." Here, in addition to dramatic devices, Winchilsea also makes use of the pastoral genre to comment on contemporary issues. The poem is cast in the form of a dialogue between lovers and opens with a traditional plea to Sylvia to flee the world and come live with her lover in seclusion.
Through use of the pastoral, the poet subtly creates expectations in the reader which she can then play against as the poem develops its true theme. After all the familiar arguments to his mistress to renounce the world for love, the lover suddenly turns to a brutally dark description of that world. Few in thousands, he tells Sylvia, find "The happy mutual Way," for it is a world

Where Hands are by stern Parents ty'd,
Where oft, in Cupid's Scorn,
Do for the widow'd State provide,
Before that Love is born.... (148)

Furthermore, he warns her, since monogamy is against nature, the only way to avoid infidelity is for the two of them to isolate themselves from all temptations. In short, what he offers Sylvia is not a life of idyllic pastoral simplicity in which they would all the pleasures prove, but a negative, cynical escape from a world in which marriages are seen only as institutions for the perpetuation of mutual misery--business arrangements customarily devoid of love and companionship, and in such conflict with man's nature that adultery is inevitable.

But Sylvia, decidedly a Restoration nymph, has the final word. If her lover's fears are so great, she admonishes him, then there is probably good cause for her to fear the worst. Therefore, she decides, she will "not trust too far," reminding her lover and us, in true
Augustan fashion, that

In Love, in Play, in Trade, in War
They best themselves acquit,
Who, tho' their Int'rests shipwreckt are,
Keep unreprov'd their Wit. (149)

In "The Unequal Fetters" Winchilsea adopts the persona of an angry feminist who rejects the double standard inherent in the male view of marriage. In the opening stanza she cleverly plays upon the tradition of the carpe diem poem, employing some of the imagery and meter of Herrick's famous "To the Virgins, to make much of Time," and even using the same feminine rhymes "flying" and "dying" which occur in Herrick's opening quatrain. But Winchilsea reverses the carpe diem theme, using the passage of time and the subsequent loss of youth and feminine beauty as an argument for not yielding to love:

Cou'd we stop the time that's flying
Or recall itt when 'tis past
Put far off the day of dying
Or make Youth for every last
To Love wou'd then be worth our cost. (150)

Since men are enticed only by physical beauty, she argues, as the passage of time brings loss of beauty, they will inevitably "seek for [it] in new Faces." In the first two stanzas and the final one, this very contemporary sounding feminist speaks for all women ("our cost," "our ruine"), answering not an individual male suitor but all men who have perpetuated false myths through traditional seduction arguments. In the third stanza, however, she breaks
through in a direct use of first person, defiantly asserting her own right to freedom:

Free as Nature's first intention
   Was to make us, I'll be found
Nor by subtle Man's invention
   Yeild to be in Fetters bound
By one that walks a freer round.

A frequent experimenter with poetics, Winchilsea uses in this poem a verse form which, apparently, was of her own invention. The quintet stanzas are of alternating eight and seven syllable lines, with the first and third lines ending in feminine rhymes that propel the movement of the stanza forward, while the remaining second, fourth, and fifth lines all end in sharp masculine rhymes. The unusual syllabic and accentual patterns imitate the sense of confinement and entanglement that the poem conveys. In the first three stanzas, a metrical tension is further created by the primary stress at the beginning of each of the first four lines ("Cou'd we stop the time that's flying/ Or recall itt when 'tis past"), but this tension, in both meaning and meter, is resolved in each stanza in the final regular iambic line ("To Love wou'd then be worth our cost"). In the concluding stanza, however, this pattern is unexpectedly broken. The opening primary stressed lines again create tension, enforcing the ironic contrasts upon which the poem is built: the metaphoric marriage knot "but slightly" ties men, while women are fettered as "close Pris'ners." Here, moreover, there is
no final resolution to the tension, but, rather, an intensification of it; the poet will not give us even the slight rhythmic relief we have come to expect in the previous stanzas. That final monosyllabic line begins with a harsh accent, rather than the softer iambic foot of the other stanzas, and the line is dragged out in heavy, slow, unrelenting beats: ("At the full length of all their chain"). The reader, then, experiences through sound and meter the entangling, burdensome, and "unequal" fetters that bind a woman and man in marriage. And this poem, which exploits the carpe diem tradition, becomes ultimately a bitter anti-seduction poem.

Though Winchilsea could be harshly satirical in her condemnation of contemporary marriage customs and laws, she could also be tenderly passionate, joyful, and even playfully sensual in her poems celebrating her own marriage. "Love, thou art best of Human Joys,/ Our chiefest Happiness below," she wrote exuberantly just a year after she and Heneage were wed ("A Song," 131). Her poems speak frequently of delight in married life, often juxtaposing blissful conjugal love with the marriage norms of the day, in which discontent and adultery were both accepted and expected.

In "To Mr. F. Now Earl of W.,” the poem alluded to earlier, Winchilsea offers a warm, light-hearted tribute to her own happy marriage. The occasion for this poem, as
the subtitle indicates, was her husband's request that
upon his return from a short trip abroad, she should greet
him with some new verses. In the poem, Ardelia (the
poetic name she frequently gave herself) requests aid from
the Muses of poetry, here portrayed as polite aristocratic
ladies who reflect the shallowness and moral laxity of the
times. Upon learning that the object of Ardelia's poetic
effort will be to praise her husband, they respond with
bewilderment and shock. Erato, the Muse of lyric and love
poetry, cries out in amazement that not since the days
when people wrote of ancient Troy, or penned medieval
ballads such as "Chevy Chase," has there been such a
request. It is the duty of the Muses, we are satirically
told, to keep quiet this connubial relationship, for in
such times of adulterous intrigues and illicit liaisons,
who, Erato inquires, could put up "With mention of a
Spouse?" (22)

The Muses decide not to aid Ardelia, but they feel
that they at least owe her excuses, and here Winchilsea
aims some very pointed gibes at the literary fashions of
her time. The winged horse Pegasus has been so "spurr'd"
recently by the writers of extravagant eulogies that he
refuses to budge, and Thalia, the Muse of comedy and
pastoral poetry, has sold out to current taste, being so
well paid for her services that she "durst not for her
life" aid Ardelia. Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy, having
given a bond "by the new House alone to stand," has
prostituted herself to the new monarchy and will write
only "of War and Strife." This sardonic reference to the
Bloodless Revolution and the coming to power of William
and Mary is one which Winchilsea takes care to par-
ticularize for us, as evidenced by her notation under the
subtitle that the poem was "Written in the Year 1689," the
year following the Revolution. Her aligning the new
monarchy with "War and Strife" is one of many instances
throughout her poetry in which she alludes to current
historic events to build a public poetic voice coexistent
with her private one.

Though the other Muses in the poem each offer
excuses, Urania, associated with Aphrodite and with
virtue, is sympathetic to Ardelia's plea. Echoing
Sidney's first sonnet of *Astrophel and Stella* ("'Fool,'
said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write!'"),
Urania whispers to Ardelia to look within her own heart
for inspiration. In a passage with delightful sexual
overtones, Ardelia decides, finally, that her words of
love must remain silent until she meets her returning
husband that night "In some neighb'reing grove":

> For since the World do's so despise
> Hymen's Endearments and its Ties,
> They shou'd mysterious be;
Till we that pleasure too possess
(Which makes their fancy'd happiness)
Of stolen secrecy.

Such tender joy seems more reminiscent of the Cavalier
poets, or of Robert Herrick in such lyrics as his "The
Night-piece, to Julia," than of any of Winchilsea's con-
temporaries.

Another love poem of hers which is also very unlike
what one would expect from a Restoration poem dealing with
marital love, is "A Letter to Dafnis April:2d 1685," and
it, too, builds some of its tone from a conscious contrast
with current popular views of marriage. Deceptively
simple, as much of her poetry is, this seventeen-line
verse epistle to her husband of almost a year, opens with
two pairs of couplets which are something of a salutation,
an extended "Dear Dafnis" which identifies him in relation
to his wife, the author of this letter. He is told that
he is "the Crown, and blessing" of his wife's life, "The
much lov'd husband, of a happy wife" (19). "Crown"
carries a rich multiplicity of meanings. As an emblem of
monarchy it would hold special significance for Anne and
Heneage, who had both been in service to the king's house-
hold. In addition to its suggestion of nobility, "crown"
also denotes an object usually treasured for its great
value, as well as a wreath or garland worn as a sign of
honor or reward for glory achieved. Dafnis is therefore,
by his identification with the Crown, acknowledged for his
precious worth in and of himself; but he also becomes the
Crown of his wife's life, thereby achieving yet higher
value in the sense of being the pinnacle of her life.
And, he is told, he is also the "blessing" of that life,
thereby achieving consummate worth to her in both an earthly
and a heavenly sense.

In the next line Dafnis is told that he is the "much
lov'd husband," and, as in the previous line, that sense
of great value does not merely flow to him, but from him
as well; he is "much lov'd," but he has given much in
return, so that the giver of that love is also the
receiver of his love, and is therefore "a happy wife,"
again intensifying the tribute to Dafnis.

In the next couplet Dafnis is further identified as
"him, whose constant passion found the art/ To win a stub-
born, and ungratefull heart." The reason for this
"stubborn, and ungratefull heart" is given no explanation
until a few lines later in the poem, but we are at least
told that it was not his raw passion, but, rather, passion
artfully conveyed, which ultimately won the heart of his
future wife.

Up to this point the poem has been an intimate, per-
sonal address to Dafnis by his spouse, but in the
following couplet, the poem suddenly becomes a public one
as well: "And to the World, by tend'rest proof discovers/
They err, who say that husbands can't be lovers." By
moving out from an intimate conjugal epistle to one addressed to the world at large, the poem now takes on social implications and the tributes of a wife to her husband become more generalized. The then-current notion of the passionless marriage and the contradiction between "husband" and "lover" can now be declared false, at least in the poet's own experience. And because her own experience so sharply contradicts that concept of marriage which the world maintains, as evidenced in its maxim about husbands and lovers, a level of ironic social commentary is created which heightens her personal testimony to the worth of Dafnis and their relationship, while at the same time building a subtle satiric portrait of that world.

In the lines which follow, the poet then defines (for Dafnis and the world) the nature of the conjugal relationship and her responsibilities as a wife:

> With such return of passion, as is due,  
> Daphnis I love, Daphnis my thoughts persue,  
> Daphnis, my hopes, my joys, are bounded all  
> in you:  
> Ev'n I, for Daphnis, and my promise sake,  
> What I in women censure, undertake.

In declaring that she will return passion "as is due," we hear echoes of Cordelia declaring to Lear that she loves him according to her "bond," with all the etymological implications of that word. Certainly Winchilsea chose her words deliberately to imply a responsibility that borders on the contractual, thereby emphasizing the social implications of marriage. As with Cordelia, her love is
defined by the nature of the relationship and the obligations inherent within it, though it is her love for Daphnis, as well as her promise (her marriage vows), that informs the fulfillment of that duty. Expanding on the subtle social commentary already introduced into the poem, she further states that she will fulfill this duty despite the fact that she censures in other women the surrender of all "thoughts," "hopes," and "joys" to a man—those very things which she herself now willingly surrenders to Dafnis. And it is this censure of women who give up their own individual identity which helps clarify the cause of that "stubborn, and ungrateful heart" earlier alluded to.

The poet's initial reluctance to join her life with that of Dafnis's, is due to her disdain of the loss of female identity—a theme we see repeated elsewhere even more strongly in such poems as "An epilogue to the Tragedy of Jane Shore."

Having moved out into the world at large, the poet now begins to move back to the personal, telling Dafnis that it is not from "vanity," but from "love" that she proceeds, and she reminds him, "You know who writes; and I who 'tis that reads." It is not, then, from any motives that turn inward upon the self that she proceeds (with this letter and with the fulfillment of her marriage commitment), but from love, which is directed outward, to the "other." A personal tone is established once again in
the poem, as it was in the beginning, only this time it is more intimate and therefore transcends the limits of the poet's skill with words:

Judge not my passion, by my want of skill,
Many love well, though they express it ill;
And I your censure cou'd with pleasure bear,
Wou'd you but soon return, and speak it here.

These final lines offer a lovely turn on the Renaissance and seventeenth-century tradition of imparting immortality to one's beloved by the poem itself--the sort of thing Shakespeare does in Sonnet 18 ("So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,/ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee"), or Donne in "The Canonization" ("And if unfit for tombs and hearse/ Our legend be, it will be fit for verse"). The poem which she has so carefully crafted is ultimately declared but a poor substitute for the person of Dafnis himself, who is thereby given yet one final tribute to his inestimable worth.

Here, then, as in many of her poems, even very personal sentiments are juxtaposed with contemporary social views. Living in an age which presented many barriers to female artistic expression, Winchilsea was nevertheless able to develop her own individual talent, and nowhere more strongly than when writing of love and marriage. Through innovative use of literary traditions and prosody, and through a variety of dramatic devices and masking strategies, she responded to her times with a clear
feminine poetic voice that was at once both private and public.

In a chapter from the *Court Wits of the Restoration* which he entitles "Love Songs to Phyllis," John Harold Wilson examines the anti-feminine strain found in much love poetry of the period. Commenting on the number of harshly satirical songs which must, he acknowledges, have been upsetting to women of the time, he concludes that nevertheless, "Phyllis has left us no record of her reaction to these various attempts at seduction by erotic songs" (102). How wrong he is. Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, has left a record, and it is one worthy to stand in the body of the best poetry of the Restoration and early eighteenth century.
In the previous chapter it was suggested that Winchilsea frequently uses generic traditions and literary conventions in a manner that affords her more freedom of expression than would otherwise have been available to a woman author. We saw, for example, that in "The Unequal Fetters" she evokes carpe diem imagery only to subvert the reader's expectations, ultimately reversing the carpe diem theme and creating within the poem a bitterly feminist statement about the falseness inherent in traditional seduction arguments. Similarly, in "The Cautious Lovers" the conventions of such pastoral dialogues between lovers are overturned as the poem develops its ironic statement about love in early eighteenth-century English society.

This chapter and the next will examine more closely Winchilsea's use of one particular generic tradition, the
pastoral. Though she experimented with some genres only briefly (the song, for example, she virtually abandoned after her early poetry), she remained fond of the pastoral throughout her life. It was a genre that she found adaptable to a wide range of themes and styles, so that by focusing on it, we are able to gain a sense of the richness and diversity of her art. Moreover, an analysis of Winchilsea's use of the pastoral mode offers an opportunity to trace in her poetry some of those impulses towards nature which led Wordsworth to classify her as an early Romantic and helps us place her poems in their proper early Augustan milieu. Above all, however, a consideration of Winchilsea's pastoral poems should demonstrate to us her extraordinary ability to manipulate and exploit literary traditions for the nurturing of her own female talent.

It might be wise at this point to recall what T.S. Eliot has told us in "Tradition and the Individual Talent." A good writer, he maintains, must have a keen awareness of literary history and a sense of how it modifies one's own writing. True talent, Eliot avers, "involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." A writer, he continues, must write

not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and
within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense... is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity. (4)

For Winchilsea, who was one of the first English women to commit herself seriously to writing, being "acutely conscious of [her] place in time, of [her] own contemporaneity" was crucially dependent upon her sense of tradition.

Eliot's point bears repeating because it is pertinent to Winchilsea's poetry and to an understanding of the literary milieu in which she wrote. Twentieth-century criticism has often erred in judging any form of imitation in an author "amateurish" and applying normative values of originality that are simply anachronistic when applied to the eighteenth century. When considering the tradition of the English pastoral, we need to be keenly aware of what Maynard Mack reminds us in *The Garden and the City*—that in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries,

the relevant classical texts, all those passages in the Roman writers glorifying the retired life—its simplicity, frugality, self-reliance, and independence—had been so often culled, so often translated, paraphrased, and imitated that they had become part of the mind of England... (21)

The term pastoral is inclusive rather than specialized, and therefore difficult to define. Indeed, as J.E. Congleton notes in *Theories of Pastoral Poetry* in
England 1684-1798, idyll, eclogue, bucolic, and pastoral were pretty much interchangeable terms prior to modern times (6). Because of the variable nature of the pastoral genre, even Walter W. Greg, whose Pastoral Poetry & Pastoral Drama (1906) was long regarded as the standard history of English pastoral poetry, declines to give a concise definition of pastoral. Declaring that he hopes his historical survey will give a "clearer appreciation of the term," Greg maintains that "Any definition sufficiently elastic to include the protean forms assumed by what we call the 'pastoral ideal' could hardly have sufficient intensity to be of any real value" (2). More recently, Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, commenting in The Green Cabinet (1969) on the "extraordinarily rich and flexible" tradition of the pastoral, similarly warns that "In all probability a tidy definition . . . is beyond our reach" (3).

Most definitions of the pastoral are, then, as Greg and Rosenmeyer warn us they would have to be, so abstract and inclusive that they are of little value. It seems more useful, therefore, to understand the pastoral genre in its historical context as a philosophical concept, which is how Anne Finch seems to have understood it, and to realize that the tradition which she found so appealing was multifarious, with roots dating back to early classical poetry, but with a rich variety of sources reaching
her from both European and English Renaissance literature as well.

There are numerous valuable studies of the pastoral. Particularly outstanding is J.E. Congleton’s *Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England 1684-1798*, which focuses upon the two distinct types of pastoral poetry prevalent toward the end of the seventeenth century, the neoclassic and the rationalistic, and traces their development throughout the following century. His lucid analysis of the debate that ensued, and his reminder of the number of excellent eighteenth-century writings that belong solidly in the pastoral tradition, including Pope’s *Pastorals* and the urban pastorals of Swift and Gay, are noteworthy. Congleton demonstrates repeatedly that serious philosophical issues, both moral and aesthetic, continued to be present in Augustan pastorals. His book thus counters the assumption of Maurice Evans that by the eighteenth century the pastoral had declined into "decorative idyll or rustic realism" (*English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century* 95), or Harold E. Toliver’s assertion that "the bulk of the pastorals written during the hundred years after the publication of *Paradise Lost* are uninspired reapplications of new makeup to an aging countenance" (*Pastoral Forms and Attitudes* 17).

The origins of pastoral poetry date back to the idylls of Theocritus, a third century B.C. Sicilian whose
Greek ancestors, the Arcadians, symbolized for Theocritus a simplicity and purity that he hoped to recapture in his portrayal of an earlier Golden Age. Thus in the idylls of Theocritus, as in the eclogues of Virgil two centuries later, we find a principal characteristic of pastoral poems: though they deal with rustic life, they are a product of an urban society and convey a sharp distinction between urban and rural life. Closely aligned to the urban/rustic polarity is the notion of an earlier time when men were pure and untainted by the corruption of contemporary man. The recreation of this Golden Age and its Arcadia is often transplanted in pastorals of the Middle Ages and Renaissance by a Garden of Eden. Whether a classical or a prelapsarian paradise, however, this earlier, happier time and its rustic setting are recreated by the poet for purposes of contrast with the degradation of his own age.

The pastoral may take a variety of forms. Greg tells us, for example, that though there was a steady increase in the use of dialogue from the Latin bucolics of Virgil through the Italian eclogues of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the dramatic impulse was already there in the idylls of Theocritus (169-176). And frequently the dramatic and narrative elements were intermingled.

It is Edmund Spenser who is chiefly responsible for transplanting the pastoral tradition firmly onto English
Throughout the Renaissance, pastoral elements thrived in a variety of forms ranging from Spenser's lyrical *The Shepheardes Calender* and the sixth book of his epic *The Faerie Queene*, to such dramatic works as Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. And in the seventeenth century the scope of the pastoral tradition was broad enough to include works as diverse as Ben Jonson's unfinished play *The Sad Shepherd*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and his pastoral elegy "Lycidas," the pleasant lyrics of Robert Herrick, and the deeply meditative poems of Andrew Marvell.

Pastoral, then, can refer loosely to any literature that treats of rustic life, but which also embodies philosophical concepts. Though the pastoral was relegated to a relatively low position in the hierarchy of literary genres, it is nevertheless a frequent vehicle for profound comments on the human condition. Love, for example, is a common topic of pastoral concern. The pastoral may deal with simple shepherds and their flocks, or at least with people who briefly play at being shepherds (as in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*), but it also raises issues of great significance. And at the center of pastoral poetry is this paradox: the pastoral presents an ideal life of rustic simplicity and ease, the recreation of an Arcadia or a Garden of Eden, but this ideal can only be
realized through art, which is a product of a sophisticated and therefore tainted urban society. Thus the pastoral concept is frequently realized through the juxtaposing of disparate values, creating a tension between such opposite elements as Art and Nature, the town and the country, courtly sophistication and rural simplicity, heroic action and contemplative retirement, responsibility and freedom, the troubling present and a Golden Age of the past, and so on.

In the discussion here, the term pastoral will refer in a general way to any poetry dealing with rural life. However, particular characteristics of the pastoral that appear in Winchilsea's poems will be isolated and analyzed in an attempt to place her poetry solidly within the pastoral tradition. Such an approach will also demonstrate that she did, indeed, use tradition artistically and innovatively to develop her own individual female poetical talent.

One of Winchilsea's most successful uses of the pastoral mode is in "An Invitation to Dafnis," a poem that relies heavily upon contrasts and employs a number of pastoral conventions. The persona of this poem, Ardelia herself, is charmingly seductive in her feminine flaunting
of the carpe diem convention. The invitation to her husband, known here as Dafnis, is, as we are told in the subtitle, "To leave his study and usual Employments,—Mathematicks, Paintings, etc. and to take the Pleasures of the feilds [sic] with Ardelia." Thus, the first of the poem's several antitheses is introduced immediately: the intellectual pursuits of scholarly confinement versus the sensuous pleasures of rural abandonment.

The poem opens with a recounting of Arcadian delights, but it is not set in Arcadia, nor does it lose its sense of contemporaneity. Rather than casting her seduction poem in an artificial Golden Age, Winchilsea retains a sense of the real while calling to mind for her Dafnis, and for the reader, what Arcadian pleasures were like. "When such a day, blesst the Arcadian plaine," she begins, thereby infusing the present with images of an idyllic past to create a simultaneous vision of two ages, while creating an Art vs. Nature antithesis as well. Dafnis is indeed being asked to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, but his Amaryllis is a real woman, and her "invitation" to her husband blends a touch of naughtiness with the reality of their domestic relationship.

Throughout the poem Winchilsea maintains this dual vision, which is ultimately a tension between Art and Nature.
The poem's title, with its use of the familiar classical name Dafnis and its announcement of the poem's intent to entice Dafnis "to take the Pleasures of the fields with Ardelia," is alone sufficient to set the reader up for certain carpe diem expectations. The suggestion that "An Invitation to Dafnis" is to be part of a well-known generic tradition, elicits from the reader the anticipation of a variety of pastoral themes and images, and it is this anticipation which the poet can now play against. Because Winchilsea is using a decidedly masculine seduction convention but converting it to a vehicle for feminine response, the reader simultaneously experiences both traditional expectations for this genre, and amused surprise at the poet's deviation from these expectations. This is, after all, not Marlowe's passionate shepherd, pleading to his Love, nor Sidney's lusty shepherd, conniving for the favors of his Chosen Nymph. It is the slightly coy Ardelia, who lures her husband with a gently enticing "invitation." If we forget the role of a classical nymph and of her shepherd-suitors, and the stock responses that Winchilsea's Augustan contemporaries would have had even to the title of this poem, we are missing much of the poem's charm and its subtle artistry. Winchilsea does not here burlesque the pastoral conventions, as Swift was to do a decade later in "A Description of the Morning" and "A Description of a City
Shower." The sensibility with which we should approach "An Invitation to Dafnis," however, is similar to the one which is required for Swift's urban pastorals. As Roger Savage advised in his article "Swift's Fallen City: 'A Description of the Morning,'" our understanding of such a poem depends, in part, upon our recognizing that the poem owes "some sort of allegiance to a genre with rules and hereditary images..." (183).

In the opening stanza of "An Invitation to Dafnis" the poet evokes Arcadia. It is a pleasant summer's day, Ardelia tells Dafnis, and they, like the nymphs and shepherds of old, ought to take advantage of it. The intellectual studies that now consume his time, she says, are more appropriate to the winter season. So "Come," he is urged, "and the pleasures of the fields survey,/ And throo' the groves with your Ardelia stray" (28).

The present day suggests for Ardelia an idyllic Golden Age, and by recalling that shepherds and their nymphs spent such a day sporting on the grass, the invitation to Dafnis to "stray" with her through the groves takes on tantalizing sexual overtones. In this poem, however, it is not the use of the persona alone that gives Winchilsea freedom to write about the topic of love and sexuality—a topic that would otherwise have been considered improper for a woman to deal with. It is the genre itself that is the primary source of her creative
freedom. One of the specific advantages for her in using the pastoral is that it supplies a license, enabling her through the weight of its traditions, through its "hereditory images" and its anticipatory themes, to achieve an artistic emancipation.

In the second and third stanzas, the Art/Nature motive hinted at earlier is more fully developed. As each studious occupation of Dafnis is enumerated, it is juxtaposed with its counterpart in nature. His intellectual concerns are thus weighed singly and collectively in balance against the natural world, the pastoral world. Rather than read poetry, he is admonished, he should view "the subjects of each rural muse"; the geometric problems he is working with a compass should be forsaken for the opportunity to be where fairy circles have marked the ground; and his painstaking task of putting illuminations on vellum should be abandoned for a vision of far brighter colors in the fields of poppy and corn. The geography book he is consulting may describe entire kingdoms in a single page, but, he is chided, not even the description of the entire world is equal to experiencing this single temperate day in the English countryside.

In the first stanzas of the poem, the poet has introduced, through a series of juxtaposed opposites, the Art/Nature conflict that is at the center of much pastoral poetry. Her treatment of the theme thus far has been, if
witty, nonetheless somewhat superficial. But in the fourth stanza, through development of a brilliant extended metaphor, Winchilsea probes the very heart of the Art/Nature paradox. As the stanza opens, that alluring temptress Ardelia offers one final item in the catalog of her beloved's interests. Shut away in his study, he has been tracing in detail the war campaigns on behalf of his deposed monarch, James II. Do not, she playfully teases him, plead "That mighty Bastions keep you from the field," or think that "tho' lodg'd in Mons, or in Namur,/ You're from my dangerous attacks secure." Not only has Ardelia become more aggressive, but she has now made his studies into a metaphoric fortress which she vows to storm with her own troops. These personal martial forces which she shall gather to challenge Louis and to steal away her Dafnis, are none other than Apollo and the Muses. With their help, her poetry will be victorious, enabling her to storm every fort and take every town to win her Dafnis. Her poems, she says, like the songs of Orpheus on his magic lute, will make everyone defenseless against her attack, for her "strong, confederate Syllables" are the strongest weapons one can muster.

Several of the senses are focused upon singly, with a separate stanza devoted to each of these senses. The images of the first stanza all suggest the sense of touch and kinetic sensation: Arcadia is warm yet shaded; the climate
is temperate, so that no rains blast the plains; a gentle breeze stirs through the summer bowers, yet it disturbs neither dress nor curly hair of the young shepherds and nymphs. In the second stanza it is the visual senses that are portrayed: the beauty of nature exceeds man's geometric designs, and the brilliance of flower and sea surpasses the colors of paintings. (But, significantly, the poetry that Dafnis is reading is not declared inferior to the rural subjects that have inspired it; Dafnis is simply admonished not to neglect to view these subjects in nature.)

After the short third stanza, which praises nature, and the fourth, which celebrates the superiority of poetry, the fifth stanza is devoted to yet another of the senses, that of sound. And this stanza also introduces yet another pair of conflicting elements which appears frequently in Winchilsea's pastoral poems, that of town and country. The town and country conflict is pervasive in the history of pastoral poetry, for, as Frank Kermode has noted, it is "the social aspect of the great Art-Nature antithesis which is philosophically the basis of pastoral literature" (37). In this stanza, then, images of various auditory pleasures in the natural world are juxtaposed with a satiric portrait of the world of dull fops and fawning courtiers. The songs of birds and the murmurs of springs and rivers are contrasted with the
false and grating speech of courtiers, disgruntled unpaid sailors, and brawling townspeople.

"An Invitation to Dafnis" begins with love, with a wife's playfully luring her husband to partake of country pleasures. It is fitting, therefore, that the poem conclude with an image of faithful conjugal love and its rewards:

As Baucis and Philemon spent their lives,  
Of husbands he, the happyest she, of wives,  
When throo' the painted meads, their way they sought,  
Harmlesse in act, and unperplext in thought,  
Lett us my Dafnis, rural joys persue,  
And Courts, or Camps, not ev'n in fancy view  
So, lett us throo' the Groves, my Dafnis stray,  
And so, the pleasures of the feilds, survey.  
(30)

The story of Baucis and Philemon (Ovid's Metamorphosis VIII, 611-724) recounts the fate of an aged Phyrgian couple noted for their enduring love. For their generous hospitality to the disguised Jupiter and his son Mercury, the couple was richly rewarded. Their modest cottage was transformed into a splendid temple in which they presided as priest and priestess, living out their last days as they had their first, in harmony with nature and with the gods. Furthermore, in fulfillment of their request that they not be separated by death, both were one day simultaneously changed into trees. In Dryden's translation, which Winchilsea doubtless knew, the tender scene is recounted in these words: "Then, ere the bark
above their shoulders grew;/ They give and take at once
their last adieu;/ At once: Farewell, O faithful spouse,' they said" (ll.187-189), so that they remain "Ev'n yet" an
oak and a linden, intertwined as one.

In addition to the domestic sentiments of affection
and fidelity which it imparts, the myth is also
appropriate to Winchilsea's pastoral themes. Baucis and
Philemon, like Dafnis and Ardelia themselves, are not the
eternally youthful shepherd and nymph of an Arcadia, yet
their love and their closeness to nature bring them
lasting peace and contentment. They exemplify, moreover,
at least a partial reconciliation in the conflict of Art
and Nature which the poem has centered around. It is,
paradoxically, through the sophistication of art that the
poet can reclaim for us the simplicity of Arcadia. The
legend of Baucis and Philomen has, as Donne would put it,
made them "fit for verse," and that verse, whether Ovid's
or Winchilsea's, is the only means by which Arcadia can be
recreated for us. That is why Winchilsea opens her poem
with Arcadian images, and why Ardelia's final plea to
Dafnis to come "stray" with her, takes on the force of a
philosophical imperative.

One further aspect of this poem deserves comment.
Winchilsea's life marks a transition between the seven-
teenth and eighteenth centuries, and her poetry, as we
might expect, evidences a transition in literary styles.
With most of her verse written after 1700, we sense more kinship with Pope and Swift than with Dryden. In "An Invitation to Dafnis," written around 1700, this transition is particularly evident. Winchilsea is here consciously writing in the main stream of the seventeenth-century carpe diem tradition, yet she evidences strongly that Augustan sense of dual vision which Paul Fussell analyzess well in The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism—that tendency to view the world in terms of moral antitheses and to convey this vision through use of such rhetorical techniques as polemic imagery and the grammatical structure of the heroic couplet itself. Furthermore, her satirical interpolations, as well as the manner in which she twists the conventional masculine approach of the carpe diem into a decidedly feminine one, are Augustan in tone. Finally, though the overall structure of the poem and the development of its thought are stanzaic, with recurrent concluding refrains, it is the Augustan sense of order and balance in the couplets which moves the stanzas along, energizing the whole, as can be seen in the following passage:

Come, and attend, how as we walk along,
Each cheerfull bird, shall treat us with a song,
Nott such as Fopps compose, where witt, nor art,
Nor plainer Nature, ever bear a part;
The Cristall springs, shall murmure as we passe,
But not like Courtiers, sinking to disgrace;
Nor, shall the louder Rivers, in their fall,
Like unpaid Saylers, or hoarse Pleaders brawle;
But all shall form a concert to delight,
And all to peace, and all to love invite.
Come then, my Dafnis, and the feilds survey,
And throo' the Groves, with your Ardelia stray.
(st. 5)

"An Invitation to Dafnis" demonstrates Winchilsea's maturity in handling her craft. The poem is structured around a series of contrasting values pitted in opposition to each other, just as its heroic couplets are themselves structured on principles of syntactic balance. Her ear for the poetic line is strong and sure. The rhythmic awkwardness that occurs occasionally in some of her early songs or in such lyrics as "An Invocation to Sleep" is missing here, as is the sing-song effect of tetrameter couplets with frequent feminine rhymes that is found in such poems as the 1689 "Upon Ardelia's Return Home."

Instead, one finds here a unity between symmetry of line and development of idea. Similarly, Winchilsea's earlier tendency to mix iambic tetrameter and pentameter couplets, to intersperse them at random with triplets or substitute an Alexandrine for one line of the couplet, or to use mid-line full stops that work against the sense of the couplet as a self-contained unit, all give way here to rhythmically and thematically satisfying heroic couplets.6

Finally, a few comments on Winchilsea's debt to what is perhaps her poem's closest literary ancestor--Robert Herrick's well-known "Corinna's Going A-Maying"--may be in order. Since Herrick's poem bears enough similarity to
Winchilsea's to suggest that she knew it well, a brief comparison of the two works may help demonstrate some of the ways in which she adopted literary traditions and adapted them to her own use.

Both poems are steeped in the carpe diem tradition, both are centered around an Art/Nature dichotomy, and both open with a plea to a loved one to seize the rural pleasures of the day. Furthermore, in both poems the person addressed is confined within a room and is being gently berated—Corinna for her sluggishness and Dafnis for his bookishness. Even the stanzaic structure of each is similar, with its frequent use of juxtaposed opposites to reinforce thematic elements. And Herrick's refrain, with its variations on "Come, my Corinna, come," is echoed in Winchilsea's "Come then, my Dafnis..." refrain. But the primary similarity between both poems is, as we have seen elsewhere in noting Herrick's influence on Winchilsea, a matter of tone. Unlike the persistent, passionate seducer one encounters in many carpe diem poems, Corinna's lover and Ardelia are gently teasing in manner, and their sexual aims are only mildly suggested. It is the wit and genial humor of these two personae that make both poems so thoroughly charming.

But there are differences between the two poems. Herrick's lovers reside in Arcadia, whereas for Winchilsea's couple, Arcadia can only be temporarily
achieved through poetry (i.e., the beauty of the day merely suggests Arcadia to Ardelia, and the rural retreat which she proposes is not meant to last beyond a few brief hours). Consequently, Winchilsea's treatment of the paradoxical nature of art seems more suggestive than Herrick's.

The most obvious way in which Winchilsea departs from the model of Herrick's poem, and from the entire generic tradition of the pastoral, is that she reverses conventional roles of swain and nymph. Her poet is not a shepherd, piping his tunes to win the affections of some reluctant nymph, some "slug-a-bed" Corinna. Instead, we are faced with something unusual in English literary history, a pastoral poet/persona who is the nymph as well as the aggressor in the amorous pursuit. Moreover, the carefree Arcadian swain has been transformed by Winchilsea into a scholarly, diligent husband. And for this scene of domestic love she has brought to bear the whole tradition of pastoral poetry and given it the freshness of her individual female talent.

Another advantage for Winchilsea in using the pastoral mode, in addition to its allowing her to write of love and passion as she would not otherwise have been able
to do with propriety, is that it gave her a vehicle for criticizing her own age and for speaking as a public poet. Katharine Rogers has declared in *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* that Winchilsea wrote in "personal, private genres obviously suited to women--lyrics and letters" (85), a comment certainly appropriate to many Restoration and eighteenth-century women writers. However, while such "private genres" do form a substantial portion of the body of Winchilsea's poetry, in many of her most significant poems her poetic stance is clearly that of a moral spokesperson addressing the ills of her society. The conventions of pastoral poetry, especially when combined with her satiric eye, supplied Anne Finch with an authority normally denied to a female author (the linguistic irony in denying an author authority should be self-evident). Consequently, the generic tradition of the pastoral helped her to legitimize her public voice and became for her an enabling device for artistic liberation.

It is probably no coincidence that "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," Winchilsea's most sustained effort at satire, is in the pastoral mode. The tradition of using the pastoral poem for satiric commentary is an old one, dating back at least to Juvenal's Satire VI, but for antecedents of this particular poem one could turn to more contemporary sources. Donne's *Satyre IV*, with its devastating portrait of a fop and its vision of a visit to court as a
descent into hell, is a distant relative of Anne Finch's poem. The nearest relative I can locate is, surprisingly, Rochester's "A Letter from Artemisia in the Town to Chloe in the Country." First published within a decade of Anne's satirical pastoral, which she wrote around 1690 or 1691, Rochester's poem bears such similarity to hers in thematic detail and in use of narrative and dramatic techniques that acknowledging her debt to that notorious wit, whose residency at Court preceded her own by only two or three years, seems unavoidable.

The disparate values which form the basis of satirical commentary in Winchilsea's poem are precisely those traditionally associated with pastoral verse—country vs. city, rural simplicity and innocence vs. court sophistication and corruption, and natural female beauty and behavior vs. the artificiality in manner and appearance of court nymphs. In Rochester's poem, such antitheses do not exist, except, possibly, by implication. The form which both poets adopt is that of a verse epistle from one female friend to another. The persona of each poem is a female poet whose sharp wit and piercing eye provide a lively narrative account of city life. Winchilsea's Ardelia differs from Rochester's Artemisia in several ways, however. For one thing, unlike Artemisia, Ardelia does not herself reside in town and unequivocally prefers the country. Her letter is, in fact, an explanation of
reasons for declining an invitation to visit London again. Furthermore, Rochester's poet/persona is almost entirely an observer of the events she describes, whereas Ardelia is a participant who interacts with other characters, who engages in dialogue with them, and whose actions are as important to the poem's satirical statement as are her words. Indeed, her final act of removing herself from the center of London life to return to her rural retreat in Kent, and her refusal to accept further invitations to the city, underscore her abhorrence of the decadence of contemporary court society.

Though Artemisia's descriptions of the fop and the court "fine lady" are similar to Ardelia's description of the fop and the coquette Almeria, Rochester's narrator is more the cynical observer than the outraged moralist. And there is great difference in the way each persona views herself as a poet and views the role of women authors in general. Artemisia begins her epistle to Chloe somewhat reluctantly, disclaiming any responsibility for attempting verse, since it is by Chloe's command that she write. She, like Ardelia, recognizes the scorn that women writers must endure: "whore is scarce a more reproachful name/ Than poetess," she acknowledges (Rochester, 105, 26-27). In fact, the irony with which Rochester's persona describes the world's disdain for women writers, suggests more tolerance of women poets and sympathy with their
plight than one might expect from this quintessential Restoration rake. Yet Artemisia's attitude towards her own talent and towards her presumption in undertaking the craft of poetry, is apologetic, and she feels subservient to male writers. Winchilsea's Ardelia, on the other hand, is confident and secure, and when the catty Almeria makes scurrilous remarks about another woman poet, Ardelia is quick to defend the right of any woman to become a poet: "Why shou'd we from that pleasing art be ty'd, / Or like State Pris'ners, Pen and Ink deny'd?" (45).

At the center of both poems is a satirical portrait of a court nymph who embodies the decadence of her society. The literary evolution of the nymph, whose significance in Augustan satire is examined by Christine Rees in her article "Gay, Swift, and the Nymphs of Drury-Lane," is part of a long tradition in both the pastoral and satire, and both traditions frequently overlap. In satire against feminine use of cosmetic arts, for example, paint, as Rees notes, "is the emblem of art, flesh the emblem of natural beauty; and this kind of distinction crosses over from satire to pastoral" (3). The town nymph, with all her paint and artificial mannerisms, may then be contrasted with her innocent country cousin. In Rochester's poem the nymph, identified sarcastically only as "a fine lady," is an affectatious, loquacious flirt who flits about and assumes "fifty antic
postures" (94). She is also obsequious with an old acquaintance they meet by chance, a fop whom Artemisia describes as a "dirty, chattering monster." Yet this "fine lady" is no fool. She is well-read and has a discerning wit, but she is utterly devoid of self-knowledge: "to her was known/ Everyone's fault and merit, but her own" (164-165). Winchilsea's coquette, Almeria, is similarly loud and ostentatious in manner, and she fawns all over Ardelia. Furthermore, she is described, in words that almost echo Rochester's description of his coquette, as one who "discerns all failings, but her own" (39). Like Rochester's lady, she also assumes a variety of antic poses and indulges in grand but hypocritical displays of affection for the fop she encounters by chance. And Winchilsea's Almeria "flies round the Coach," showing herself at the windows for public admiration, just as Rochester's fine lady "flies upstairs" to where Artemisia is and commences to show herself at the window.

Despite similarities in both poems in the descriptions of the nymph and the fop, as well as in some of the sequence of events, Winchilsea's poem deviates markedly from Rochester's. Rochester's Artemisia is writing to Chloe to bring her up to date on the latest news from town, and in her report on the amorous escapades and intrigues of London's high society, women do not fare well. Theirs is, Artemisia tells Chloe, a "silly sex,"
and throughout her sardonic narration, there is no portrait of a woman that one can hold up in contrast to that of the "fine lady"; not even Artemisia herself, apart from her cynical but perceptive observations, displays any positive, redeeming traits to present a more balanced view of womankind. Rochester offers the reader nothing to counteract that image of women as manipulative, conniving hypocrites who perpetuate a corrupt social system. Though not much of a participant in the predatory world that the poem depicts, Artemisia neither does nor says anything to counterbalance that world with other values. Ultimately, then, Rochester's use of a female persona does not facilitate his imparting any sympathy with women. On the contrary, it allows him to present an even blacker condemnation of women than would have been possible with a male persona. Criticism from one's own kind, whether in ethnic identification, religious affiliation, or gender, is always the most devastating.

One further point: the men who are portrayed in Rochester's poem are victims of their town nymphs. The husband of the "fine lady" is a drunken, cuckolded fool whose wife prevails upon him, "though much against his will" (76), to bring her repeatedly to London to pursue her social adventures. Her lengthy explanation to Artemisia of why fops make better lovers than do men of
writ (who are less easily deceived and manipulated), intensifies the poem's sexually biased psychological ambiance. The message of the poem is clear: women are in control, and if the city is evil and its inhabitants all debauched, then it is women who are most to blame for this.

Satire is essentially diagnostic. It need not necessarily point to a specific cure for society's ills, but the satirist must offer us, either directly or indirectly, a concept of what constitutes a healthy body politic if we are to recognize and accept the validity of his diagnosis of an unhealthy one. Rochester scoffs, sneers, and curls a contemptuous lip at the world his Artemisia describes. But he is as aloof as is his persona, and the satiric view he offers is finally a nihilistic one. One senses in "A Letter from Artemisia in the Town to Chloe in the Country," that the diseased world Rochester describes, suffers an incurable illness, and if it is terminal, it is also, in the poet's view, endemic, and it is passed on through the female sex.

Winchilsea's concept of satire is quite different from Rochester's. In her prose Preface written years later, Winchilsea defends her use of satire and carefully defines her purpose in writing "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," declaring that

...the whole intention of itt, was in general to expose the Censorious humour, foppishnesse and coquerterie that then prevail'd. And I am so far
from thinking there is any ill in this, that I
wish it oftener done, by such hands as might
sufficiently ridicule, and wean us from those
mistakes in our manners, and conversation. (11)

It is, then, not only Winchilsea's sex which marks her
poem as distinctively different from Rochester's. The
overt corrective intent of her satire, as well as her con-
cept of the poet as moral advocate, also differentiates
her poem from his. For one thing, the disparate values
which are contrasted throughout "Ardelia's Answer to
Ephelia" are clearly defined. Ethical touchstones,
examples of health (to continue the metaphor begun
earlier), are supplied. Ephelia, the recipient of this
verse epistle, is one whose goodness brings love and
spiritual freedom to Ardelia. And in direct contrast to
the decadent coquette Almeria, is the young, sensitive,
and refined Alinda.

But it is Ardelia herself who is of primary impor-
tance. In his essay "The Muse of Satire," Maynard Mack
notes the importance of determining for the reader the
moral character of the persona. "For the satirist
especially," writes Mack, "the establishment of an
authoritative ethos is imperative" (195). Thus Winchilsea
takes great care to develop for the reader an
understanding of the sensibilities of her narrator,
thereby providing a moral basis for her persona's cen-
sorial eye. The town nymph's catty remarks about her to
the fop, offer further opportunity for defining the poem's conflicting values: Ardelia is criticized for her bookishness; for her rustic, out-of-fashion clothing; for her sense of religious devotion; for her eschewing of literary fads and admiring the likes of Dryden and Lord Roscommon; for her disdain of opulence and extravagant show; for her lack of vanity; and for her refusal to engage in gossip. Ardelia becomes, then, our moral guide, and her commentary and narrative interpolations form a philosophical foundation for this satire.

Sometimes Winchilsea uses humorous anachronisms even in overtly didactic poems to underscore a moral point. In "Alcidor," for example, the poet illustrates through the tale of a shepherd the impossibility of maintaining the idyllic life. Young Alcidor is faced with a conflict similar to that of Calidore in Book VI of Spenser's The Faerie Queene: whether to remain in pastoral retreat with the nymph he loves or fulfill his obligations in the world. Unlike the responsible Calidore, who finally, though reluctantly, leaves to continue his quest, Alcidor ignores his monarch's call to battle and chooses instead to remain in a life of otium (the pastoral notion of ease), where he can continue, he thinks, "To reign in Gloria's Breast." The young swain is lying about in the shade of a peaceful grove when lo and behold, into the
midst of Arcadia marches a highly adorned eighteenth-century soldier:

But oh! a ruffling Soldier came
In all the Pomp of War:
The Gazettes long had spoke his Fame;
Now Hautboys his Approach proclaim,
And draw in Crouds from far. (152)

Poor Alcidor is quickly tossed by his nymph for this "Man of Feathers and of Lace" (23), and the poet closes with a
Johnsonian-like moral: "Man was not made in Shades to
lie,/ Or his full Bliss, at ease, enjoy,/ To Live, or Love
in peace" (153).

Another poem which treats of the city/country theme
through the pastoral convention of the nymph is "Adam
Pos'd." Its finely polished, tightly executed verses con-
sist of four heroic couplets and a triplet, concluding
with an Alexandrine. This superb poem, as witty as it is
skillful, deserves to be quoted in full:

ADAM POS'D

Cou'd our First Father, at his toilsome Plough,
Thorns in his Path, and Labour on his Brow,
Cloath'd only in a rude, unpolish'd Skin,
Cou'd he a vain Fantastick Nymph have seen,
In all her Airs, in all her antick Graces,
Her various Fashions, and more various Faces;
How had it pos'd that Skill, which late assign'd
Just Appellations to Each several Kind!
A right Idea of the Sight to frame;
T'have guest from what New Element she came;
T'have hit the wav'ring Form, or giv'n this Thing
a Name. (149)

The basis of this satire is an anachronistic
encounter between a "pos'd" or perplexed Adam and a
Restoration coquette. Winchilsea is careful to place her Adam in a post-lapsarian state: the thorns in his path and the sweat of hard labor as he tills the ground (Genesis 3:18-19, 23), as well as the fact that he is clothed in skins (Genesis 3:21). And by offering us an Adam already fallen, Winchilsea intensifies his perplexity at confronting this nymph, for we know that he has already met Eve and named her (Genesis 3:20). What confuses him, then, is not that this nymph is of another sex; it is that her nature is so protean, her manner and appearance so changeable. Her fashions are "various," her faces are "various," and she performs with "all" her airs and "all" her antic graces. She is "fantástick" in the sense of being fanciful, capricious, and impulsive, but to Adam she is also, in an additional meaning of the word, something of a phantasm, an apparition, and outside the range of his rational knowledge. She is, in short, beyond definition, for to name is, at least in part, to define.

Adam's first act after being created is to name every living creature. Even before God has made Eve, he brings to Adam all the animals he has created, "to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (King James Version, Genesis 2:19). Thus Adam's naming of things, signifies that they are brought into some sort of schematic order, are made a part of the cosmic framework. And the reason
he is perplexed with this court nymph, is that she lies outside the scope of his understanding and, perhaps, his control. Adam may have unquestioning dominion over the creatures of the earth and the air and the sea, but this "wavering Form," this "Thing," has given him pause.

In a brief, two-page article, "'Adam Pos'd': Metaphysical and Augustan Satire," Ann Messenger compares this poem to Donne's "Satyre IV," noting, as Christine Rees had earlier (in "Gay, Swift, and the Nymphs of Drury-Lane," 4), that the germinal idea for Winchilsea's poem is the line describing a courtier as "A thing, which would have pos'd Adam to name" (1. 20). While I differ with Messenger's reading of this poem as highly condemnatory of the nymph, I concur completely with her conclusion that the persona of this poem "is also quietly laughing at Adam, the mere male, vainly attempting to understand a modern woman" (11). This contemporary coquette is a vain, dissembling nymph, but she is also lovely, graceful, and perhaps somewhat enticing because of her very unpredictability. If Winchilsea is gently satirizing feminine frivolity, her mood here is more amused than condemnatory. And it is the scene itself which causes her amusement. What is comical is not so much the nymph herself, but the contrast between her and Adam. Clad in "rude, unpolish'd Skin," dilligently plowing and weary from the drudgery of his labor, Adam
suddenly confronts a frolicksome, frivolous, elaborately adorned court lady, and she thoroughly befuddles this paradigm of patriarchy, this "first Father." Ultimately Winchilsea allows the poem to turn upon itself, so that the nymph's very beauty and coquettish antics, satirize Adam as much as they satirize the nymph herself.

The country vs. city theme appears elsewhere in Winchilsea, but it is not always handled satirically. "A Ballad to Mrs. Catherine Fleming in London from Malshanger farm in Hampshire," which appears in the unpublished Wellesley manuscript, contains light-hearted verses addressed to a friend who has remained in town while Anne has retreated to a country farm. In a series of pleasant images Winchilsea contrasts the innocence and quiet of rural life with the noise and hectic pace of city dwelling. Only her friend's enticement, like the "sweet harmonious art" of Orpheus's song, could ever woo her away again. But if that happened, she cautions, then her beloved woods, "Charm'd like Birnam's...wou'd rise" and march with her into London, so startling the townspeople that she would be forced to return immediately. This is more gentle humor than satire, as she reminds us in her concluding stanza:

Mean while accept what I have writ,
To shew this rural scene;
Nor look for sharp satyrick wit,
from off the balmy plain:
The country breeds no thorny bays,
But mirth and love and honest praise.
With a fa-la-la-la-la-la-la.

This whimsical ballad, written in 1719, the year preceding Anne's death, demonstrates the versatility of the pastoral in her hands, as well as her persistent fondness for its themes. It also demonstrates an aspect of her pastorals which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter: the importance of pastoral friendships.
CHAPTER VI
PASTORAL FRIENDSHIPS AND EDENIC VISIONS

The motif of friendship runs throughout much of Winchilsea's pastoral verse. We have seen, for example, how she turns the familiar country vs. city theme of "A Ballad to Mrs. Catherine Fleming" into a poetic tribute to her friend: having retreated to the country after a recent visit to the London home of Mrs. Fleming, Anne welcomes in the poem the serenity of rural life and expresses a strong distaste for urban noise and confusion, yet she affirms that she will nonetheless return to the noxious city if it be the only way to enjoy the pleasure of her friend's company.

In addition to such occasional poems as "A Ballad to Mrs. Catherine Fleming," Winchilsea has thirty-five or so verse epistles, many of which are in the pastoral mode, as well as numerous other poems containing passages honoring friends or celebrating friendship. In the verse epistle
"To My Sister Ogle, Dec. 31, 1688," for example, Winchilsea mourns the separation from her half-sister and speaks of the day when Heaven shall restore them to each other's company. Evoking an Edenic vision of a future when they shall be reunited, she writes that "Time, shall submitt to friendships pow'rs,/ And as we please, shall rest, or fly" (38). The poem concludes on a note of comfort: their present pains will be rewarded when they leave this life together, "New arts to find, new joys to try,/ The height of friendship to improve."

The extraordinary value which Winchilsea places upon friendship belongs, in part, to the pastoral tradition. Thomas Rosenmeyer traces in The Green Cabinet the tradition of the epistle and its relation to the pastoral, noting that several of Theocritus's most successful poems are cast as letters to friends. He observes, moreover, that the epistolary medium has similarities with pastoral singing matches and with exchanges between lovers (106). Even more to the point is Rosenmeyer's assertion that in the pastoral, "proper freedom is possible only if it is enjoyed in a circle of friends" (105).

Inherent in the concept of the pastoral is the notion of freedom, whether from the responsibilities and restraints of sophisticated urban life, or from the degredation and corruption of one's own age. Hence the yearning for a simple rural retreat, often created for us
by the poet's evoking of a classical or a prelapsarian paradise. Whatever the philosophical issues treated in the pastoral, however, the notion of freedom is always central to the desire for retreat. As evidence for the corollary between friendship and retreat, we need only note that the personae in Winchilsea's pastoral poems almost never seek solitude in their retreats. In "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat," for example, which will be discussed later, the poet would share her retreat with a sympathetic mate—"A Partner suited to my Mind"—as well as with her friend Arminda, for whom she pleads, "Give then, O indulgent Fate!/ Give a Friend in that Retreat" (72, 74).

In one of the last poems she wrote, "On Lady Cartrett dressed like a shepherdess at Count Volira's ball," Winchilsea's tribute to her friend becomes ultimately the means of resolving the pastoral dichotomy between Nature and Art. Creating a whimsical visual image through the use of anachronism, as she does in "Adam Pos'd," the poet here reverses the use of this comic device; rather than bringing the present into the past (as when a modern coquette is placed before Adam), she inserts Arcadian shepherds into the midst of an elegant eighteenth-century masquerade ball.

The poem is in anapestic tetrameter, a measure difficult to sustain in English verse and seldom used before
the nineteenth century. (Byron's "The Destruction of Sennacherib" and Browning's "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix" are notable examples.) The rising meter of the anapests suggests unrest, a kind of unsettledness that borders on the awkward—all of which suits perfectly the disorientation conveyed through satirically humorous anachronisms.

Some curious shepherds wander into a ballroom where they mingle unnoticed amidst the disguised revelers. And, like Adam, they, too, are "pos'd" by what they witness:

Quoth the Swains who got in at the late Masquerade
And never before left their flocks or their shade
What people are here who with splendor amaze
Or but with their antick variety please
Who talk to each other in voices unknown
And their faces are worse than their vizors when shown.... (Wellesley ms.)

The familiar Art vs. Nature theme is explored as the shepherds quickly decide that these court ladies compare most unfavorably with their Arcadian nymphs. For all their cosmetics and costumes, these modern women, the young swains decide, are far less lovely than the nymphs they have left behind, and they also appear to be less virtuous (more "easily won").

Suddenly, however, Lady Cartret appears, dressed like a shepherdess and with such "innocent sweetness" and natural beauty that the shepherds immediately decide she surpasses all other nymphs they have ever known.
Moreover, she is supreme in virtue, for they have overheard the young gallants discussing her unshakeable faithfulness to her husband. Returning to their valleys, the shepherds resolve never again to be enticed "by loud rumour or show" to leave, and they acknowledge that their muses will henceforth be inspired not by Phillis or Sylvia or Cloe, but by that fairest of all nymps, Cartret.

The conflict between Nature and Art that is common to many pastoral poems is here resolved in the person of Lady Cartret herself, whose beauty of face is matched by her beauty of character. The poet's primary purpose, however, is not to present the philosophical questions inherent in the pastoral conventions, but to pay tribute to a friend, and we must not fail to recognize the importance of this point.

The significance of the motif of female companionship in Winchilsea's pastoral poems is related to her use of classical and pastoral nomenclature. For the purposes of my discussion I shall use the terms classical and pastoral interchangeably, since Winchilsea appears to have made no distinction between the two traditions in her choice of names.

What's in a name? In some cases, an immensity of meaning, notwithstanding what both Shakespeare and Gertrude Stein have to say about the matter. The high incidence of pastoral and classical names in the poetry of
Anne Finch is certainly suggestive. While the use of such names as Silvia and Theseus for the generic shepherds and nymphs that appear in poems like "The Cautious Lovers" or "A Pastoral Dialogue" is simply convention, the frequency with which she employs classical names for her husband in intimate love poems, for friends in poems of tender affection or admiration, and for fictitious persons in satirical verse, is significant. I would like, then, to suggest some of the benefits that the use of personal names affords her, and to analyze the artistic purposes that these names serve. In short, the focus will again be on the way in which Winchilsea manipulates poetic traditions and techniques to enhance her versatility as a poet.

Certainly among seventeenth-century non-pastoral English lyrics there is ample precedence for the use of classical and pastoral names: Lovelace has his Lucasta and Althea, Herrick his Julia and Silvia and Anthea, and Carew and Jonson both have their Celia. Even among Winchilsea's early contemporaries, the Court Wits, the practice of using pastoral or classical names is not uncommon. In all these instances, however, the names are feminine and appear in love poems with decidedly male personae who are addressing their mistresses. Indeed, as John Harold Wilson observes in The Court Wits of the Restoration: An Introduction, sometimes these names are pseudonyms for
real mistresses (86). Clearly Winchilsea could not identify fully with this tradition, for the obvious reason that she is a woman, writing with a woman's perspective, and her personae are almost always female.

There is, however, another tradition which Winchilsea could identify with, and that is the convention of pastoral friendship. Two of her immediate literary predecessors, Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn, wrote pastoral poems extolling female friendships. Philips, known as "The Matchless Orinda," wrote numerous poems to women which celebrate platonic love and address these friends under pseudonyms. In some of the poems, such as "Friendships Mystery, to my dearest Lucasia" or "To Mrs. M.A. at parting," Philips, like Winchilsea, even uses pastoral names in lyrics that are not cast in the pastoral mode. In Reason's Disciples, Hilda L. Smith comments very briefly on the relationship between the female friendship poems of Katherine Philips and the incipient feminist theme of the desire for escape from the world (155-156). In the example which Smith cites from "Invitation to the Country," Philips writes to Rosania of a rural retreat:

When no distractions doth the soule arrest:
There heav'n and earth open to our view,
There we search nature, and its author too;
Possessed with freedome and a reall state
Look down on vice, on vanity, and fate.
There (my Rosania) will we, mingling souls,
Pitty the folly which the world controuls
And all these Grandeur which ye most do prize
We either can enjoy or will despise.
(Philips, 103-104)

Smith's observations are very suggestive, and she is
correct, I think, in recognizing the feminist implications
both of Philips' sense of connectiveness in her poetic
tributes to women, and also of the relationship of her
friendship poems to the long tradition of pastoral retreat
poems.

Excluding those names which have not yet been iden-
tified or which appear to be fictitious, there are at
least sixteen identifiable persons in Winchilsea's poems
to whom she gave classical or pastoral names. Though the
majority of these are female friends, there are male
acquaintances as well. Furthermore, not all the poems in
which pastoral names appear are poetic tributes to
friends. On the contrary, Winchilsea's use of pastoral
names occurs in various types of poems and for reasons
which are both sophisticated and multivalent. Of signifi-
cance, then, is not what names she chose and which people
she gave them to, but, rather, how the convention of
pastoral names served her artistic needs.

Here, again, Rosenmeyer offers valuable insight.
Commenting on the use of names to establish intimacy, he
offers the following observation:

Contrary to the epic, which underscores the
introduction of its characters by means of
patronymics and references to the land of
birth, pastoral ingenuously scatters names about, on the presumption that everybody--and that includes the listener as well as
the narrator and his characters--surely knows who these people are. (107)

In those pastoral poems that celebrate friendship, Winchilsea does use private, personal names to corroborate
a sense of intimacy between the poet and those either referred to or directly addressed. They function rather like nicknames, which, after all, have always signified a
special relationship between people, whether used by young lovers, adolescent playmates, or those belonging to any
type of teenage group. Even grown men, mirabile dictu, have been known to designate silly appellations for mem-
bbers of their civic organizations and secret fraternal societies.

An additional function of specifically classical names in Winchilsea's friendship poems is that they call
up an entire set of classical values on friendship, much as they do in the honorific poems of Ben Jonson and others
in the Tribe of Ben. In the case of poems by women poets like Winchilsea, Philips, and Behn, placing female
friendship into an ideal mode by recalling classical values may be particularly advantageous in establishing a
legitimacy for female voices.

In the love poems to her husband, it seems likely that Anne chose pastoral names in order to create an ele-
ment of distance when conveying intimate expressions of
love. Even in her early years, her close connections with the aristocracy and, briefly, with the court, as well as her life-long devotion to the Church of England, must have made her keenly aware of the necessity for maintaining propriety, particularly since the very act of writing was itself highly suspect for a woman. We know, for instance, that she was sensitive to the criticism Aphra Behn had endured for writing too freely of passion. In "The Circuit of Appollo," a light-hearted account of a literary contest in which a Paris-like Apollo is asked to choose the best female poet, Winchilsea cannot let stand her superlative praise for Behn (the first English woman to write openly about love and sexuality), without acknowledging that "A little too loosly she writ" (92). And in her prose Preface of 1702, Winchilsea finds it necessary to justify her own poetic treatment of love. Her remarks in the Preface are worth quoting, for they testify to the pressure she must have felt as a woman author:

For the subjects, I hope they are att least innofensive; tho' sometimes of Love; for keeping within those limmits which I have observ'd, I know not why itt shou'd be more faulty, to treat of that passion, then of any other violent excursion, or transport of the mind. Tho' I must con­fesse, the great reservednesse of Mrs. Phillips [Katherine Philips] in this par­ticular, and the prayses I have heard given her upon that account, together with my desire not to give scandal to the most severe, has often discourag'd me from
making use of it, and given me some
regret for what I had writt of that
kind.... (10)

In poems containing the most tender personal
expressions of conjugal love, poems such as "A Letter to
Dafnis," Anne always refers to her husband by a classical
name. The masks of pastoral identity, both for herself
and for her husband, are dramatic; they provide an
artistic restraint and temper any sentimentality. It is
also quite likely that the classical pseudonyms allow her
to be more daring when dealing with sexual passion.

Finally, the use of classical names serves yet
another purpose. In Winchilsea's satirical poems such as
"Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," or in poems such as "The
Cautious Lovers" that express ardent feminist ideas, the
evoking of pastoral names provides a necessary distance
between the poet and her views, a kind of protective con-
cealment of direct authorial responsibility. In these
poems the classical names usually refer to fictitious per-
sons, save for her naming of herself. These masks of
pastoral identity are, then, yet another example of that
technique of indirection which this early feminist used so
frequently and so well.

Many individuals in Winchilsea's poems do not receive
classical names. Often these are people who are acquain-
tances but not close personal friends of hers, and the
poems addressed to them are more formal, highly stylized
tributes than deeply felt expressions of restrained emotion. Among these poems are the ones addressed to people such as Alexander Pope, Mrs. Randolph (an obscure poet), Rev. Mr. Bedford, Mrs. Arrabella Marow, Colonel Baggot, Lady Selena Shirly, Lord March, and Lady Catherine Jones. Sometimes, however, the omission of pastoral names where we might anticipate them serves a sophisticated literary purpose, as in her splendid elegy of intense emotion, "Upon the Death of Sir William Twisden."

There are reasons why the reader might expect to encounter pastoral conventions in this poem. For one thing, Sir Twisden was the great-grandson of the first Countess of Winchilsea, Elizabeth Heneage; hence he was not only someone whom Anne knew well and obviously respected greatly, but he was also a relative of her husband (Reynolds introd. to Poems, xl). Moreover, the poem opens by evoking precisely those images we associate with a pastoral elegy:

Cou'd Rivers weep (as sometimes Poets dream)  
Cou'd neigh'bring Hills our sorrows know,  
And thoughtlesse Flocks, and fading Flowers,  
Droop o're the pastures, and beneath the showers,  
To sympathize with Man, and answer to his Woe....  

(61)

Yet our anticipations are all deflated as the pastoral images collapse upon themselves. If these phenomena of nature could occur (as we have been led to believe by a long tradition of pastoral elegies), then, we are told, we should expect their fulfillment at this time of grief.
But the poet's poignant cry of "Now," echoes in futile repetition: now should the streams become rivers of tears; now should the flocks forget to flourish and the flowers fail to bloom; and now should all of nature spread the doleful news "That Twisden is no more, their Matchlesse Patriot's dead" (62). The extended set of modal auxiliaries which the poet has built up, culminates in a lengthy catalogue of those occurrences of nature which we should experience but never will, for they are impossibilities.

Unlike Milton, whose announcement that Lycidas is dead is followed by tributes and emotional responses from personified flora and assorted watery gods, Winchilsea's announcement of the death is followed by a clear denial of any pathetic fallacy. Nature, we are told, cannot offer any comfort to man. Thus by evoking the pastoral mode Winchilsea creates in the reader a set of expectations which she then subverts to heighten the poignancy of the death.

But oh! in vain, things void of sense, we call,  
In vain, implore the murmuring sound  
Of hollow groans, from underneath the ground;  
Or court the loud laments, of some steep water's fall;  
Of things innaninate, [sic] would force,  
Some share of our undivided grief,  
Whilst Nature (unconcern'd for our relief)  
Persues her settl'd path, her fixt, and steady course,  
Leaving those ills, which Providence allows  
To check our Pleasures, and contract our Brows,  
Freely to act their uncontrouled part,  
Within the center of the human breast.... (62)
This passage reveals much about Winchilsea's attitude toward nature. In addition to recalling many traditional pastoral images, "Upon the Death of Sir William Twisden" also follows in structure many of the conventional divisions that are found in such pastoral elegies as "Lycidas." We have, for example, an invocation of the muse (though Winchilsea's is more an apology for her lines as being but "Th' unskill'd attempts of an inferiour Muse"); expressions of anguish at the loss of a dead friend; a procession of mourners (for Winchilsea more an expression of the grief of others that unites with her own grief); a digression (in stanza 7 she includes one that, like Milton's, centers around a Church which will sorely miss the loss of so great a Christian); and a consolation based upon an affirmation of immortality. Yet, and this is of the utmost significance, Winchilsea does clearly and unequivocally reject those aspects of pastoral elegiac convention that include mournful shepherds and shepherdesses with their flocks and that require all of nature to be drawn into grief for the deceased person. And the reason she defiantly rejects these conventions is because her Augustan sensibilities are in direct conflict with the concept of nature that they embody. That concept of a moralized nature which Winchilsea rejects, was to grow throughout the eighteenth century and to culminate in the spiritualism of William Blake and the Romanticism of
William Wordsworth. It was a concept which, as Albert J. Kuhn defines it in his fascinating and scholarly article, "Nature Spiritualized: Aspects of Anti-Newtonianism," viewed nature as "moral, redeemed, prophetic, indeed spiritual and spiritualizing" (412). And it was a concept antithetical to Winchilsea's own philosophical and theological view of the universe.

After asserting that nature does not reverse her ordinary processes to mourn human loss, Winchilsea continues, in the second stanza of her elegy, to widen the distance between mankind and nature. It is not simply that nature is aloof and indifferent to the suffering of men and women and can offer no comfort. Nature herself, in the face of human suffering, loses all attributes of beauty, calm, and endurance, to the extent that these attributes are dependent upon human perceptions of them. The state of mind so influences one's perceptions, Winchilsea avers, that sorrow can reduce all of nature to desolation: the ancient flood of Noah is renewed, as "All seems to dye, with a departed Friend,/ The Earth unpeopl'd seems, and all again is drown'd."

The absence of classical names and the rejection of the pastoral concept of a nature in sympathy with humanity, serve in this poem to heighten the sense of personal anguish. In understanding Winchilsea's repudiation of a spiritualized nature, however, we must not neglect to
acknowledge that "Upon the Death of Sir William Twisden" still retains many ties with the pastoral elegiac tradition. In addition to the structural similarities to Milton's "Lycidas" which were noted above, the poem also has much in common with Edmund Spenser's "Astrophel."

First, both the Twisden elegy and "Astrophel" are essentially biographical, concerned with recalling the qualities of a deceased friend. Winchilsea emphasizes the personal attributes of Sir Twisden: his patriotic service to his country, his exemplary courtly behavior, his Christian piety, and his great knowledge, particularly in antiquarian studies. He is praised as a lover of the arts, but Winchilsea does not expound, as Milton does, on the nature of poetry and her own commitment to the craft. Similarly, Spenser eulogizes Sir Philip Sidney for his personal traits: he was a patriotic Englishman, a brave soldier, a skilled huntsman and athlete, and a faithful mate. And with the exception of a single brief reference to Sidney's being a poet (180, 67-68), no mention is made of art. As Richard Mallette observes in Spenser, Milton, and Renaissance Pastoral, rather than enunciating "truths on the nature of life, death, and immortality," Spenser avoids these issues in "Astrophel" and instead "concentrates on setting forth a pattern of manly perfection in the figure of his subject" (137)--a description which applies just as fittingly to Winchilsea's own
Second, these elegies express profound personal grief, rather than of a general invective against death or a stylized lamentation for the loss of another creative human spirit. And at the center of both poems is the poet's emotional response to the death. Spenser declares directly his deep personal affection for Astrophel: "The dolefulst beare that euer man did see,/ Was Astrophel, but dearest vnto mee" (183, ll. 149-150). And Winchilsea similarly describes with poignant analogies her "anxious greif, pathetick thoughts" (67, l. 186). Both poets, moreover, use parenthetical asides to convey personal distress.

Other than structural differences, then, the only major element that marks "Astrophel" as different from Winchilsea's elegy (and I am considering "Astrophel" without its appended "Dolefull Lay of Clorinda,"4), is that the rural setting, the classical names, and the traditional pastoral portrayal of a sympathetic nature are all rejected by Winchilsea. And the philosophical reasons for this rejection lie at the very heart of her concept of nature.

We have seen how in poem after poem Winchilsea repeatedly uses the pastoral tradition as an enabling device for artistic freedom. Here I wish to examine the way in which a simple pastoral lyric develops a powerful
political statement through the transposition of Arcadian elements with modern ones, a device Winchilsea uses for humorous effects in "On Lady Cartret drest like a shepherdess" and in "Alcidor." In "The Change," written very shortly after the revolution of 1688, pastoral conventions become a vehicle for the politicization of Winchilsea's public voice. That is, through use of the pastoral mode, she is able to express her opposition to contemporary political events in a way that might not otherwise have been possible for her. (After the Bloodless Revolution, as was noted in chapter two, both Anne and Heneage faced great personal danger for their political views; Heneage was even briefly arrested and charged with treason.)

"The Change" is a bitter poem in which Arcadia is transformed by the recent upheavals in English politics. At the opening of the poem we are presented with the vision of a desolate Arcadia, its fruitfulness and lush beauty bespoiled by thinly-veiled allusions to Restoration politics and the overthrow of the Stuart monarchy. Images of devastation are presented in a stanzaic progression that builds to a grim climax.

The poem opens with an apostrophe to a pastoral river now almost completely dried up. "What Nymph, or Swain, will near thee lie?" the persona/speaker asks (84). The water imagery developed in this stanza is of two kinds:
the life-sustaining, refreshing water of the river, which can no longer either supply fish or quench the thirst of shepherds' flocks, and the mournful tears of the stream, which hide amidst the rocks.

In the second stanza it is the sun that is addressed, and just as the Arcadian river has dried up, so, too, the Arcadian sun has disappeared. Only clouds remain as a permanent darkness covers the land, and all the imagery emphasizes that now the sun can supply neither light nor heat.

The third stanza focuses on some unidentified lofty structure which lies in the midst of a deserted meadow. Perhaps emblematic of man's architectural achievements and the hopes that even simple, primitive civilizations have for permanence, this mysterious building is now decaying with the ravages of time and frost—further symptoms of the collapse of the Golden Age. There are intimations of its previous glorious days, when it supplied shelter, "soft Nights," and "cheerful Days," but now it is left to rot with the earth for its tomb.

All the imagery of the preceding stanzas is united in the final stanza in a culminating apostrophe to Man. As the stanza opens, the poet, who has earlier addressed the River, the Sun, and the lofty Structure, now turns to Man, warning him that his fate is to be the same as theirs:

No Love, sown in thy prosp'rous Days,
Can Fruit in this cold Season raise:
No Benefit, by thee conferr'd,
Can in this time of Storms be heard.
All from thy troubl'd Waters run;
Thy stooping Fabrick all Men shun.
All do thy clouded Looks decline,
As if thou ne'er did'st on them shine. (85)

The images all come together here in deepening levels of symbolic meaning. The river that once ran through Arcadia is here the troubled waters that run through the heart of the English citizen. The lofty structure is the stooping fabric of the troubled man himself, his bodily frame. And the sunless plains of Arcadia are the clouded looks on his sunless face. Man himself, then, has become a fallen Arcadia, as all images of the previous stanzas combine to define his spiritual desolation. And in the final couplet the speaker urges this wretched man to repair to other worlds where old values might still be found. Arcadian England is now no more, and man can only look forward to a spiritual exile from the government of his country, if not a literal one.

Closely related to the recreation of Arcadia or Eden in pastoral verse is the pastoral concept of time. For Anne Finch, the use of anachronisms fulfills a variety of functions, ranging from the satiric and humorous to the didactic. But her concern with time goes far beyond the occasional juxtaposing of incongruous events or things for a desired effect. We find repeatedly in her verse an awareness of the profound implications of the pastoral mode. The possibilities for philosophical inquiry into
the relationship between Art and Nature, for example, are explored in a number of her poems. Perhaps her most serious attempt at the pastoral, however, is "A Pastoral," subtitled "Between Menalcus and Damon, on the appearance of the Angels to the Shepherds on Our Saviour's Birth Day."

"A Pastoral Between Menalcus and Damon" is cast in the form of a dialogue between two shepherds, one of whom, Damon, was privileged to be present when the angels recently appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of Christ. The context of the poem is decidedly Christian, but the biblical setting is infused with classical elements (such as the reference to Pan, ll. 88-89). The plot is simple. To make the long night on the fields pass more quickly, Menalcus asks Damon to sing him a song, and Damon responds with sublimely beautiful verses describing the appearance of the Heavenly Host. Damon also offers a vision of what the earth will be like once the infant Saviour grows to manhood and fulfills the prophecies. Damon's song elicits such joy and gratitude from Menalcus that he gives the poet/swain a treasured heirloom, an antique bowl he has inherited which once belonged to Joseph, and asks that he repeat his song the following night.

What is most striking about this poem is that the shepherd Damon does for Menalcus precisely what the
pastoral poet does for all of us--he offers a glimpse of Paradise, of a restored Eden. Through the shepherd poet, Winchilsea presents in this poem an epiphany of sorts, in which heaven touched earth briefly and nature and man seemed in perfect harmony with the universe. The tale of Damon and Menalcus becomes, then, a kind of parable about the redemptive powers of the pastoral poet and the function of the pastoral mode.

In his chapter "Pope: Art and Time in the Pastorals" from The Providence of Wit, Martin Battestin examines the importance of the concept of time in the Pastorals of Pope. His remarks are germane to this discussion of Winchilsea's sense of the pastoral:

The essence of pastoral, as Pope understood, is the recognition of the Fall and of our desire to repudiate the wretched legacy of Adam. In this life, in the final stages of Nature's decay and of man's moral decadence, the Golden Age of innocence and of perfect harmony between man and Nature is recoverable only through Art in the formal world of the eclogue itself. At the end of history, the true Golden Age will in fact be restored to men through the redeeming efficacy of Christ, the Logos and Messiah.... (61)

For Pope, then, and for Winchilsea, art is a redemptive force for restoring Eden and is therefore, in Battestin's words, "man's compensation for the Fall" (60). And this vision which the poet offers us, a vision based upon Christian teleology, is brought about in pastoral verse by the poet's defeat of time.
The use of contrast within this poem—a device which is deeply seated in pastoral tradition—serves to heighten the teleological significance of the event which Damon's song celebrates. The opening stanza sets the scene: it is a winter night, the winds are harsh, and it is cold on the plains. Menalcus asks Damon for one of his songs, "To charm the season, and deceive the night" (216), and suggests a biblical story or song such as David would have sung while watching his flocks. The reader is thus set up for the sense of continuity in Christian history when Damon begins his story of the birth of the Redeemer of mankind. The beautiful lyrical descriptions of the approach of the Angelic Host and of the future restoration of an earthly paradise are in direct contrast with the harsh physical setting at the opening of the poem and emphasize that Nature herself will also be a part of the fulfillment of this prophecy:

Angels and God, shall dwell with men below,
And men releas'd, to God, and Angels go.
Peace, to the troubl'd World he shall restore,
And bloody discord, shall prevail no more,
The Lamb, his side by the tam'd Wolff shall lay,
And o're the Aspicks den, the child shall play.
Contending Elements, his Pow'r shall own,
The Winds, shall att his word their rage lay down,
And the chaf't billows, shall forbear to frown.
Th' untun'd Creation (by the fall of man)
Shall move harmoniously as itt began. (219)

At the conclusion of Damon's song it is sunrise, and, as Milton reminds us at the close of "Lycidas," our poet must move his flocks to fresh pastures. It is not Damon,
however, who speaks the final words, but Menalcus, and he closes with praise not of God nor of the Saviour child, but of Damon, the shepherd whose song can create for others such an exalted vision. The poem is about the promised redemption of mankind, but it is also about the artist who through his pastoral song can restore the Golden Age, the renewed Eden. No rural gifts, Menalcus claims, are sufficient to express gratitude to Damon, so he gives him another artistic creation—a bowl said to have belonged to Joseph and passed down to Menalcus through "long inheritance." It is adorned with gold clusters of grapes which, when the bowl is filled, seem "to have produc'd the wine" (220), a wine which is symbolic of the mystical blood of Christ and which, of course, also renews.

The artist, Winchilsea seems to be telling us, is the only one who can recapture repeatedly the vision of Paradise or a restored Eden. And such a vision offers humanity at least temporary relief from the tribulations of life. Thus the poem closes with Menalcus's request that the shepherd poet repeat his song the following night, and his affirmation that then "The season shan't be cold, nor shall itt then be long." The poet, through his art, through her art, is able at least briefly to triumph over both nature and time.
CHAPTER VII

NATURE UNCONCERN'D: NATURE POEMS
AND HUMANISTIC SENSIBILITIES

For over a century and a half, the reputation of Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, has rested almost entirely upon Wordsworth's celebrated remark in his 1815 Supplementary Essay to the Preface of the Lyrical Ballads, that

... excepting the 'Nocturnal Reverie' of Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the 'Windsor Forest' of Pope, the poetry intervening between the publication of the 'Paradise Lost' and 'The Seasons' does not contain a single new image of external nature, and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination.

(III,73)

Wordsworth's praise has been a mixed blessing. It resurrected Winchilsea's name from the obscurity that befell any pre-nineteenth-century English woman who presumed to write. But for nearly two hundred years it has

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distorted the general perception of her as a poet and thwarted proper recognition of the depth, the quality, and the diversity of her poetry. Anne Finch is an eclectic poet who was thoroughly in touch with her times. Her genius lies in her remarkable ability to adapt the literary traditions of her Augustan society so as to develop her own individual talent and maintain her integrity as a woman poet. It is therefore crucial that the still dominant image of her as a nature poet be placed within a proper literary context.

Wordsworth's remark has set the tone for critics, anthologists, and literary historians throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century. It has caused Winchilsea to be analyzed, anthologized, and categorized almost exclusively as a nature poet and precursor of Wordsworthian Romanticism. Edmund Gosse, for example, who discovered the unpublished folio manuscript of her poems in 1884, heralds her as a misplaced poet whose "temper was . . . foreign to the taste of her own age" and who was possibly "the first of the new romantic school" (History of Eighteenth Century Literature, 35-36). Myra Reynolds declares in The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760 that Winchilsea "delicately foreshadowed tastes that ruled in the romanticism of a century later" (152),
and in her lengthy introduction to the still-standard edition of Winchilsea's poems, Reynolds makes repeated comparisons between Winchilsea and Wordsworth, declaring some of her verses to be "exactly Wordsworthian in substance and mood" and maintaining that "Wordsworth's strong interest in Lady Winchilsea is justified by the law of affinities" (cxxxii). Similarly, Hugh L'Anson Fausset prefaces the substantial representation of Winchilsea verse in his 1930 Everyman's edition of Minor Poets of the Eighteenth Century with the following assertion:

But it is perhaps in her attitude to Nature that we recognize best the early signs of a craving which, in spite of Pope, was to grow more and more imperative as the century advanced, until it became a dominating impulse in the Romantic movement. (xvi)

Literary historians have followed suit. Henry A. Beers's 1898 A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century refers to "a marked romantic accent" in some of Winchilsea's verse (61). The 1932 Oxford Companion to English Literature, compiled and edited by Paul Harvey, devotes only four sentences to Anne Finch, one of which informs us that "Wordsworth found affinities in some of her work" (849). And Martin S. Day, in his 1963 History of English Literature, 1660-1837, categorizes Winchilsea under the heading "Nature Poets" and discusses her, along with James Thomson, as a poet who tended to
"the specific and individualized nature experience, emotionally perceived" (130). In short, with the notable exception of Reuben A. Brower's 1945 article, "Lady Winchilsea and the Poetic Tradition of the Seventeenth Century," it is only with the recent scholarship of a few feminist critics that the de-Romanticizing of Winchilsea has begun and that poems other than her nature ones are receiving some attention.

Moreover, many anthologists, as if believing that all eighteenth-century roads lead to Wordsworth, limit their inclusion of Winchilsea poems to a few atypical ones containing images of "external nature." Even a standard anthology such as Bredvold, McKillop, and Whitney's *Eighteenth Century Poetry & Prose* (first issued as part of the Bernbaum Poetry and Prose series) contains only "To the Echo," "The Bird," "The Tree," "To the Nightingale," and "A Nocturnal Reverie." And George Benjamin Woods opens his *English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement* with these four poems (under the ambiguous nomenclature of "pre-Romantic"): "The Tree," From "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat," "To the Nightingale," and "A Nocturnal Reverie."

The misjudgment in representing such a richly diverse poet as Winchilsea as a nature poet and Romantic precursor should be obvious. Of the two hundred and thirty-three poems in the Winchilsea canon, about half a dozen are
devoted primarily to descriptions of external nature, and these, with the exception of "A Nocturnal Reverie" and "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat," are not among her better poems. Yet invariably, save for some recent feminist collections noted earlier, these are always the poems included in standard anthologies.¹ What is doubly ironic, is that under close examination, even these few poems prove to be far more Augustan than Wordsworth's comments might lead us to suppose. "A Nocturnal Reverie," her most widely anthologized poem since the eighteenth century, is a case in point.²

There is much in "A Nocturnal Reverie" to recommend it as Romantic. The setting is rustic, dark, and secluded, and when the persona begins speaking of her serenity in the midst of nature, one senses all the proper movements for some Wordsworthian recollected tranquility. The poem recalls the opening scene in Act V of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice in which Lorenzo and Jessica exchange a series of imaginative musings on the beauty of nature, each beginning with the phrase "In such a night." Winchilsea's poem, however, is something of a tour de force, its entire fifty lines consisting of a single sentence constructed around clauses that begin, "In such a night...when...." The descriptions are specific and contain numerous visual, auditory, and olfactory images of nature. Moreover, the scene is a nocturnal one,
with night transforming the appearance of everything, so
that the imagination of the reader is fully engaged. All
is thinly veiled, clouded, and hidden in shadows,
suggesting an air of Gothic mystery that would appeal to
the Romantic sensibility:

In such a Night, when passing Clouds give place,
Or thinly vail the Heav'ns mysterious Face;
When in some River, overhung with Green,
The waving Moon and trembling Leaves are seen;

When darken'd Groves their softest Shadows wear,
And falling Waters we distinctly hear;
When thro' the Gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient Fabric, awful in Repose....

(268-269, ll. 7-10, 23-26)

There are other suggestions of Wordsworthian
Romanticism in the poem as well. The mood is reflective.
Nature, the poet tells us, can renew the weary spirit, can
calm the confusion and rage which torment the human soul.
Furthermore, the dichotomy between the social world and
the natural world is emphasized. Nature's serenity is
marred by man: the Kine are able to feed contentedly only
because they are temporarily "unmolested", and all of
nature's creatures enjoy their "shortliv'd Jubilee" only
"whilst Tyrant-Man do's sleep" ((269). Lastly, there is
even the suggestion that nature possesses transcendental
attributes: "But silent Musings urge the Mind to seek/
Something, too high for Syllables to speak." But these
very lines, when taken in the context of what follows
them, demonstrate the essential difference between
Wincilsea and Wordsworth:

Till the free Soul to a compos'dness charm'd,
Finding the Elements of Rage disarm'd,
O'er all below a solemn Quiet grown,
Joys in th' inferiour World, and thinks it like
her Own.... (270)

A comparison of these lines with the conclusion of
Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from
Recollections of Early Childhood" is revealing. While the
"meanest flower that blows" may cause Wordsworth to have
"Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,"
Wincilsea's response to nature is quite different.
Wordsworth is inspired to "thoughts" that turn inward and
seek meaning within himself, whereas Wincilsea, as a
devout Anglican, is inspired to seek beyond herself, to
look to heaven for meaning. Moreover, Wincilsea is not
dealing with Nature in a generalized sense, but nature at
a specific time and place. It is not any grove, any
meanest flower, that can bring relief from life's
pressures and a chance to refresh oneself: it is this par-
ticular time and place--a night such as this in this very
setting. And the poet is well aware that such retreats
from life's cares are temporary at best ("Till Morning
breaks, and All's confus'd again," l. 48). In such
moments of respite, Wincilsea tells us, she seeks to
speak "Syllables" that will articulate her sense of a
divinity beyond herself, but such musings cannot be
expressed. Unlike Wordsworth, she does not expound a
transcendental concept of Nature; rather, she defines a human experience with nature at a time and place. And hers is a thoroughly orthodox and rational approach. One may be seduced into a false illusion that man and nature are one; one even, "in such a Night," occasionally "Joys in th' inferiour World, and thinks it like her Own." But the soul's source is elsewhere, and Winchilsea knows ultimately that the world of nature is but an "inferiour" world. Hers is, after all, an Augustan sensibility, not a Romantic one.

It is notable that in his Supplement to the Preface, what Wordsworth specifically comments on in his praise of Winchilsea is, in addition to her fresh images of external nature, her "feelings" and "genuine imagination," though of course the concept of these terms, as Wordsworth understood them, would have been foreign to Winchilsea. Wordsworth believes that Nature is able to merge with the soul and infuse one with a transcendent spirit. For him, however, it is not simply that Nature is invested with value. In Anne Finch's poetry there are moral implications to Nature as well, as we have seen in some of her pastoral poems, such as "The Change." The difference is that for her there is an irreconcilable dualism that exists between man and Nature, so that Nature and the human soul remain two separate realities. The dualism that Ann Messenger finds inherent in the argument of "To
the Nightingale" is present in all of Winchilsea's nature poems, including "A Nocturnal Reverie." Sometimes, Winchilsea believes, it is possible for one's reasoning powers to see a correspondence between Nature and human acts. For Wordsworth, however, as for Shaftesbury and his followers, it is not reason but imagination which links man to Nature. As Earl Wasserman notes in his article "Nature Moralized," in the analogy between man and Nature which Shaftesburian Platonism espoused, "the major human faculty is not reason, but imagination . . ." (46). Belief in the unifying power of the imagination as opposed to reason, is one of the distinguishing features of Shaftesbury's philosophy and markedly distinguishes the Shaftesburian view of Nature from the view of Winchilsea and her fellow Augustan humanists.

There are other characteristics of "A Nocturnal Reverie" which mark it as decidedly Augustan rather than Shaftesburian. As with all Winchilsea's nature and pastoral verse, it is men and women, not Nature in the abstract, who are central to the scene. At the center of the poem is a lovely, brief tribute to her friend, Lady Salisbury, whose beauty and virtue withstand "the Test of every Light" (l. 20). Moreover, the poem's conclusion is a reminder that daylight brings a return to everyday activities and a renewed pursuit of those often illusive but nevertheless attainable joys of life: "Our Cares, our
Toils, our Clamours are renew'd,/ Or Pleasures seldom reach'd, again pursu'd."

There are yet other touches of an Augustan sensibility that permeate this nature poem. The careful control and sense of containment which the heroic couplets supply, remind us again that here are no ecstatic soarings of a free Romantic spirit, but the rational, moralistic reflections of a thoroughly Augustan humanist. There is also humor in the poem, and even social satire. The glow-worms are likened to "trivial Beauties" who similarly wait for twilight to appear, realizing that it is their most favorable hour to shine. Even the quasi-Gothic description quoted above is immediately undercut by a touch of whimsy and mild self-irony. An unidentified figure, "Whose stealing Pace, and lengthen'd Shade we fear," appears upon the darkened pasture, but reality checks the rampant and foolish imagination of the frightened sojourners, for they recognize that the threatening intruder is but a harmless grazing horse, noisily chewing forage.

All nature can do, Anne believes, is provide a temporary retreat from the world so that the spirit can renew itself. And what that ideal retreat should be is the subject of another of her well-known nature poems, "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat." Though flawed by the inclusion of a lengthy irrelevant passage (73-74, ll. 157-202), the poem contains many instances of what
Wordsworth referred to as the poet's eye being "steadily fixed upon his object." Reuben Brower has already noted its relationship to Marvell's "The Garden" and the tradition of retirement poetry (71-75), but his discussion is limited primarily to examination of a few metaphysical images in Winchilsea's poem. There are, in fact, other seventeenth-century strains here than solely the metaphysical ones with which Brower is concerned. In its celebration of simplicity and naturalness, as well as in its style, it bears similarities to Robert Herrick's verse (a similarity I have noted elsewhere in other poems). Winchilsea's debt to Herrick is especially evident in the following passage from "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat":

Cloath me, Fate, tho' not so Gay;
Cloath me light, and fresh as May:
In the Fountains let me view
All my Habit cheap and new;
Such as, when sweet Zephyrs fly,
With their Motions may comply;
Gently waving, to express
Unaffected Carelessness:
No Perfumes have there a Part,
Borrow'd from the Chymists Art....

(70-71, ll. 64-73)

When placed alongside the final lines of Herrick's "Delight in Disorder," the resemblance is striking:

A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat;
A careless shoestring, in whose tie
I see a wild civility;
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part. (41)
Both poems convey a similar idea: Winchilsea would have her garments yield to the breezes in much the way that Herrick would have his lady's clothing yield to the movement of her body, and both poets scorn the cosmetic arts in preference for naturalness. Both poems also contain a tone that is distinctively light and charming and that reflects simplicity in style. The meter and rhyme of the last four lines in the Winchilsea passage quoted above, recall the closing lines of "Delight in Disorder," with four words in those lines echoing key words in the Herrick passage: waving, Carelesness, Part, and Art.

As valuable as Brower's article is in recognizing the seventeenth-century genealogy of some of Winchilsea's verse, his approach is limited by minute analyses of isolated metaphysical images that ignore the thematic content of her poetry. Thus he disregards the fact that moralistic and rational poems of rural retirement are typically Augustan (Pope's _Pastorals_, for example). His eagerness to present Anne Finch as a metaphysical offspring rather than an early Augustan is evident in his biased readings of her verse. Her superb elegy on the death of Sir William Twisden, for instance, he dismisses as "typical of the would-be philosophic poetry of the eighteenth century" (77). Indeed, "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat" may be read as a conscious refutation of Marvell's theme in "The Garden."
While both poems are reflective, Winchilsea's, unlike Marvell's, describes a real retreat that is truly a part of the natural world, rather than an abstract meditative state. For her, moreover, nature provides an object lesson, an understanding of reality that Marvell's poem lacks. Thus a withered oak becomes for her a *memento mori*, and the temporary retreat, as in "A Nocturnal Reverie," provides the means for renewing her spiritual self and for viewing both "the Height, from whence she came," and the Paradise that awaits her. But the principal way in which her poem differs from Marvell's is in her sense of society. Winchilsea's poem is thoroughly peopled. In ll. 8-21, for instance, she describes what she is retreating from and what sort of people she wants to join her, and ll. 164-201 contain a lengthy passage in praise of friendship and a tribute to her friend Arminda, whom she would have join her. Furthermore, in ll. 104-105 Winchilsea appears to be directly answering Marvell, who, in the eighth stanza of "The Garden," rounds off his description of paradise with this startling assertion:

    But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
    To wander solitary there:
    Two paradises 'twere in one
    To live in paradise alone. (60-63)

In her description of her retreat, Winchilsea also evokes the Garden of Eden, but her paradise is incomplete without a mate:
Give me there (since Heaven has shown
It was not Good to be alone)
A Partner suited to my Mind,
Solitary, pleas'd and kind;
Who, partially, may something see
Preferr'd to all the World in me;
Slighting, by my humble Side,
Fame and Splendor, Wealth and Pride. (104-111)

And the conclusion of this section she devotes to praise of human love as the gift Heaven has given to bring man closer to God.

For Winchilsea, then, it is human beings that provide the spiritual continuity and depth to one's life, even in a rustic retreat. For this reason, the men and women in her poems seem always to be set against a temporary background of nature, rather than within it. In her view of nature, as with other philosophical issues, Anne Finch belongs solidly in the company of Swift, Pope, and the other Augustan humanists of the early eighteenth century, and not with the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Graveyard School writers, or the early Romantics. Indeed, as Paul Fussell notes, and Earl Wasserman noted earlier, the awareness of a dichotomy between nature and man's attempts to live a virtuous existence, is one of the principal characteristics that mark the Augustan humanists as an anachronistic minority reacting against their own age.4
No discussion of Lady Winchilsea's nature poetry should ignore the influence upon her of the early eighteenth-century movement in gardening, for here, again, her Augustan sensibilities are evident. There has been much recent scholarship on English gardening, including Peter Martin's *Pursuing Innocent Pleasures: The Gardening World of Alexander Pope*, and Robert P. Maccubbin and Peter Martin's *British and American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century: Eighteen Illustrated Essays on Garden History*, which contains Morris R. Brownell's comprehensive survey of current thought regarding the history of British landscaping. None of these studies, however, is as eloquent as Maynard Mack's *The Garden and the City*, or as provocative as Martin Battestin's discussion in *The Providence of Wit* of the theological basis for supporting the gardening movement (40-57).

Maynard Mack warns us that the Augustan sense of "natural," which implied being "not oppressively trammeled or corseted by man, yet always conspicuously responding...to human pleasure and human need" (56), is different from the later Romantic sense of the word. The Augustan humanist's aesthetic views had a metaphysical rationale. God was seen as the Supreme Gardener, and, as Martin Battestin reminds us, the artist/gardener who imitates the order and harmony in nature, was therefore fulfilling a function that was as much religious as it was
aesthetic. The ideal, then, was for the gardener to bring nature into harmony with art, or, as Battestin describes it,

...not to remake Nature in man's image,...but to enhance and humanize her--bringing the terrain which is the immediate setting for a man's life appreciably closer to Nature's own benign ideals of discipline and profusion, of uniformity amidst diversity." (49)

Winchilsea frequently expresses the Augustan humanist's belief that redemptive value lies not with nature, but with man's artistic creations. Thus it is that those poems of hers which deal with gardening, ultimately praise not so much the gardens as the gardener. In "Upon my Lord Winchilsea's Converting the Mount in his Garden to a Terras," for example, Anne honors Charles, third Earl of Winchilsea and nephew to her husband, whose new landscaping of Eastwell both refined nature and corrected the aesthetic errors of his ancestors. In his wisdom, the young Charles "Removes a Mountain, to remove a fault," a mountain which long had stood "concealing all the beautys of the Plaine" (34). The innovations of Charles are bold, and, as Anne describes them, they reveal the sense of vast design that was to become the hallmark of such renowned eighteenth-century landscape artists as Capability Brown:

So lies this Hill, hew'n from itts rugged height,  
Now levell'd to a Scene of smooth delight,  
Where on a Terras of itts spoyleys we walk,  
And of the Task, and the performer talk;  
From whose unwearied Genius Men expect  
All that can farther Pollish or Protect;
To see a sheltring grove the Prospect bound,
Just rising from the same prolifick ground,
Where late itt stood....  (34)

In designing the gardens and remodeling the house, Charles has employed those same principles of design which Battestin describes. Winchilsea writes that "gracefull simetry, without is seen,/ And Use, with Beauty are improv'd within" (35). Yet throughout the poem, and again in its conclusion, the poet stresses that her intent is primarily to honor the lord of this estate. It is he, after all, whose art has controlled nature and brought it into harmony with Augustan aesthetic principles, using form and reason to impose order upon his world.

"To the Honorable the Lady Worsley at Longleate" is another honorific poem whose praise of an estate's gardens similarly becomes a tribute to the gardener who designed them. And here, again, it is not the mansion which is singled out for description, but the grounds of the estate, for it is they which most fully reflect the lord of this estate as an artist/creator. The poem is addressed to Lady Worsley, Anne's friend and recent hostess, and it contains much hyperbolic praise of her. But it is the laudatory verses to Lady Worsley's father, the Viscount Weymouth (formerly Baron Thynne), which are the true nexus of the poem. Viscount Weymouth has laid out the gardens in Dutch fashion, and the descriptive passages of the flowered labyrinths, terraced landscapes,
and Italian-style fountains and cascades, are a tribute to his genius. He has "th' original improv'd," and by doing so, has made of this lovely setting a Garden of Eden.

But, the poet writes, Paradise did not get its name from the beauty and fruitfulness of external nature, but from Adam and Eve, "th' accomplish'd Pair/ That gave the Title and that made itt fair" (55). Thus, what makes a garden a paradise, what gives meaning to nature, is not the physical beauty or lushness of the place, but the moral and spiritual attributes of the men and women who inhabit it. And that is why, whether in the gardens of Longleate or the gardens of Eden, "'Twas Paradise in some expanded Walk/ To see Her motions, and attend his Talk" (55).

It is not Nature as transcendental vehicle or philosophical abstraction but people who are at the heart of Winchilsea's poetry. As we have seen in a number of her pastoral and nature poems, human beings are always in the midst of her "natural" world. She is not a "pre-Romantic" or a Shaftesburian Platonist, but an Augustan humanist, and her strong, traditional Anglican faith infuses all her poetry, whether it be a poem such as "Upon the Death of Sir William Twisden," which draws its structure and imagery from the pastoral elegiac tradition, or a poem such as "A Nocturnal Reverie," which has at least some links with later eighteenth and early nineteenth-century nature poetry.
CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUALIZ'D AND GAY: MELANCHOLY AND THE RELIGIOUS SENSIBILITIES OF WINCHILSEA

It is a testimony to the vagaries of literary fashion that "The Spleen," the superb Pindaric ode for which Anne Finch was best known in her lifetime and throughout the eighteenth century, should be almost totally ignored since that time. She herself would undoubtedly have found it ironic that a remark of Wordsworth's and a few atypical nature poems would form the cornerstone of her literary reputation for nearly two hundred years, while many of her greatest poems would be buried in the rubble of neglected Augustan philosophical and didactic poetry. Even today, though a few critics such as Katherine Rogers and Ann Messenger have begun to examine eighteenth-century women authors in the light of feminist criticism, interest is still primarily focused on Winchilsea's nature poems or on those poems that deal overtly with women's issues. The
excellent essay on Winchilsea that appears in Messenger's recently published collection, His & Hers: Essays in Restoration & 18th-Century Literature, for example, concentrates almost exclusively on "To the Nightingale." And the comprehensive essay by Rogers in Gilbert and Gubar's Shakespeare's Sisters, "Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea: An Augustan Woman Poet," explores feminist themes in such poems as "Unequal Fetters" and "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," while also focusing upon such nature poems as "To the Nightingale," "A Nocturnal Reverie," and "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat." In short, Winchilsea's didactic poems remain essentially ignored.

Winchilsea, as I have said earlier, is an eclectic poet and therefore cannot be categorized by a single poem or group of poems. Nevertheless, "The Spleen" is representative, both in style and content, of a large body of her poetry. It contains several of her most serious recurrent topics and thematic approaches, including a general analysis of melancholy and its social and personal implications, an expression of Anglican faith and Royalist politics, a satirical criticism of contemporary society, a defense of the right of women to become authors, and a concern with the function of poetry and, more specifically, with her own role as a poet. "The Spleen" also demonstrates that though her seventeenth-century literary roots are strong, the eighteenth-century poetic strains in
her verse are even stronger and place her solidly with such conservative Augustan humanists as Swift and Pope.

"The Spleen," was recognized during Winchilsea's lifetime as one of her major poems. It was first published anonymously in 1701 in Charles Gildon's *A New Collection of Poems for Several Occasions* and was reprinted in 1709, together with John Pomfret's "The Prospect of Death," under the title *The Spleen: A Pindarique Ode, By a Lady. Together with a Prospect of Death: A Pindarique Essay* (Reynolds Ed., Poems, 416). It was reprinted numerous times, being apparently the most popular of all the poems in her 1713 collection. Nicholas Rowe, having seen the poem in manuscript, admired it greatly, and, as I have noted earlier, the evidence for its continued popularity throughout the eighteenth century is strong.

The tradition of melancholy literature has roots in the Renaissance and is endemic throughout the seventeenth century as well, though one might be likely, because of such poems as Robert Blair's "The Grave" or Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," to associate melancholic lyricism solely with the eighteenth century. As Amy Reed notes in *The Background of Gray's Elegy: A Study in the Taste for Melancholy Poetry, 1700-1751*, "The eighteenth century... inherited from the seventeenth, a decided taste for poems of melancholy, and a considerable
body of poetry which satisfied that taste" (78). The publication in 1621 of Robert Burton's three volume study, The Anatomy of Melancholy, created further interest in the malady and helped stimulate its increased popularity as a literary idea. From John Donne's Corona of sonnets to the Deity and Milton's "Il Penseroso" to numerous poems by Henry Vaughan and Abraham Cowley, melancholy lyrics are evident throughout the seventeenth century. In the latter part of that century and the early eighteenth century, however, such melancholy themes as solitude, retirement, meditation, grief, melancholy, the vanity of human life, sleep, and death became particularly common in English poetry.¹

Winchilsea has a number of poems typical of melancholic poetry of the period. The images that one finds in her nature poem "A Nocturnal Reverie," for example, are common to melancholic verse: moonlight, an owl's screech, darkened groves and distant caverns, falling waters, winds, ancient ruins, and shadows that cast an eerie gloom over the entire isolated scene. The following lines from Thomas Warton the Younger's "Pleasures of Melancholy" contain, in fact, all of the above images:

Oh lead me, black-browed Eve, to solemn glooms
Congenial with my soul, to cheerless shades,
To ruined seats, to twilight cells and bowers,
Where thoughtful Melancholy loves to muse,
Her favourite midnight haunts . . . .
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Where through some western window the pale moon
Pours her long-levelled rule of streaming light;
Where sullen sacred silence reigns around,
Save the lone screech-owl's note, whose bower is built
Amid the mouldering caverns dark and damp,
And the calm breeze, that rustles in the leaves
Of flaunting ivy . . .

(Wichilsea's affinity to her Augustan contemporaries
has been emphasized numerous times in this study; one must
not forget, then, that the youthful Pope wrote melancholic
verse, including "Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate
Lady" and "Eloisa to Abelard." Indeed, the description of
Eloisa's surroundings, though more grim and somber than
anything in Winchilsea's poem, is nevertheless evocative
of many melancholic images in "A Nocturnal Reverie":

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heav'nly-pensive, contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing melancholy reigns. . .

But o'er the twilight groves, and dusky caves,
Long-sounding isles, and intermingled graves,
Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence, and a dread repose:
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.

(II: 319, 325, ll. 1-3, 163-170)

It is not only the imagery of some of Winchilsea's
melancholic poems that is common to contemporary meditative verse, but also her themes and subject matter. "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat," for example, bears resemblance to Thomas Parnell's "Hymn to Contentment" and John Pomfret's "The Choice" (1700), a retirement poem
which Samuel Johnson declared was "the composition often-
est perused in the English language" and which went
through four editions during the first year of its publi-
cation (Lives of the English Poets, I, 302). Similarly,
the vanity of life theme and the orthodox treatment of
Judgment Day in her "All is Vanity" ode occur in Matthew
Prior's lengthy "Solomon on the Vanity of the World," as
well as in Robert Blair's "The Grave," and Edward Young's
"The Last Day" and "Night Thoughts."

While the Christian consolation for death in a poem
like "Night Thoughts" or "The Grave" is compatible with
Winchilsea's theology, however, the pensiveness and moody
contemplation that mark these poems is antithetical to
much of her verse. Winchilsea never cultivates in her
poetry a melancholic mood as Thomas Warton does when he
asks to be led "to solemn glooms/ Congenial with my soul."
Moreover, those poems of hers that do evidence gloom, do
not invite sadness for its own sake, but, rather, have
external causes for their melancholic mood. A number of
such poems, including "To Death," "An Invocation to
Sleep," "A Song on Greife," "All is Vanity," and "On
Affliction," were written within a year or two following
the 1688 Revolution and reflect the great anxiety and
upheaval experienced by Anne and her husband. Often these
poems, while expressing a generalized grief and sense of
loss, have a subtext that is highly politicized.
One poem written during this period which does pertain specifically to her affliction with spleen is "Ardelia to Melancholy." The opening lines, relying heavily upon martial imagery, plunge Ardelia into an adversarial role with her malady, a position she maintains throughout the poem, despite her dramatic declaration that she will resist its force no longer:

At last, my old inveterate foe,
No opposition shalt thou know.
Since I by struggling, can obtain
Nothing, but encrease of pain. . . . (15)

All the remedies she has applied are useless, she maintains, including mirth, music, friendship, and, finally, her own poetic impulse; her "dusky, sullen foe" overcomes all. Accepting realistically that the malady will remain with her throughout her life and will make her passage "sad, and slow," Ardelia declares that only heaven can set her free. The poem concludes, then, with the metaphor of herself as a conquered fort, ravaged and decaying. Yet even in this very personal poem—which, incidentally, she chose not to publish during her lifetime, despite the popularity of her melancholic poem "The Spleen"—there is an objectivity that balances the poem's intense emotion.

One marked way in which "The Spleen," like "Ardelia to Melancholy," differs from much melancholic poetry of the period is that Winchilsea neither wallows in self-pity
nor relinquishes all responsibility for her own misfortunes and afflictions. Never reluctant to fix blame upon society for its ills, Anne is nevertheless cautious, even in her most satirical verse, to remind others and herself that life is a continuous struggle for self-control. A poem that does share much with Winchilsea's "The Spleen," however, is Matthew Green's poem of the same name, first published in 1737 following his death and undoubtedly greatly indebted to its predecessor.

Green's "The Spleen," written in the form of an epistle to his friend Mr. Cuthbert Jackson, sets forth in octosyllabic couplets the methods he has devised "In stormy world to live serene" (Fausset 210, 1. 42). Like Winchilsea, he confronts the spleen as a detested affliction rather than an attitude congenial with his soul. And some of the remedies he applies to "cure the mind's wrong bias" (89) are those that she also applies: mirth, music, and the company of good friends. Moreover, Green's reliance on reason as the ruler of his passions, along with his general sense of self-control, are qualities Winchilsea advocates in "The Spleen," though her orientation seems more overtly grounded in Christian theology than his. Green also distrusts religious enthusiasm and the somber, melancholic attitude of sectarians (280-285), a distrust which Winchilsea vehemently expresses in her poem, as we shall note later.
Green's verses are pleasant and contain an urbane wit combined with a heavy dose of good sense. He does not plumb the depths of personal anguish as Winchilsea does in her poem, nor does he develop the intimacy with the reader that she does. Though himself a splenetic, he maintains a consistent distance with the reader when discussing the ailment, reflecting the same sense of moderation that he advises other splenetics to adopt. Green's manner in his poem is genteel, witty, and at times almost jaunty. And it is quite different from Winchilsea's poetic stance, which is derived, in part, from a complexity of attitudes. It is, finally, a matter of tone that most markedly separates Winchilsea's poem from Green's.

One must acknowledge, then, that Anne's melancholic poems share much in common with the melancholic poetry written in England during her lifetime and shortly after her death. But one must also conclude that "The Spleen" is unique among other melancholy poems of the period. One reason for this uniqueness is the individuating quality of its tone. Its intense personal appeal is tempered by a stark realism and a rigorous analytical approach. Winchilsea is here describing what is most difficult to describe, for the spleen is neither a person, place, nor thing; it is a nervous disorder with physiological as well as psychological effects, and for Anne Finch, herself
afflicted with melancholy, it involved considerations that were both intrinsically personal and broadly social. Furthermore, the implications of melancholy for one of Anne's persuasion and intellectual integrity were immense. It was, first of all, an ailment that had complex medical dimensions both in terms of symptoms and treatment. It was also a fashionable disease and as such it had sociological ramifications. It was more likely to afflict women than men, and because of the vade mecum of responses which many, including physicians, had towards this malady, melancholy had decided gender discriminatory implications as well. Moreover, it had religious and political aspects that for the seventeenth-century English citizen were almost inextricably linked to each other. And lastly, for Anne, who felt the debilitating effects of the disease most keenly as a detriment to her writing, melancholy raised issues regarding the nature of the poetic commitment and a woman's right to become a poet.

It is perhaps expedient to begin a discussion of "The Spleen" by putting the malady within its medical context. To begin with, it must be understood that from the Renaissance through much of the eighteenth century, melancholy did not have the simple connotation of sadness or depression that it does today. It was recognized as an ailment traced to black bile, one of the four primary humors; hence "melancholy" means "black bile."² It had,
furthermore, both physical and psychological manifestations, as Robert Burton observes in this explanation of its symptoms from The Anatomy of Melancholy:

For as the body works upon the mind, by his bad humours, troubling the spirits, sending gross fumes into the brain, and so per consequens disturbing the soul, and all the faculties of it,... with fear, sorrow, &c. which are ordinary symptoms of this disease; so, on the other side, the mind most effectually works upon the body, producing by his passions and perturbations miraculous alterations, as melancholy, despair, cruel diseases, and sometimes death itself. (I, 288)

Burton's remarks are of interest not only because the medical authenticity of all the symptoms he describes was still considered valid by the early eighteenth century, but also because each of these symptoms is mentioned by Winchilsea in "The Spleen." 3

The scholarship on medical dimensions of Renaissance and eighteenth-century melancholy is plentiful and comprehensive enough to refute easily the claim by Bridget Gellert Lyons in Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England, that by the early seventeenth century, particularly because of Harvey's discovery in 1628 of the circulation of blood, melancholy became obsolete as a medical category and existed solely as a literary idea (xiv-xv). Most valuable for my purposes here, is John F. Sena's thorough and enlightening article in the 1971 Yearbook of English Studies, "Melancholy in Anne Finch and Elizabeth Carter:
The Ambivalence of an Idea." Sena, who is concerned with analyzing the change that occurred in melancholic poetry during the first half of the eighteenth century, offers a well-documented examination of the medical accuracy of Winchilsea's "The Spleen," citing numerous Restoration and eighteenth-century medical treatises.4 Even if we lacked recent scholarship, however, we have other evidence that the poem is a sound reflection of eighteenth-century medical thought, for Dr. William Stukeley, a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, published the poem in 1723 as an introduction to his medical treatise, Of the Spleen, its description and history, uses and diseases, particularly the Vapors, with their remedy... (Reynolds introd., Poems, xlvi).

To digress for a moment: so inclusive and varied is the list of symptoms to which eighteenth-century physicians readily affixed the diagnosis of melancholy, particularly where women were concerned, that one might be inclined to snicker at the naivety and primitiveness of eighteenth-century medical knowledge. Anyone so inclined, however, might peruse some of the current literature on the controversy surrounding the diagnosis of Pre-menstrual Syndrome. The facile manner in which some physicians today attribute symptoms to PMS that are just as imprecise and numerous as those associated with eighteenth-century melancholy, may similarly raise a chuckle or sneer two
hundred years from now.

Winchilsea's "The Spleen" is a Pindaric ode whose irregular strophic pattern marks the changing movements of the poem and complements its alternating moods. Never was her handling of her craft more subtle, nor her sense of the poetic line more elegant than it is here. As I have already suggested, its tone is distinctive. Winchilsea assumes the poetic stance of a public moralist, a spokes­person for society, while at the same time being inti­mately personal as well. This tone and poetic stance are due, I believe, to the fact that she knew first-hand the anguish of melancholy.

She begins her poem by setting forth some basic general information about melancholy: it is mercurial in nature, assuming, like the sea god Proteus, a variety of shapes. Its symptoms ape those of other illnesses, and its cause remains elusive. The physical signs of the malady are described in imagery from the natural world, but these images are heavily suggestive of emotional states as well: "Now a Dead Sea thou'lt represent,/ A Calm of stupid Discontent,/ Then, dashing on the Rocks wilt rage into a Storm" (248).

Then follows, for the next fifty-five lines, a detailed account of the many symptoms of the malady. Melancholy was known to affect the sensory perceptions: in The Anatomy of Melancholy Burton wrote of splenic victims
that "All their senses are troubled, they think they see, hear, smell, and touch, that which they do not... (I, 442). Winchilsea does not present the symptoms of spleen in random order, however, but arranges them by their impact upon the individual senses, in order to portray the immense inclusiveness of melancholic disorders. The opening images, which describe the varying moods of the splenetic, also suggest a kinesthetic aspect to the disorder. The Dead Sea and the storm hint at the physical stupor and involuntary bodily movements that may accompany melancholy, while the sense of movement, or lack of it, is intensified by the adjectives: "Calm," "stupid," "dashing," and "Trembling." The description of the torpor of fear that may overcome the victim, forms a transition to the next category of senses: the visual.

The psychological manifestations of melancholy were well known to contemporary physicians, and here, again, Winchilsea's descriptions are precise and medically accurate. Insomnia, nightmares, and hallucinations plague the splenic victim:

Thy fond Delusions cheat the Eyes,
Before them antick Spectres dance,
Unusual Fires their pointed Heads advance,
And airy Phantoms rise. (16-19)

Here she introduces a famous Roman melancholic figure, Brutus, whose nocturnal visions at Philippi preceded his downfall at the hands of Octavius. Her reference to
Brutus is effective, particularly since Shakespeare's dramatization of that nocturnal scene is so well-known for its ominous terror. Her choice of Brutus subtly reminds the reader that great persons may be afflicted with spleen, and that it is not only hysterical females who are subject to its disorders. Moreover, Brutus is, or had been, as Mark Antony ironically reminds us in the scene of Julius Caesar's funeral, an "honorable man." But he is also a villain, one who, we remember, was assigned by Dante to the lowest circle of Hell for betraying a friend. There is, then, an aspect of malevolence to him, just as there may be to the malady of melancholy itself if one romanticizes it or fails to struggle against its injurious effects. In the context of the entire poem, particularly in Winchilsea's repudiation of the fashionable association between melancholy and wit and her attack on the Puritan cultivation of melancholic behavior as inimical to religion, the Brutus allusion is particularly apt.

The second stanza, which presents a series of olfactory images to describe the effects of spleen, continues the suggestion that there is something malefic about melancholy. Winchilsea here identifies the malady with Original Sin, claiming that it is not man's body which should be blamed for the disease, but his soul:

Falsly, the Mortal Part we blame
Of our deprest, and pond'rous Frame,
The idea that Original Sin is responsible for illness and bodily decay is standard orthodox theology, but Winchilsea's reminder here intensifies the seriousness of melancholy. Throughout the poem she assails those who falsely represent the malady as desirable or cultivate a melancholic pose for their own self-serving ends. Melancholy is an enemy to honest human relationships, to peaceful domesticity, to all creative impulses, and to true religious sensibilities. It is not, then, something to be glorified, nor should its disorders be feigned by those who think it implies cleverness or genius.

The kinesthetic and visual imagery of the first stanza is followed in the second stanza by a series of olfactory images, and these reinforce the theological point the poet has already made. When man and woman possessed paradise, she writes, all was fragrant, but now melancholy has corrupted Eden. In the most famous lines from the poem, Winchilsea contrasts the perfections of paradise, described earlier, with the fallen Eden of the melancholic:

Now the Jonquille o'ercomes the feeble Brain;
We faint beneath the Aromatick Pain,
Till some offensive Scent thy Pow'rs appease,
And Pleasure we resign for short, and nauseous Base.  (40-43)

The auditory symptoms of melancholy presented in the third stanza are as unpredictable as those affecting the
other senses. The manic depressive stages that plague a splenetic are manifested in whispered fears and sorrows or loud, uncontrollable laughter, and again there is something sinister about the affliction. Under its influence the depressed victim utters malicious gossip based upon neurotic fantasies and the splenic wife becomes churlish and combative with her husband.

The distinctive tone of "The Spleen" is due in part to the fact that the poet knew first-hand the anguish of melancholy. In the fourth stanza, which follows Winchilsea's description of the various symptoms of the malady, she begins her consideration of the social aspects of melancholy. After briefly introducing the first of her several satirical targets, those who pretend to melancholy as a claim to genius or wit, she suddenly becomes subjective and personal. This transition from the objective to the subjective serves a dual purpose within the poem. By letting the reader know of her own affliction, she establishes her credibility as a satirist and social critic for all aspects of the spleen. Moreover, she creates an intimacy with the reader, thereby lending an element of pathos that heightens the seriousness of the poem. The personal passage is worth quoting in full:

O'er me alas! thou dost too much prevail:
I feel thy Force, whilst I against thee rail;
I feel my Verse decay, and my crampt Numbers fall.
Thro' thy black Jaundice I all Objects see,
As Dark, and Terrible as Thee,
My Lines decry'd, and my Employment thought
An useless Folly, or presumptuous Fault:
Whilst in the Muses Paths I stray,
Whilst in their Groves, and by their secret
Springs
My Hand delights to trace unusual Thing,
And deviates from the known, and common way;
Nor will in fading Silks compose
Faintly th' inimitable Rose,
Fill up an ill-drawn Bird, or paint on Glass
The Sov'reign's blurr'd and undistinguish'd Face,
The threatening Angel, and the speaking Ass.

These are powerful lines, poignant and self-revealing, yet free of self-pity or self-deception.
Indeed, they are all the more powerful because of their painful honesty. And aesthetically they are absolutely essential, for they form the nexus, the groin vault of this exquisitely structured poem. In these sixteen lines Winchilsea links together all the various implications of melancholy that for her are at once both highly personal and broadly social. It is no accident that this passage of deeply personal sentiment occurs in a stanza that opens and closes with satire. Her Augustan sense of harmony and proportion extends here to the balance between the individual tormented psyche and the objective rationality of the satirist.

Many of the sensory manifestations of melancholy that were detailed earlier in the poem, come together in the poet's description of her own suffering. The overwhelming totality of the melancholic experience is suggested by its
impact upon the senses. The emotional implosion which the malady inflicts upon her is documented in a flood of concurrent sensory responses that comes close to synaesthesia. She feels melancholy through her entire body as a kinetic force. "I feel" is then repeated, both for emphasis and for transference of response from body to mind. "I feel my Verse decay," writes Winchilsea, indicating a mental response that lies outside of the reasoning faculties. The grammatical construction of this clause implies a painful progression in her distorted and morose view of her own poetry. Her verse does not suddenly appear decayed, but, rather, decays increasingly under the influence of her splenic mood. These neurotic thoughts and the sense of kinesthesia are joined with visual and auditory impressions: all objects are seen through black jaundiced eyes, and she imagines her lines "decry'd" by others. The depression which accompanies melancholy, causes her to experience a sense of futility about her own writing and to imagine that her employment is "thought/ An useless Folly, or presumptuous Fault."

In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, that bible of feminist criticism, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar give an exclusively psychological interpretation to Winchilsea's medical problem. Commenting on the passage quoted above, they write that she fears her wanting to be a writer is "crazy, neurotic, splenic," and that her expression of
fear is a suggestion "that Pope's portrayal of her as the foolish and neurotic Phoebe Clinket had—not surprisingly--driven her into a Cave of Spleen in her own mind" (60-61). Here Gilbert and Gubar miss the point. First, their reference to Pope's supposed spoofing of Winchilsea in Three Hours after Marriage, the play he co-authored with Gay and Arbuthnot, is based upon very spurious evidence (see my chapter two). Not only does the portrait of Phoebe Clinket bear little resemblance to Anne Finch, but also, as I have documented, Pope was a close friend of Lady Winchilsea and her husband and a frequent guest at their home during the period when the play was written and publicly performed at Drury Lane.

More serious is Gilbert and Gubar's misreading of the text of "The Spleen." To disregard the fact that melancholy was recognized by the medical community as an ailment with physical as well as mental symptoms, and to view it solely as a psychosomatic reaction to attacks upon her writing, undercuts the satirical import of her poem and makes of it little more than a piece of confessional verse. Winchilsea did experience prejudice as a woman writer, as her comments in numerous poems indicate. But her concern here is with melancholy's destruction of her self-confidence and its debilitating effects upon her own writing. Her horror at the effects of spleen is due to her awareness that such distorted judgment about her own
verse and about what others think of it, is a paranoia resulting from the illness and runs contrary to reality. She is fully aware of the crippling depression which the spleen brings upon her, and her salvation lies in her uncompromising honesty and her refusal to submit to this malady without a battle. To miss this point is to miss the social criticism and the satirical thrust of the last half of the poem.

Despite the occasional self-deprecating poses and the apologies for her writing (which were in part a matter of convention), the belief in her art and in herself as a writer remained strong throughout Winchilsea's life. Though she was hurt by frequent misogynist attacks and the lampooning of female writers, she never gave in to them. As we have seen in numerous poems, she ardently defends the right of women to become authors, and she never ceased, not even in the final years of her life, to continue writing verse that is forthright, truly reflective of her feminine perspective, and uniquely her own. In the last part of the fourth stanza of "The Spleen" Winchilsea distinguishes between her own poetic impulses ("My Hand delights to trace unusual Things,/ And deviates from the known, and common way") and the meaningless employments which society thinks appropriate for women. Typical of contemporary prejudicial attitudes towards women writers is the following remark from an unsigned essay in The
Spectator (No. 606, October 13, 1714), which appeared just one year following the publication of Winchilsea's small
volume of verse:

What a delightful Entertainment must it be to the Fair Sex, whom their native Modesty, and the Tenderness of Men towards them, exempts from Publick Business, to pass their Hours in imitating Fruits and Flowers, and transplanting all the Beauties of Nature into their own Dress, or raising a new Creation in their Closets and Apartments. How pleasing is the Amusement of walking among the Shades and Groves planted by themselves, in surveying Heroes slain by their Needle, or little Cupids which they have brought into the World without Pain!

This is, methinks the most proper way wherein a Lady can shew a fine Genius, and I cannot forbear wishing, that several Writers of that Sex had chosen to apply themselves rather to Tapestry than Rhime.

In juxtaposing her desires with society's expectations, Winchilsea moves within "The Spleen" from personal considerations back to general social ones, thereby creating a strong irony. She defiantly rejects the pseudo-artistic pursuits traditionally reserved for women, such as painting, tapestry, and embroidery. Not only are the results of these pursuits usually devoid of talent (so that the conventional bird is expectedly "ill-drawn"), but the subjects themselves are trivial: the roses on silk she sarcastically describes as "inimitable," and the "threatning Angel" and "speaking Ass" are obviously ludicrous. There is, furthermore, subtle political irony from this steadfast Royalist in the line referring to "The
Sov'reign's blurr'd and undistinguish'd Face." The ambivalence as to the cause of the "undistinguish'd Face" I take to be intentional; England's reigning monarch at the time this poem was written was still William of Orange, successor to the Finches' beloved, deposed James II.

The remainder of the poem is devoted to more public, social aspects of melancholy. As Winchilsea well knew, the malady was too serious an affliction to be taken lightly. She therefore has no sympathy for those such as the ill-natured husband, the shrewish wife, or the drunkard who claim melancholy as an excuse for their behavior. She also lashes out against those who pretend to be its victims for desired ends: the frivolous coquettes who delight in melancholic posturing to attract male attention, or the foolish fops who feign melancholy in order to claim a wit they lack.

To understand Winchilsea's attack against such melancholic imposters, we need to remember that melancholy was a fashionable disease. As Lawrence Babb carefully points out in *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642*, two fundamentally opposite concepts of melancholy appear throughout Elizabethan and Stuart literature (175-185). The concept derived from Galen and medical tradition is found essentially in the melancholic lover, the malcontent, and the grief-stricken dramatic figure. The view of
melancholy embodied in this tradition is that it is a debilitating and degrading malady, and literary figures evidencing this type of melancholy are generally the object of scorn or laughter. The other tradition, which derives from Aristotle, is that melancholic disorders are an attribute of superior intellect and genuine piety. An introspective figure such as Hamlet would therefore be viewed as typifying the dignity of the illness. From this tradition is derived what Winchilsea sees as the most despicable and destructive of all melancholic poses, that of the sanctimonious, morose Puritan:

By Thee Religion, all we know,
That shou'd enlighten here below,
Is veil'd in Darkness, and perplex
With anxious Doubts, with endless Scruples vext,
And some Restraint imply'd from each perverted
Text.
Whilst Touch not, Taste not, what is freely
giv'n,
Is but thy niggard Voice, disgracing bounteous
Heav'n.
From Speech restrain'd, by thy Deceits abus'd,
To Deserts banish'd, or in Cells reclus'd,
Mistaken Vot'ries to the Pow'rs Divine,
Whilst they a purer Sacrifice design,
Do but the Spleen obey, and worship at thy Shrine.

(116-127)

These are harsh lines, far different in tone from the humorous portrayal of fops and coquettes, or the gibe, occurring towards the conclusion of the poem, at physicians whose greatest financial gain is from splenic patients. As we have seen repeatedly, Winchilsea is incensed at hypocrisy in any form, but the false piety of
the Puritans is particularly odious to her. The religious fanaticism and excessive fear of damnation which Puritanism cultivated, and which had such devastating political ramifications for England during the seventeenth century, were still distrusted by Anne, who, we must remember, was born just one year into the Restoration.

So strong was the association between Puritanism and melancholy in the Restoration and eighteenth century that many anti-sectarians regarded Puritan zeal as a manifestation of a melancholic mental disorder. Thus many writers of the period, distinguishing between true and false enthusiasm, viewed Puritan behavior as the result of a disease requiring medical treatment. Robert Burton had earlier declared in The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621) that Puritan enthusiasts were "certainly far gone with melancholy, if not quite mad, and have more need of physic than many a man that keeps his bed, more need of helebore than those that are in Bedlam" (III: 372). Echoing Burton, the Cambridge Platonist George Rust averred in his 1683 A Discourse of the Use of Reason in Matters of Religion that the hallucinations and delusions of Puritans are "no better then Frenzies and Symptoms of Melancholy" (33). And the year prior to publication of Winchilsea's "The Spleen," John Locke noted in a chapter added to the fourth edition of his Essay Concerning Human Understanding that "in all ages, men, in whom melancholy has mixed with
devotion... often flattered themselves with a persuasion of immediate intercourse with the Deity" (II: 431). There was, then, ample precedence for Winchilsea's linking of Puritan religiosity with melancholy and for such later satirical attacks on Puritans as Swift's in A Tale of a Tub. Joseph Addison's allegation in No. 494 of The Spectator, that "a sorrowful countenance... eaten up with spleen and melancholy" is the Puritan norm for piety, seems to have been widely accepted.

The anger Winchilsea displays in "The Spleen," then, is an outburst against that which violates her basic religious sensibilities. The Puritan obsession with sin and the emphasis on repression are imimical to her Anglican faith. For her, melancholic despair has little to do with a true sense of sin; indeed, once sin is acknowledged and forgiven, the best way to worship God, she believes, is with a joyful heart.

This theme of the affinity between true piety and a happy spirit is a recurrent one in Anne's verse. In one of the first poems she wrote, the Song "Love, thou art best of Human Joys," God is said to recognize the love between a man and a woman as having great spiritual worth because its pleasures elevate the soul. The love of man, even the passionate love of one's husband, is not, for Winchilsea, very far removed from the love of God. Even during the final period of her life, when she was plagued
with chronic melancholy and ill health, her religious verse is never morbid. In "A Supplication for the joys of Heaven" (Wellesley ms.) she writes that when she is eventually united with God, she will be steadfastly "spiritualiz'd and gay." And in "An Hymn of Thanksgiving after a Dangerous fit of sickness in the year 1715" she offers jubilant alleluias to God who has restored her health, claiming that her praise of Him will allay any fear of recurring attacks of spleen:

In Allelujahs who'rl proceed
Shall find all objects praises breed
Nor fear the spleen
Shou'd come between
By Allelujahs freed. (Wellesley ms.)

Winchilsea believes that one should always be cheerful in praising God, for to be otherwise implies a lack of true gratitude for what one has been given. Thus the austerity and dour manner of the Puritans are, as she notes in "The Spleen," "disgracing bounteous Heav'n."

In "A Contemplation," the final poem included in the Wellesley manuscript, Winchilsea writes what might almost be taken as a summation of her theological and philosophical views. Though it does not refer specifically to melancholy, it does touch upon illness in general and is germane to this discussion. Like "The Spleen," it deals with issues of political and social concern, as well as personal ones, and it provides a great deal of insight into the way in which Winchilsea's religious beliefs are
deeply intertwined with all aspects of her life.

The central theme of "A Contemplation" is the vanity of human wishes. The poem consists of quatrains of strict iambic accentual-syllabic meter with alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines. The first and third lines, which are the tetrameter ones, rhyme with each other, as do the second and fourth lines. This is the hymnal stanza and helps create the poem's mood of serenity.8

Winchilsea opens the poem with a reflection on Heaven as the only proper focus for one's ambitions. In "The Spleen" she refers to the "Touch not, Taste not" dictum which leads Puritans to denigrate the senses and repress all pleasures of the body. Winchilsea, however, is definitely no Puritan. Her Heaven is not an amorphous, incorporeal state of vapid spirituality. It is vibrant and gloriously sensuous, a fulfillment of bodily and spiritual delights. It is, in short, the perfect realization of what it means to be human in the fullest physical, mental, and spiritual sense. For her hymn of praise, then, Winchilsea's description of Heaven becomes, in part, an exhaltation of the human senses. In Heaven, she writes, our sight will know only the beauty of "th' incorruptable Face," our bodies will know exhilarating "Agility in pace or flight," our ears will hear "Praises in Seraphick Sounds," and our noses will inhale "Such balmy Odours.../
As from the Bridegroom's pores/ The holy Canticles rehearse."

In contradistinction to this vision of perfection that Winchilsea says men and women yearn for, is the picture of a tainted world in which mortal suffering is inevitable. The Heaven she portrays in "A Contemplation" is notable not only for what it possesses, but also for what it lacks: illness and decay, usurpation, thievery, and the common shocks that flesh is heir to. Here, too, as we have seen elsewhere, Winchilsea moves from the general to the specific as she cites the injustices that Heaven will right. After a vague reference to her own "Coronet of Thorns," she explains more fully the suffering which she and Heneage have endured:

The Lord to whom my life is joyn'd
For Conscience here opprest
Shall there full retribution find
And none his Claimes molest.

As a non-juror, one who refused to take an oath of allegiance to the new monarchy following the 1688 Revolution, Heneage was denied any possibility of obtaining a court appointment or a government position. Virtually excluded from the public life for which he had been trained, he and Anne encountered great financial difficulties following their exile from court. After Heneage inherited his title in 1712, however, their difficulties became even greater, as we know in part from Swift's remarks in a letter to
Stella:

Poor Lord Winchilsea [Charles, Heneage's nephew] is dead, . . . and what is yet worse, my old acquaintance, Mrs. Finch, is now Countess of Winchilsea, the title being fallen to her husband but without much estate."

(Correspondence, I, 55)

With the death of their benefactor Charles, the Finches lost once again their sole source of financial support, just as they had earlier when James was toppled from the throne. Moreover, the estate Heneage inherited was involved in lengthy litigation, and his status as a non-juror deprived him of his seat in the House of Commons. What bitter irony their new titles must have held for the Finches.

As she does in other poems as well, Winchilsea moves from private concerns back to broader social ones, here depicting the vanity of human wishes and decrying economic inequities by use of the examples of Cardinal Woolsey and John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough:

And Mammon wert thou well employ'd
    What Mansions might be wonne
 Whilst Woolsey's Pallace lyes destroy'd
    And Marlborough's is not done.

This stanza, the penultimate one in the poem, is followed by a gentle admonition that we must look to Heaven for the fulfillment of our hopes and ambitions. If we learn to be contented with little, desiring no more for ourselves on earth than "A Sweet Repose at Night" and placing our trust in an afterlife, then, the poet writes,
our earthly sufferings are much easier to bear. Her message of hope, as well as the quality of her piety, suggests that of another Augustan humanist who later in the century wrote his own "Vanity of Human Wishes"—Samuel Johnson.

Bouts with melancholy were to torment Winchilsea throughout her life. "My old inveterate foe" she called melancholy in her early "Ardelia to Melancholy" (15), and the martial imagery in that poem is appropriate to the war she was to wage against the ailment even in old age. Myra Reynolds assumes that Anne's health problems improved in later years (introd. to Poems, xlv), but the Wellesley manuscript contradicts this assumption. It contains references to the spleen in at least half a dozen poems, including "A Supplication for the joys of Heaven," dated February 6, 1718, just two years prior to her death.

Taken as a group, Winchilsea's melancholy poems reveal a wide range of moods, from somber to satiric to light-hearted. Above all, they demonstrate her individuating tone and her refusal to approach melancholy from a popular viewpoint.

Winchilsea's religious persuasion, her perspective as a female writer, and her Augustan rationality all blend to make "The Spleen" an extraordinary poem. Its reflective sentiments are checked by its author's unflinching satirical eye, so that the poem is both subjectively emotional
and objectively rational. Throughout "The Spleen" Winchilsea maintains a balanced stance that is at once both public and private, both general and specific, both publicly moralistic and intimately confessional. Though the poem, both in a literary and a scientific sense, has roots in the Renaissance and seventeenth-century understanding of melancholy, it strongly reflects its author's originality. Furthermore, Winchilsea does not cultivate a melancholic mood as appropriate and desirable for the expression of intensely personal and emotional sentiments, as many eighteenth-century melancholic poets do. Thus "The Spleen" differs in varying degrees from such eighteenth-century melancholic poems as Thomas Parnell's "A Night-Piece on Death," Edward Young's "The Complaint: or, Night Thoughts," Robert Blair's "The Grave," and "The Pleasures of Melancholy" of Thomas Warton the Younger.

Winchilsea's sense of herself as a committed female poet, as a devout Christian, and as a chronic melancholic is unified. As a woman writer, she had to struggle with the syndrome which Gilbert and Gubar have termed "female anxiety of authorship" (Madwoman, 45-53). As an Anglican Royalist she had to cope with religious and political upheavals that shook the foundations of English life and threatened the personal welfare and safety of herself and her husband. And as a victim of melancholy, she had to
wage a life-long battle to overcome the emotional ravages of her affliction and to resist yielding to despair. Her battle against melancholy was crucial; she fought it both for her own religious faith and for her art. She fought hard, in frequent skirmishes and in occasional deadly conflicts. And she triumphed. Towards the end of her life, after a serious attack of melancholy that left her, in her own words, on "the verge of the devouring grave," she wrote a poem of thanksgiving for her restored health, once again dedicating her poetry as an offering to God. These lines, from "Written after a violent and dangerous fit of sickness in the year 1715" (Wellesley ms.), are a fitting summary of the unified sensibilities and the individual female talent of Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea. They might well serve as an epigraph for "The Spleen," and as an appropriate conclusion for this study of the best English female poet of the eighteenth century:

Let no revengefull Spleen my page disgrace
Whilst general Vice I strive to ridicule
And prove the Sinner is the witty Fool
In grave or cheerfull numbers lett me try
Lesse to divert then warmly Edefy.
NOTES—CHAPTER I

1 I have what is perhaps a feminist's aversion to the familiarity of referring to Winchilsea as "Anne" (what critic, after all, would dare refer to Lord Tennyson as "Alfred" or "Al," or even Lord Byron as "George"?), yet I see no way to avoid it occasionally and therefore use it interchangeably with Winchilsea. During her lifetime she wrote under three different names: her maiden name of Kingsmill, her married name of Finch, and, in later years, her titled name of Winchilsea. To refer to her consistently as Winchilsea would cause confusion at times, particularly since she and her husband resided for years with the then Lord and Lady Winchilsea.

2 In the forefront of feminist literary histories are Ellen Moers' Literary Women (1976) and Elaine Showalter's A Literature of Their Own (1977), both of which convincingly demonstrate that a female literature and culture existed by the nineteenth century, while Gilbert and Gubar's The Madwoman in the Attic (1979) remains what is probably the most important theoretical study of the nineteenth-century female literary imagination.

3 I am not dealing at all with her plays, The Triumphs of Love and Innocence and Aristomenes. The only discussion of them in detail that exists anywhere is in chapter 3 of Ann Longknife's unpublished dissertation, A Preface to an Edition of the Works of Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea. Her defense of their dramatic value is not convincing.
4 In transcribing the poems from this manuscript, I have chosen to remain true to the text, while recognizing that in some instances the vagaries of spelling and lack of punctuation may cause slight difficulties. I hope in the near future to edit the entire manuscript with limited editorial corrections and emendations.
NOTES--CHAPTER II


2 John Eames's article in the Dutch journal English Studies examines an unpublished manuscript of Kingsmill's poems both for its biographical significance and its literary merit, and he demonstrates in the poetry a modest competence.

3 The standard biography for Winchilsea has been a portion of the 117 page introduction by Myra Reynolds to her 1903 collection, The Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea. Though in many ways a commendable work, it is marred by some factual inaccuracies and does not contain some essential data. The fullest and most reliable biography to date is William J. Cameron's 1951 unpublished master's thesis, Anne, Countess of Winchilsea: A Guide for the Future Biographer, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand. Unfortunately, this thesis is available only on microfilm, for Cameron adds much new material to the Reynolds biographical sketch and corrects some of her errors. My principal biographical sources, then, unless otherwise noted, are Cameron and the poems themselves.
4 Cameron suggests (36-37) that since James first brought his pregnant wife to the Palace of St. James in May of 1682, he would probably have had all her Maids of Honor already in attendance at court by then.

5 This poem is found in the unpublished Wellesley manuscript, p. 103. Unless specifically noted as being from the Wellesley manuscript, all poems quoted will be from the standard Reynolds edition.

6 The only existing chronological listing of all of Winchilsea's poems and plays appears in Cameron's thesis, along with evidence for the dating of specific works. I have relied upon his dating of the poems except for those few instances I've noted in which the evidence has led me to a different conclusion.


8 Both the octavo and the folio manuscripts are the principal sources for the Reynolds edition.

9 All the Winchilsea manuscripts are dated and described in detail by Cameron, who identifies the hand of the octavo as being largely Heneage's (see Appendix D to his thesis), but it is actually Helen Sard Hughes who should receive credit for first identifying the handwriting of both the folio ms. and the latter part of the Wellesley ms. as being Heneage's. In her 1929 article in London Mercury, Hughes writes that she obtained letters from the current Lord Winchilsea to compare Heneage's hand with that of the poetry manuscripts, thereby correcting Edward Dowden's erroneous attribution of the autograph of part of the Wellesley ms. to Anne. After considering that aside from the manuscript volumes there are no known extant letters in Anne's own hand, Hughes concludes that Anne's physical affliction with "spleen" may have made the act of writing "distasteful" to her (635), a plausible inference with regard to the other manuscripts, though the Wellesley ms. was completed, if not begun, after Anne's death.
10 Most Winchilsea commentary, relying upon Reynolds as a source, inaccurately lists the 1701 Miscellany as her first appearance in print.


12 Among the critics who have repeated the erroneous views of Reynolds on this matter are Fausset, xiv-xv; Buxton, 178; Rogers, introd. to Selected Poems, xii; and Todd, 328-329.
1 Other eighteenth-century biographical references to Winchilsea which are not discussed here include Horace Walpole's *Royal and Noble Authors* (1758), *Biographia Brittanica* (1763), *Anecdotes of British Topography* by Richard Gough (1768), and James Granger's *Biographical Dictionary* (1769), all discussed briefly in Reynolds, lxxi--lxxii.

2 J.H.R. correctly ascribed the poem to "Anne, Countess of Winchilsea, who lived in the reign of Queen Anne." For a discussion of his comments on the poem, as well as Seward's, see Reynolds, lxxii--lxxxv.

3 The manuscript was published in 1905 by H. Frowde under the title *Poems and Extracts chosen by William Wordsworth for an album presented to Lady Mary Lowther, Christmas, 1819*.

4 See the letters dated October 16, 1829, and April 30 and May 10, 1830.
NOTES--CHAPTER IV

1 In The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature Rogers offers a comprehensive study of the tradition of misogynist themes and archetypes, while Nussbaum's the Brink of All We Hate focuses on attacks against women in Restoration and eighteenth-century English satires. Also valuable is Thompson's Unfit for Modest Ears, which examines sexual attitudes of the period, particularly as evidenced in the pornographic and obscene literature whose effect was most assuredly demeaning to women.

2 Woolf's essay "Professions for Women" from The Death of the Moth and other Essays makes an impassioned plea for the destruction of this image as an essential prerequisite to freedom for women.

3 See Martin S. Day's History of English Literature, 1660-1837, 19-39, for a discussion of drama in the early Restoration.

I am indebted to Susan Staves for her lucid analysis and plentiful documentation of this issue in the third chapter of *Players' Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration*, 111-189.

It was, as Staves has noted (157), 1801 before the first woman was granted a divorce by Parliament.

Macfarlane, 225. See also Lawrence Stone's *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, 46-48, graph 3.


Staves discusses this case on pp. 144-148.

Staves's chapter "Sovereignty in the Family" examines several court decisions based upon this analogy.
NOTES—CHAPTER V

1 Other critics have been less reluctant. William Empson's provocative book Some Versions of the Pastoral (1936) defines the pastoral as the "process of putting the complex into the simple" (23). John Heath-Stubbs in his slim volume The Pastoral defines the term as simply any poetry that expresses a "feeling for natural beauty and for the life of the country-side" (1). Patrick Cullen's Spenser, Marvell, and Renaissance Pastoral, emphasizing the ambivalence inherent in the concept of pastoral poetry, defines the pastoral mode as "the juxtaposing of contending values and perspectives" (1). And Helen Cooper's scholarly Pastoral: Medieval into Renaissance declares the pastoral to be "a kind of dialectic framework in which to work out the tensions between court and city, culture and country simplicity, between Paradise and hardship, unfettered freedom and the responsibilities and limitations of normal life, between Nature and Art" (7).

2 I am greatly in debt to Congleton, as I am to Frank Kermode, whose English Pastoral Poetry From the Beginning to Marvell, though it stops short of the period in which Winchilsea began to write, offers as pithy and perceptive an understanding of pastoral conventions in the thirty-four page introduction to his anthology as one could wish for. And the anthology itself is useful.

3 See Rosenmeyer's convincing arguments for maintaining that the earlier "Hesiodic" tradition is not truly pastoral (20-29).

4 For a discussion of the rationale for the hierarchical structure of literary genres, a rationale
classical in origin but revived by the Augustan sensibility, see Paul Fussell's *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Sensibility*, 66-83.

5 This is a rare instance in which Myra Reynolds's dating appears to be more accurate than William Cameron's. Cameron places the composition of the poem at some time between 1691 and 1697, but Reynolds observes in a footnote on p. 418 of her edition of the poems, that *Description de tout l'Univers* by Nichols and Guillaume Sanson, the geography book referred to in 1. 25 of the poem, was published in 1700.

6 William Bowman Piper's introduction to his anthology *The Heroic Couplet*, 3-153, contains a lengthy discussion of this form. Though Piper's concern is essentially with the heroic couplet as a political vehicle, particularly for Dryden and Pope, his historical survey and his analysis of some of the subtle variations in handling the poetics of the couplet are perceptive.
1 The date of this poem is significant and makes the sentiments all the more poignant, for it was just days earlier, on December 18, that William of Orange first entered the capital. (See Maurice Ashley 176-180). At the time the poem was written, James II had gone into exile with his family and Anne and Heneage had fled the court, taking temporary refuge at Kirby Hall, Lord Hatton's estate in Northamptonshire (Cameron 58-59).

2 Following is a list of the pastoral and classical names which Winchilsea used for friends and family members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almeria</td>
<td>-- probably a fictitious person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arminda</td>
<td>-- Catherine Cavendish, later Countess of Thanet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areta</td>
<td>-- Anne Finch's first-chosen pen name (see Myra Reynolds's introduction, lxxxiv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardella</td>
<td>-- Anne Finch's pen name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspasia</td>
<td>-- Frances Thynne, later Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celia</td>
<td>-- possibly Lady March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleone</td>
<td>-- Grace Stroud, later the Hon. Mrs. Henry Thynne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clorinda</td>
<td>-- Lady Catherine Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphnis</td>
<td>-- one of Anne's names for her husband, Heneage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavio</td>
<td>-- another name for Heneage Finch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ephelia -- possibly Lady Weymouth  
(see Cameron's notes to Chapt. 14)
Flavia -- Mrs. Catherine Fleming
Ismena -- so far unidentified
Lamira -- Lady Anne Tufton, later Countess of Salisbury
Maria -- Mary Thynne, later Lady Brooke
Mirtillo -- Dr. Waldron
Orania -- Mrs. Richard Thornhill
Orinda -- the name Katherine Philips chose as her pseudonym
Philomela -- the name Mrs. Elizabeth Singer Rowe chose as her pseudonym
Serena -- Lady Catherine Tufton, Later Lady Sondea
Teresa -- Dorothy Ogle, Anne Finch's sister
Theanor -- Henry Thynne
Urania -- Mary of Modena, second wife of James II
Utresia -- Frances Thynne, later Lady Worsley
Valeria -- possibly a fictitious person

3 Kuhn's article traces in eighteenth-century theological thought the view of external nature as a manifestation of God's grace and a confirmation of Christian revelation and mystery. Earl Wasserman's "Nature Moralized," which first appeared in ELH in 1953, is also valuable in distinguishing the Augustan concept of nature from what would come to be identified as the Romantic one.

4 See pp. 500-507 in vol. 7 of the Variorum Edition of Spenser for the controversy regarding the "Lay" and its questionable authenticity.
NOTES--CHAPTER VII

1 I would include the following poems in this category: "A Nocturnal Reverie," "The Tree," "To the Echo," "The Nightingale," "The Bird," "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat," and "To the Countess of Hertford who Engaged Mr. Eusdon to Write upon a Wood."

2 "The Spleen," which will be discussed in the next chapter, remained her most anthologized poem throughout the eighteenth century.

3 Messenger's "Selected Nightingales" from His & Hers: Essays in Restoration & 18th-Century Literature explores the complexity of dualisms underlying the dialectic movement of "To the Nightingale." Messenger's thesis is provocative and convincingly argued.

4 The scholarship on the Augustan humanists and their reactionary minority status is ample. One of the first to declare that Pope and Swift were anachronisms, "the product of a body of learning that was fading, or had already faded, by the end of the seventeenth century," was Earl R. Wasserman. See his article in Philological Quarterly, xli (July 1962), 617. And Paul Fussell's discussion of the Augustan humanist's view of nature is helpful (7-8).
NOTES--CHAPTER VIII

1 John F. Sena's A Bibliography of Melancholy, 1660-1800 supplies ample evidence of the interest in melancholy during this period and the later eighteenth century as well. His bibliography is conveniently divided into poetry, prose, and medical works and contains a valuable list of scholarship on the subject. For a discussion concentrating on the time at which "The Spleen" was published, see the chapter entitled "The Taste for Melancholy in 1700" in Amy Reed's book, 27-79, which demonstrates that a good many writers around 1700 wrote about melancholic themes.

2 See chapters two and three of Lawrence Babb's The Elizabethan Malady, 21-71, for an explanation of the scientific theory of melancholy.

3 The term "spleen" became interchangeable with "melancholy" by the late seventeenth century, as did "hypochondria," "hysteria," and "vapors," with the latter two terms being applied only to female patients. For an explanation see Babb, The Elizabethan Malady, 28.

4 For further scholarship on Restoration and eighteenth-century medical thought regarding melancholy, in addition to the works already cited, see Lawrence Babb, "The Cave of Spleen"; Oswald Doughty, "The English Malady of the Eighteenth Century"; Mary Claire Randolph, "The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory: Its Possible Relationships and Implications"; and William R. Riddell, "Dr. George Cheyne and the 'English Malady'."

5 See Sena, "Melancholy in Anne Finch...", 2-5.

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6 See Myra Reynolds's notes to Winchilsea's Poems, 430-431, and Reuben Brower's article "Lady Winchilsea and the Poetic Tradition of the Seventeenth Century," 70-71, for a brief discussion of how both Pope and Shelley apparently borrowed from these lines.

7 John Sena's "Melancholic Madness and the Puritans" examines anti-Puritan literature of the period and the changes that occurred in the nature of the attacks. Noting that earlier charges of ignorance and hypocrisy leveled against Puritans were replaced by the middle of the seventeenth century with claims of melancholic madness, Sena documents that these claims were founded upon contemporary medical theory.

8 Louis Turco's The New Book of Forms: A Handbook of Poetics, a 1986 revised version of his 1968 The Book of Forms, remains the only complete source for poetic forms. It is an invaluable aid for one interested in all aspects of poetics. For a discussion of common measure and the hymnal stanza, see 119-123.
APPENDIX A

UNPUBLISHED POEMS FROM THE WELLESLEY MANUSCRIPT REFERRED TO IN THIS STUDY
An Hymn of Thanksgiving after a
Dangerous fit of sickness
in the year 1715

To thee encreaser of my days
My ransom'd Soul my voice I raise
O may thy love
My warmth improve
And guide my future days.

2.
With Allelujah's now I come
From terours rescued and the tomb
To pay my thanks
Amidst the ranks
Devoted from the womb.

3.
With Allelujah's let me try
To penetrate the vaulted sky
Till all thy train
Endulge the vein
And Allelujah cry.

4.
For health restored and will to please
For softened passions and for ease
O let me give
Whilst I shall live
In Allelujahs praise.

5.
By Angels who their tents display'd
Around my curtains gloomy shade
Now I their charge
Am set att large,
Be Allelujahs paid.

6.
With Allelujahs I aspire
To mix with that Celestial choire
Accept my heart
Without the art
Which does their songs inspire.
7. Till to thy Courts thou dost me bring
Where I like them shall touch the string
   With zeal and will
   And equal skill
Their Allelujahs sing.

8. For Providence my ample feild
My food my raiment and my shield
   Thro' life my trust
   Rejoice I must
And Allelujahs yeild.

9. For scaping dangers in my way
The deadly shaft which fly's by day
   The hasty fright
   That comes by night
I Allelujahs pay.

10. For this the gift by Heaven assign'd
With verse to sooth my active mind
   To every thought
   Which there is wrought
Be Allelujah join'd.

11. In Allelujahs who'l proceed
Shall find all objects praises breed
   Nor fear the spleen
   Shou'd come between
By Allelujahs freed.

12. To Allelujahs till I dye
May I my cheerfull hours apply
   Then to the blest
   In ceaseless rest
With Allelujahs fly.
Written after a violent and dangerous fit of sickness in the Year 1715

Snatch'd from the verge of the devouring grave
What with his Creature wou'd her Maker have
Speak for thy Servant hears and ready stands
To yield her lengthen'd life to thy Commands
If not enough this Chastisement appears
For Idlenesse or long offending years
Oh yet again lett me thy Rod endure
Nor rashly ask the hast'ning of my Cure
Till bow'd with Grief and sinking on the Flore
I hear it utter'd Go and Sin no more
And now methinks I hear that healing Voyce
Seem to reply and bid my Soul rejoice
Depart in peace it saies and rest secur'd
Thy groanes are finish'd and thy ease procur'd
A Ransom is receiv'd God's only Son
Has pay'd the Price of all that thou hast done
Thy Prayers thy sighs through him accesse have found
And no one tear unpittied dried the ground
His watchfull Providence unloos'd thy Bands
And he again upheld thy lifted hands
Strength to thy feeble knees from him there came
Again to bear thy supplicating Frame
This Intercessor for that Mercy made
Which thy unslak'd and threatening heats allay'd
Rebuk'd the Feaver as in Peter's house
He drove it from the Mother of his Spouse
Temper'd thy blood in ev'ry beating vaine
And gave its just Dominion to the Brain
Baffling the spite of those who envy bore
And said she's fallen now to rise no more
But o're the waves of Misery and Care
He bid thee walk nor sink into Dispair
'Tis true indeed O my Redeeming Lord
By thee again to ease and breath restor'd
In Thee I think my Father reconcil'd
And I again acknowledg'd as a Child
I now again my clouded hopes renew
And future glory keep in present view
Entitled to the Church my mothers breast
In Christs clean Robe the Wedding garment dresst
I now again her Sacraments draw near
In Love in Trust in Penitence in Fear
Whilst in my Thoughts still this suggestion falls
Be of good Comfort rise thy Saviour calls
I come Lord Jesus at thy Call I come
O my good Shepheard bring thy wanderer home
Then shall the Hands the Knees the Heart the Brain
Which to their use thou hast restor'd again
Be all employ'd to Glorify thy Name
And thy sweet Service be my future aim
Make me O Lord whom thou hast deign'd to raise
An humble Instrument to spread thy Praise
Lett my weak pen thy tender servants lead
To pious meltings when my Verse they read
Lett my Recovery which I here Record
Teach ev'ry fainting Soul to trust the Lord
And if sometimes when Flesh that quickly tyres
Some relaxation some new Theam requires
I sink to trifle for a little space
Let no revengefull Spleen my page disgrace
Whilst general Vice I strive to ridicule
And prove the Sinner is the witty Fool
In grave or chearfull numbers lett me try
Lesse to divert then warmly Edefy
And if I'm blest to compass that design
As thine the Gift the Glory too be thine
All that I am all that I had or have
Since my first dawn of life thy Mercy gave
And now renews delivering from the grave
To thee be Glory from my Heart and Pen
And with me joyn all Angels Saints and Men
Lett every thing extoll him that has breath
Who here adjourns hereafter Conquers Death

All Glory be to God
An Epistle to Mrs Catherine Fleming at Coleshill in Warwickshire, but hastily performed & not corrected.
  London October ye 18th: 1718.

'Tis now my dearest friend become your turn
To leave the town and mine alass to mourn
Whilst all this mighty pile to us is seen
A Wilderness without refreshing green
Ruin'd and desolate our London shews
Nor longer gives us pleasure or repose
How well we love is but in absence found
No sympathetick med'cin heals that wound
A distant view of what we once possest
Heightens th'impatience of the sever'd breast
The more the object pleased the more the loss
When others all our happiness engross
Yet Scud'more so attracts what all must yeild
She for either sex contest the feild
Scud'more the ornament of female life
The fairest widow and the steadiest wife
Of all the wis of none the vain pretence
Guarded by mild reserve and awfull sence
From me she takes what grudging I resign
Yet charms me into praise who wou'd repine
O soft distress why did it not remain
Which gave me joy and you but moderate pain
That languishing disease which caused your stay
Till perfect health has born you far away
Why did it not a little longer wait
For my endearments in your alter'd state
Who late from my too tardy journy come
Thinking you gone declin'd my lonely home
From which I turn'd till tidings did convey
How much I lost by studying that delay
Who might to Catherine still repair
And her complaints and mutual kindness share
Her lively conversation still enjoy
Which nothing equals nothing can destroy
Harmonious in her mind as in her art
Never untun'd or ceasing to divert
Now Digby's race to you I recommend
Who know her value my accomplish'd friend
From whom I've learn't the charms of Digby's line
Where tho' concea'l'd all excellencies shine
May all your hours be season'd with delight
And mirth and musick cheat the lengthening night
And when on Anna's tender notes you dye
Or she revives you with some bright reply
Then condescend and with ARDELIA by
In your society where to be plac'd
Is entertainment for the nicest taste
Whilst of all ills with which our time is curst
Unpolish't conversation is the worst
When on some trivial theams loud talkers dwell
And fluency of speech call speaking well
Till the stretch't features give the torrent way
And laughing first to laughter you'd betray
But never yet was any smile of mine
Allured to countenance the vain design
Nor ever noise for wit on me cou'd pass
When thro' the braying I discern'd the Ass
Strong forcible and clear true wit is found
Prevailing by the weight not by the sound
Still sharing with a civilized address
New turns of thought which easy words express
Inciting wit as steel the flint provokes
Till flashes answer to the brightening stroakes
Thus one distinguish't wit engages more-----
Till pensive wits who silent sat before-----
Confess the quickning flame and utter all their store
Then round the room enliven'd humour flys
Like scatter'd lightening o'er th'emblish'd skies
Glow's thro' the sanguid cheek and the informing eyes
For there of wit e'er spoke the warnings given
As fire proceeds the sound from opening Heaven
True wit is ralley which never flings
The ridicule but on fantastick things
The complement insinuated right
Which sets some talent in its proper light
And whilst on the possessor it distills
With conscious pleasure not confusion fills
A story well applied and short comprised
The incidents or true or well devised
A readiness with others to combine-----
In gay discourse which breeding does refine
Such wit I love for such my friend is thine.
A Suplication for the joys of Heaven

To the Superior World to Solemn Peace
To Regions where Delights shall never cease
To Living Springs and to Celestial shade
For change of pleasure not Protection made
To Blissfull Harmonys o'erflowing source
Which Strings or stops can neither bind or Force
But wafting Air for ever bears along
Perpetual Motion with perpetual Song
On which the Blest in Symphonies ascend
And towards the Throne with Vocal ardours bend
To Radial light o'erspreading Boundless space
To the safe Goal of our well ended race
To shelter where the weary shall have rest
And where the wicked never shall molest
To that Jerusalem which ours below
Did but in type and faint resemblance shew
To the first born and ransom'd Church above
To Seraphims whose whole composes love
To active Cherubins whom wings surround
Not made to rest tho' on immortal ground
But still suspended wait with flaming joy
In swift commands their vigour to employ
Ambrosial dews distilling from their plumes
Scattering where e'er they pass innate perfumes
To Angells of innumerable sorts
Subordinate in the ethereal Courts
To Men refin'd from every gross allay
Who taught the Flesh the Spirit to obey
And keeping late futurity in view
Do now possess what long they did persue
To Jesus founder of the Christian race
And kind dispencer of the Gospell grace
Bring me my God in my accomplish't time
From weakness freed and from degrading crime
Fast by the Tree of life be my retreat
Whose leaves are Med'cin and whose fruit is meat
Heal'd by the first and by the last renew'd
With all perfections be my Soul endued
My form that has the earthly figure borne
Take the Celestial in its Glorious turn
My temper frail and subject to dismay
Be stedfast there spiritualiz'd and gay
My low Poetick tendency be rais'd
Till the bestower worthily is prais'd
Till Dryden's numbers for Cecilia's feast
With sooth depress inflame and shake the breast
Vary the passions with each varying line
Allow'd below all others to outshine
Shall yeild to those above shall yeild to mine
In sound in sense in emphasis Divine
Stupendious are the heights to which they rise
Whose anthems match the musick of the skies
Whilst that which art we call when studied here
Is nature there in its sublimest sphere
And the pathetick now so hard to find
Flows from the grateful full transports of the mind
With Poets who supernal voices raise
And here begin their never ending layes
With those who to the brethren of their Lord
In all distress a warm relief afford
With the Heroick Spirits of the brave
Who durst be true when threatn'd with the Grave
And when from evil in triumphant sway
Who e'er departed made himself a prey
To sanguine perils to penurious care
To scanty cloathing and precarious fare
To lingering solitude exhausting thoughts
Unsuccour'd losses and imputed faults
With these let me be join'd when Heaven reveals
The judgment which admits of no appeals
And having heard from the deciding throne
Well have ye suffer'd wisely have ye Done
Henceforth the Kingdom of the blest is yours
For you unfolds its everlasting doors
With joyfull Allelujahs let me hail
The strength that o'er my weakness cou'd prevail
Upheld me here and raised my feeble clay
To this felicity for which I pray
Thro' him whose intercession I implore
And Heaven once enter'd prayer shall be no more
Loud acclamations shall its place supply
And praise the breath of Angells in the sky.

Finisht February 6th 1717/18
The puggs a dialogue between an old & young dutch Mastiff

What dogs can do & what they'd say
The Fable writers do convey
Is not all known yet sure their talents
Are not outdone by modern gallants
For 'tho' they neither read nor write
If they make love can play & fight
Are comb'd & powder'd & appear
At either park & call'd my dear
If they know how to push their fortune
And the best giver can importune
To supple they've their masters lick't
The very moment they've been kick't
Have all fidelity maintain'd
Untill by larger proffers gain'd
Who can pretend to go beyond 'em
Or blame such patrons as defend 'em
But I've too long my tale omitted
To which this prologue has been fitted
And now must tell you taht I know
A young Dutch dog in Cleaveland Row
Who wou'd had he been taught & letter'd
His own complaints perhaps have better'd
But being left to me I must
To all his jealous cares be just.

This dog who so much matter yeilds
Wou'd visit pug in Leicester feilds
A dog in all sage prudence learn'd
And for the Provinces concern'd
Tho' naturealiz'd he were of late
And grown a member of our State
Extreamly civil was their meeting
And thus the elder pug did greet him
My namesake whelp't amongst the ditches
And offspring sure of noblest bitches
Permit me tho' our race but traded
Till we our neighbours rights invaded
With saple paws thus to embrace you
And on the upper hand to place you
For truly this kind favour done me
Has to your service throughly won me
But something in your face appears
Too melancholy for your years
Unfold then all your griefs & dangers
We're now esteemed as mungril strangers
Time was--but here a sigh was vented
And the harangue by that prevented.

Then quoth the dog from Cleaveland Row
I meant this visit long ago
But kept so close whilst chief in favour
I cou'd not show my good behaviour
Till now of that incumbrance quitted
I'm farther liberty permitted
And may employ my time & feet
May court or quarrel in the street
Might hang my self had I but garters
Nor shou'd be mist in my old quarters
And certainly that dog's a puppy
That stays when any one wou'd drop ye.

'Tis right young pug the elder cry'd
My age these changes oft has try'd
Now hugg'd & priz'd shut up & hamper'd
Then lash'd & spurn'd & gladly scamper'd
Or cring'd till it did so endear me
That not a servant durst come near me
And all who did not love must fear me

A favorite till he domineers
Is a poor dog below the spheres
But then the dog that fires the sky
Is not so curish or so high

But we have all enough to do
To keep our masters just & true
Since often they but little care
For what we eat or what we wear
See how they've hagl'd my bavaire
And as that were not scorn enough
Have snipt my cravat to a ruff
Made me asham'd to walk my rounds
From Doll's to Colemeer's were my bounds
And grave respect was allways paid
By those who my strict watch survey'd
But grief talks all & I'm to blame
Now tell how your misfortunes came
And if you master served or dame
Quoth t'other when his speech was ended
'Twas on a Lady I attended
And frisk'd & fawn'd till I was tired
As long as she my airs admired
Prefer'd each word & smile of hers
To all that cou'd be done for curs
Securely wou'd her house have kept
And never but dog sleep have slept
Tho' being of a sturdy head
I've to a cup of ale been bred
In Southwark taught by Mrs Cary
And still 'twas fill'd by Mrs Mary
Yet I for that was never blamed
Tho' sometimes ridiculed & sham'd
But 'twas comparison disgraced me
And in my Lady's sight debas'd me
A lovelier thing she met with one day
0! fatal sight 0! fatal monday
But may it ever be forgotten
And Yanica lye dead & rotten

Tho' Yanica is small & jetty
Sleek as a mole & wondrous pretty
Her beauty in its youthfull splendor
Such enbonpoint so soft so tender
Minyion even when she's most untoward
Genteely coy & chastly froward
A bitch that any heart cou'd soften
And no wise dog wou'd see her often
Yet had you heard my dame commend her
You wou'd have wish't a rope might end her
Such never ceasing praise she gave her
And wou'd have lost us all to have her
Then tell me can it be supported
When one has been carest & courted
Call'd handsome fellow stroak'd & patted
And regularly lodged & fatted
To be thrown off & hear a pother
Kept day & night about another
When Ladies never yet cou'd pardon
The men who others fix regard on
And she whose praye not highest rises
Or whom the Swain not chiefly prizes
All other court or praise dispises.
Friend quoth old pug you're in the wrong
You came I find to town but young
And by rehearsing of this matter
Have lived on t'other side the water
But you must alter now depend on't
Since you're removed to the court end on't
Must swallow wrongs for which by nature
Your mouth seems a convenient feature
Must sooth the dog your betters fondle
And all things take by the right handle
Favour tho' you perhaps may share it
Will come & go & all must bear it
D'ye think my Knight tho' much refin'd
Is always courteous always kind
No sometimes he'll not let me stir
Then presently take out the cur
Who now am strip't of every rag
And for my diet force't to beg
Then be content where chance has set ye
Nor let your Lady's coldness fret ye
If not till now her love has wander'd
Think her one woman of an hundred.

Fondness dear pug is all a jest
And never yet was long posses't
But if you'd only live at ease
Who changes least strive most to please.
Under the picture of Mr John Dryden

As great a character the Poet draws
From unjust envy as from just applause
Then Dryden since of both none e'er had more
We'll grant like thee none ever writ before.
On the Death of the Queen.

Dark was the shade where only cou'd be seen
Disasterous Yew that ever balefull green
Destructive in the field of old when strung
Gloomy o'er graves of sleeping warriours hung
Deep was the wild recess that not an ear
Which grudged her praises might the accents hear
Where sad ARDELIA mourn'd URANIA'S Death
In sighs which seem'd her own expireing breath
In moving Sylables so often broke
That more then Eloquence the anguish spoke
Urging the tears which cou'd not give relief
But seem'd to propagate renewing grief
Lamira near her sat and caught the sound
Too weak for ecchoing rocks which fixt the bound
For Cliffs that overlook't the dangerous wave
Th'unhappy Vessels or the Sailors grave
The pittyng Nymph whom sympathy constrain'd
Ask'd why her friend thus heavily complain'd
Why she retired to that ill omen'd spot
By men forsaken and the World forgot
Why thus from light and company she fled
And living sought the mansions of the Dead
Her head reclined on the obdurate stone
Still uttering low but interrupted moan
In which URANIA she to all prefer'd
And with her seem'd unactive or interr'd
As if all virtues of the polish't mind
All excellencies of the female kind
All wining graces in Urania join'd
As if perfection but in her was seen
And Her least dignity was England's Queen.

Thou hast describ'd her pleas'd ARDELIA cry'd
As thou hadst known her awfull without pride
As thou in Her Domestick train hadst stood
And seen her great and found her warmly good
Duey maintaining her exalted place
Yet condescending with attractive grace
Recall'd be days when ebon locks o'erspread
My youthfull neck my cheeks a bashfull red
When early joys my glowing bosom warm'd
When trifles pleas'd & every pleasure charm'd
Then eager from the rural seat I came
Of long traced Ancestors of worthy name
To seek the Court of many woes the source
Compleated by this last this sad divorce
From her to whom my self I had resign'd

The Sovereign Mistress of my vanquish't mind
Who now survive but to attend her hearse
With dutious tribute of recording verse
In which may truth with energy be found
And soft as her compassion be the sound
Bless't were the hours when thro' attendance due
Her numerous charms were present to my view
When lowly to her radiant eyes I bowed
Suns to my sight but Suns without a cloud
Towards me their beneficial aspect turn'd
Imprest my duty and my conduct warn'd
For who that saw the modest airs they cast
But from that pattern must be nicely chast
Peculiar Souls have their peculiar sighs
And thro' the eye the inward beauty shines
Then who can wonder if in hers appear'd
Superior sense to be reverence'd & fear'd
Endearing sweetness to her happy friends
And Holy fire which towards the altar tends
Bles't my attention was when drawing near
(My places claim) her crouded audience chair
I heard her by admiring States addrest
With embasies in different tongues exprest
To all that Europe sent she gave replies
In their own speech most eloquent & wise
Soft was her talk and soothing to the heart
By nature solid perfected by art
The Roman Accent which such grace affords
To Tuscan language harmonized her words
All eyes all listening sense upon her hung
When from her lovely mouth th'enchantment sprung
What Livia was when Rome Augustus sway'd
And thro' a woman's wit the world obey'd
What Portia was when fortitude and love
Inflected wounds which did her firmness prove
And forcing Brutus to applaud her worth
Drew with the steel th'important secret forth
Such was URANIA where they most excell'd
And where they fail'd by nobler zeal upheld
What Italy produc't of glorious names
Her native Country & her kindred Dames
All virtues which Antiquity cou'd boast
She equal'd but on Stormy Britain tost
They lost their value on a northern Coast
Yet who can wonder if to her we grant
What Poets feign when they Diana paint
What Legends write when they enthrone a Saint.
What now ARDELIA speaks with conscious sense
Of Real Worth & matchless excellence
Never such lustre strove against the light
Never such beauty satisfied the sight
Never such Majesty on earth was found
As when URANIA worthyly was crown'd

As when superior airs declared her birth
From Conquerours o'er the Monarchs of the Earth
And large excuse did for their Maxim bring
That Roman Ladies Hoop'd to wed a King
If Royalty had then arose from choice
And merit had compell'd the publick voice
All had allow'd URANIA claimed the most
In view of whom all other charms were lost
Hers in Meridian strong in their decay
But sweetly sinking like declining day
In grief but veil'd as when a rainy cloud
The glorious Sun does yet transparent Shroud
And whilst it softens each resplendent beam
Weeps o'er the land from whence the vapour came
O'er Britain so her Pious sorrows fell
Less for her Woes then that it cou'd rebell
Yet thence arose the shades her life o'ercast
And worldly greatness seldom made to last
Thence in a foreign clime her Consort died
Whom death cou'd never from her thoughts divide
Thence Sable weeds & cyprus walks she chose
And from within produc't her own repose
Yet only pray'd for those she cou'd not calm
As fragrant trees tho' wounded shed but balm
Nor ceas't to live till vindicated Heaven
Shew'd that in vain were such examples given
Who held her light to three great Kingdoms forth
And gave her Sufferings to dilate her worth
That Gallia too might see she cou'd support
Monastick rules and Britains worst effort
Now peacefull is the spirit which possest
That never blemish't that afflicted breast
Closed are such eyes as paradise might boast
Seen but in Eve e'er innocence she lost
The solemn grave with reverence takes her down
And lasting wreaths succeed th'unstable crown
For rude Huzza's in mercenary streets
All Hail in her triumphant way she meets
Who shall in silent Majesty repose
Till every tomb shall every guest disclose
Till Heaven which does all human loss repair
Distinguishing the atoms of the fair
Shall give URANIA'S form transcendent beauty there
And from the beams Irradiating her face
(Which here but wanted that suspended grace)
Shall shew the Britains how they strove in vain
To strip that brow which was consign'd to reign
Tho' Polititians strove to guide the round
Of miscall'd fortune & prescribe its bound
Till the contested Earth shou'd be no longer found

Here she concludes Lamira thinks it just
Such pious tears shou'd wait such Royal Dust.
A Ballad to Mrs. Catherine Fleming in London
from Malshanger farm in Hampshire

From me who whileom sung the Town,
   This second Ballad comes;
To let you know we are got down,
   From hurry, smoke, & drums:
And every visitor that rows,
In restless Coach from Mall to Paul's.
   With a fa-la-la-la-la-la-la.

2.

And now were I to paint the seat,
   (As well-bred poets use;)
I shou'd embellish our retreat,
   By favour.of the muse:
Tho' to no villa we pretend,
But a plain farm at the best end.
   With a fa-la &c.

3.

Where innocence & quiet reigns,
   And no distrust is known;
His nightly safety none maintains,
   By ways they do in Town:
Who rising loosen bolt and bar,
We draw the latch and out we are.
   With a fa-la &c.

4.

For jarring sounds in London streets,
   Which still are passing by;
Where cowcumbers with Sand ho meets,
   And for loud mastry vie:
The driver whisling to his team,
Here wakes us from some rural dream.
   With a fa-la &c.
5.
From rising hills thro' distant views,
   We see the Sun decline;
Whilst every where the eye persues,
   The grazing flocks and kine:
Which home at night the Farmer brings,
And not the Post's but sheeps bell rings
   With a fa-la &c.

6.
We silver trouts and Cray-fish eat,
   Just taken from the stream;
And never think our meal compleat,
   Without fresh curds and cream:
And as we pass by the barn floor,
We choose our supper from the door.
   With a fa-la &c.

7.
Beneath our feet the partridge springs,
   As to the woods we go;
Where birds scarce stretch their painted wings,
   So little fear they shew:
But when our outspread hoops they spy,
They look when we like them shou'd fly.
   With a fa-la &c.

8.
Thro' verdant circles as we stray,
   To which no end we know;
As we o'er hanging boughs survey,
   And tufted grass below:
Delight into the fancy falls,
And happy days and verse recalls.
   With a fa-la &c.
9.
Oh! why did I these shades forsake,
And shelter of the grove;
The flowring shrub the rusling brake,
The solitude I love:
Where Emperours have fixt their lot,
And greatly chose to be forgot.
With a fa-la &c.

10.
Then how can I from hence depart,
Unless my pleasing friend;
Shou'd now her sweet harmonious art,
Unto these shades extend:
And like old Orpheus powerfull song,
Draw me and all my woods along.
With a fa-la &c.

11.
So charm'd like Birnam's they wou'd rise,
And march in goodly row,
But since it might the town surprize,
To see me travel so:
I must from soothing joys like these,
Too soon return in open chaise.
With a fa-la &c.

12.
Mean while accept what I have writ,
To shew this rural scene;
Nor look for sharp satyrick wit,
From off the balmy plain:
The country breeds no thorny bays,
But mirth and love and honest praise.
With a fa-la-la-la-la-la-la.
On Lady Cartret drest like a shepherdess at Count Volira's ball.

Quoth the Swains who got in at the late Masquerade
And never before left their flocks or their shade
What people are here who with splendor amaze
Or but with their antick variety please
Who talk to each other in voices unknown
And their faces are worse than their vizors when shown
Where the Nymphs we have left if amongs't 'em wou'd seem
More fair than the dazies which grow by the stream
Yet cold to the men who no title cou'd show
As our fields when the flocks are not seen for the snow
Whilst these appear kind & as easily won
As our apples are mellowed by age or the sun.

But just as the Coridons this had expres't
Lady Cartret came by like a shepherdess dres't
The innocent sweetness observed in her eyes
Agreeing so well with her rural disguise
Her lips & her skin which in pastoral disputes
They used to extoll by their flowers & their fruits
Exceeding comparisons drawn from the plains
At once discontented & ravish't the Swains
For Strephon who curious had stray'd thro' the rooms
And felt on the sheep that was wrought in the looms
Soon told them the courtship they made on the downs
Wou'd on Cartret be lost or occasion her frowns
For he heard the gallants who in feathers & lace
Did busily crowd & encumber the place
Declare that no favour of her's wou'd be shown
To any on earth but a Lord of her own

Then back they resolved to their valleys they'd go
And no more thence be brought by loud rumour or show
Nor shou'd Phillis they said in her holiday cloaths
With a pink in her hat in her bosom a rose
Nor Silvia who with the best cream in her bowl
Set a gloss on her forehead & breded her role
Or light hearted Cloe who laugh't ere she spoke
For ever hereafter their muses provoke
But all the green springs which their youth shou'd behold
Or chimnies where tales must revive them when old
Shou'd hear them repeat how they Cartret admired
Which said as they came they unheeded retired.
Sir plausible as 'tis well known
Has no opinions of his own
But closes with each stander by
Now in a truth now in a lie
Fast as Camelions change their dye
Has still some applicable story
To gratify or Whig or Tory
And with a Jacobite in tatters
If met alone he smoothly flatters
Is full of service and accosts
Knows each man's interests and his toasts
Uncivilly wou'd no one treat
To save his Honour or estate
Greets friend and foe with wishes fervent
And lives and dies your humble servant.
A Contemplation

Indulg'd by ev'ry active thought
When upwards they would fly
Nor can Ambition be a fault
If plac'd above the sky

When humble first we meekly crave
Remission for the past
We from the fore-tastes which we have
May guesse our Joys at last

Then let my Contemplations soar
And Heav'n my Subject be
Though low on Earth in nature poor
Some prospect we may see

And now that scene before me stands
And large Possessions there
Where none usurps another's Lands
And Theives we do not fear

All Care all Sorrow all Surprise
Fly from that World of peace
Where tears are wip'd from clouded Eyes
And Sighs for ever cease

Decay or Sickness find no place
In that untainted Air
But still th'incorruptable Face
Shall as at first be fair

Agility in pace or flight
The Blessed shall convey
Where e're the Lamb more fair then light
Shall lead the radiant way

Whilst Praises in Seraphick Sounds
The blissfull road shall trace
And musick seem to passe the bounds
Even of unbounded Space
Such balmy Odours shall disperse
   As from the Bridegroom's pores
The holy Canticles rehearse
   Fell on the Bolts and Doors

When to his Spouse the well belov'd
   More white then Jordans Flocks
Spake whilst her hand the Barrs remov'd
   And dew-drops fill'd his locks

The Crosse shall there triumphant rise
   And ev'ry Eye shall scan
That promis'd Ensign in the skies
   Close by the Son of Man

With Christ there Charles's Crown shall meet
   Which Martirdom adorns
And prostrate lye beneath his feet
   My Coronet of Thorns

The Lord to whom my life is joyn'd
   For Conscience here opprest
Shall there full retribution find
   And none his Claimes molest

Hypocrisy and feign'd pretence
   To cover foul Dissigns
Shall blussing fly as far from thence
   As to the deepest Mines

We there shall know the use of Foes
   Whom here we have forgiven
When we shall thank him for those woes
   Which pav'd our way to Heaven

There all good things that we have mist
   With Int'rest shall return
Whilst those who have each wish possest
   Shall for that fullnesse mourn
There Coventry of Tufton's Line
   For piety renown'd
Shall in transcending virtues Shine
   And Equally be Crown'd

Around her shall the Chains be spread
   Of Captives she has freed
And ev'ry Mouth that she has fed
   Shall testify the deed

Whilst Scools supplied to mend our youth
   Shall on the list be shown
A Daughter and a Mother both
   In Her the Church shall own

The Gospell crosse the seas rehearst
   By her diffusive aid
And fifty-thousand pounds dispers'd
   Shall there be largely paid

My Heart by her supporting Love
   In all its Cares upheld
For that, to see her Crown improve
   With transports shall be fill'd

From Gratitude what graces flow
   What endlessse pleasures spring
From Prayers whilst we remain below
   Above whilst Praise we Sing

And Mammon wert thou well employ'd
   What Mansions might be wonne
Whilst Woolsey's Pallace lyes destroy'd
   And Marlborough's is not done.

Whilst to this Heav'n my Soul Aspires
   All Suff'ring's here are light
He travels pleas'd who but desires
   A Sweet Repose at Night
APPENDIX B

POEMS IN TRIBUTE TO ANNE FINCH, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA
APOLLO OUTWITTED

To the Hon. Mrs. Finch, (since Countess of Winchilsea,) under the Name of Ardelia.

Phoebus now short'ning every Shade,
   Up to the Northern Tropick came,
And thence beheld a lovely Maid
   Attending on a Royal Dame.

The God laid down his feeble Rays;
   Then lighted from his glitt'ring Coach;
But fenc'd his Head with his own Bays,
   Before he durst the Nymph approach.

Under those sacred Leaves, secure
   From common Lighting of the Skies,
He fondly thought he might endure
   The Flashes of Ardelia's Eyes.

The Nymph, who oft had read in Books
   Of that bright God, whom Bards invoke,
Soon knew Apollo by his Looks,
   And guess'd his Business, e'er he spoke.

He in the old Celestial Cant,
   Confess'd his Flame, and swore by Styx,
Whate'er she would desire, to grant;
   But wise Ardelia knew his Tricks.

Ovid had warn'd her to beware
   Of stroling Gods, whose usual Trade is,
Under Pretence of taking Air,
   To pick up Sublunary Ladies.

Howe'er, she gave no flat Denial,
   As having Malice in her Heart;
And was resolv'd upon a Tryal,
   To cheat the God in his own Art.

Hear my Request, the Virgin said;
   Let which I please of all the Nine
Attend whene'er I want their Aid,
   Obey my Call, and only mine.
By Vow obliq'd, by Passion led,
The God could not refuse her Prayer:
He wav'd his Wreath thrice o'er her Head,
Thrice mutter'd something to the Air.

And now he thought to seize his Due,
But she the Charm already try'd,
Thalia heard the Call, and flew
To wait at bright Ardelia's Side.

On Sight of this celestial Prude,
Apollo thought it vain to stay,
Nor in her Presence durst be rude;
But made his Leg, and went away.

He hop'd to find some lucky Hour,
When on their Queen the Muses wait;
But Pallas owns Ardelia's Power;
For Vows divine are kept by Fate.

Then full of Rage Apollo spoke,
Deceitful Nymph! I see thy Art;
And though I can't my Gift revoke,
I'll disappoint its nobler Part.

Let stubborn Pride possess thee long,
And be thou negligent of Fame;
With ev'ry Muse to grace thy Song,
May'st thou despise a Poet's Name.

Of modest Poets thou be first,
To silent Shades repeat thy Verse,
Till Fame and Echo almost burst,
Yet hardly dare one Line rehearse.

And last, my Vengeance to compleat;
May you descend to take Renown,
Prevail'd on by the Thing you hate,
A Whig, and one that wears a Gown.

—Jonathan Swift

IMPROMPTU TO LADY W

In vain you boast poetic names of yore,
And cite those Sapphos we admire no more:
Fate doom'd the fall of every female wit,
But doom'd it then, when first Ardelia writ.
Of all examples by the world confess'd,
I knew Ardelia could not quote the best;
Who, like her mistress on Britannia's throne,
Fights and subdues in quarrels not her own.
To write their praise you but in vain essay;
E'en while you write, you take that praise away:
Light to the stars the sun does thus restore
But shines himself till they are seen no more.

—Alexander Pope

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