

Lucy Percy Hay (1599-1660), Countess of Carlisle

Wanton Seductress or Influential Broker?

by

Ingrid Lemstra

First reader: Dr. N.N.W. Akkerman

Second reader: Dr. J.F. van Dijkhuizen

MA Thesis presented to
The Department of Literary Studies
Faculty of Humanities
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Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle, painted by Anthony van Dyck 1637

BAL 72301, oil on canvas 218.4cm x 127cm, Private Collection.

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I dedicate this thesis to Ferdinand Dorsman (1958-2011) who will be in our hearts for ever.

A Note on Dates

In the seventeenth century, England still adopted the old-style Julian calendar which was ten days behind the new-style Gregorian calendar used on the continent. This thesis uses Julian calendar dates. The Julian calendar marked the new year alternately on 1 January or on Lady Day, 25 March. Therefore, dates falling in the period between January and March are expressed in the form 14 January 1640/41.

A Note on Spelling

For the sake of clarity, quotations from The National Archives letters will not be transcribed diplomatically except for Queen Henrietta Maria's letter in French to Lord Carlisle (TNA SP 16/123 f.96r). The spelling will be modernized. For instance, in Lucy's letter of 22 December 1628 to Lord Carlisle, "does" replaces "duse", "assurance" replaces "asurons" (TNA SP16/123 f.8r-8v).

List of Abbreviations

<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> . Ed. C. Matthew and B. Harrison, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

Introduction

Scholars have only recently acknowledged the important position that ladies-in-waiting held in Stuart court patronage. Women held many kinds of important facilitating roles in early modern society which have been obscured by male-focused historiographies; specifically within the court, ladies-in-waiting were ideally placed to dispense patronage because of their privileged access to the monarch. As Malcolm R. Smuts and others have noted, in seventeenth-century Europe, patron-client relationships were often dependent and subordinate to the power of the monarch (“The Structure of the Court” 1). The (usually male) patron rewarded his (usually male) clients with remuneration, career opportunities and protection in return for loyalty and service. A king, his Privy Chamber and parliament shaped the court’s formal political power, while a queen-consort and her female household influenced court politics unofficially. Unofficial court politics were still subject to certain procedures and rules; however, they often took place outside the public spheres, in other words, the formal male-dominated institutions of government and administration. Ladies-in-waiting operated hidden from view within the private spheres of the formally-structured household. Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben argue that “Ladies-in-waiting shaped the early modern European courts and influenced the politics and culture of their times” (3). Ladies-in-waiting had the power to recommend a person or a suit to the queen and to act as patrons and brokers to family and friends (Daybell, “Scripting a Female Voice” 3-4). This thesis sets out to show the operations of private-sphere female patronage by studying the patronage activities of one of Queen Henrietta Maria’s Ladies of the Bedchamber.

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth I, Bedchamber rearrangements made for the household of Queen Anna of Denmark (1574-1619), queen-consort to King James VI and I, raised the position of Lady of the Bedchamber to considerable prominence as Akkerman and

Clare McManus have shown (Akkerman, “The Goddess” 287-309; McManus, “Memorialising” 81-85). Consequently, under the reign of Charles I, female courtiers’ position changed yet further. The establishment of Henrietta Maria’s court involved a reorganisation of the queen’s household structure in 1627 which resulted in a clear separation of duties and functions between the Privy Chamber and the Queen’s Bedchamber: from that moment the Ladies of the Bedchamber could operate autonomously, rather than being supervised by the men of the Privy Chamber. Ladies of the Queen’s Bedchamber could now engage in politics independently (Wolfson 311-312).

Furthermore, the close personal relationship between Henrietta Maria and Charles, which intensified after the assassination in 1628 of Charles’s favourite, George Villiers (1592-1628), Duke of Buckingham, resulted in the growing influence of the queen and her household. The duke had monopolized the king’s favour to the detriment of the queen. Moreover, Buckingham had, to a large extent, controlled the allocation of reward. After the duke’s death, Charles increasingly sought council from his wife. As Henrietta Maria became more influential in external as well as internal political affairs, her Ladies of the Bedchamber were increasingly able to capitalize on their close access to her person. The queen’s bedchamber was now unambiguously a source of political power – as it had only been in a partial sense under James – and access to it was highly prized. The interaction of the courts of Henrietta Maria and Charles facilitated communication between the Queen’s Ladies of the Bedchamber and significant male figures at court (Smuts, “The Structure of the Court” 2; Hibbard 393-394). These ladies-in-waiting acted as intermediaries between the queen (and king) and leading officials in order to secure royal favour. Hence, a position within Queen Henrietta Maria’s Bedchamber provided aristocratic women with the opportunity to participate in domestic and foreign politics and exercise a degree of power over statesmen.

One lady-in-waiting who occupied such a position was Lucy Hay (1599-1660), née Percy, from 1622 Countess of Carlisle. Lucy was the daughter of Henry Percy (1564-1632), the ninth Earl of Northumberland, and Dorothy Devereux (1563x5?-1619), daughter of the first Earl of Essex. Lucy joined Queen Henrietta Maria's Bedchamber in 1626, an appointment which placed her at the heart of this powerful second court. She makes a particularly interesting subject for the study of Stuart female patronage because she also appears to have inspired a literary salon of her own at the Stuart court, independently from her mistress the queen (Veevers 35-37; Sanders, "Caroline Salon" 453-455). Considerable surviving evidence about her life thus testifies to her dual role as political patron and arbiter of cultural taste. This thesis investigates Lady Carlisle's cultural and political activities in order to ascertain to what extent she influenced court politics. It will analyse how Lady Carlisle was perceived by others, how she presented herself in conjunction with Queen Henrietta Maria and finally how she expressed herself autonomously through her correspondence.

Lucy's marriage on 6 November 1617 to James Hay (1580-1636), from 1622 Earl of Carlisle, was the starting point of her successful career as a female courtier. Lord Hay was a prominent courtier at King James's court. He successively became Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, Master of the Robes and, in 1613, Master of the Great Wardrobe. In 1616, Hay was appointed extraordinary ambassador to the court of Louis XIII (Schreiber 7-13). At age 17, Lucy enjoyed the company of the most powerful men at court. King James I, his son Charles Prince of Wales, later King Charles I, and James's prime favourite the Earl of Buckingham, were all present at the marriage feast (Sir Gerard Herbert to Carleton, 8 November 1617, TNA, SP 14/94 f.16r). Lucy caught Buckingham's eye at the feast. In 1619, her husband's return from an embassy to Heidelberg and Vienna was deliberately delayed by Buckingham because he intended to consummate his love for Lucy in Carlisle's absence (Betcherman 55,

63). Two years into her marriage, Lucy became Buckingham's mistress (this did not stop Buckingham from marrying Lady Katherine Manners in 1620). Because he was dependent on Buckingham's favour Carlisle subsequently accepted Lucy being Buckingham's lover (Akkerman, "A Triptych"). Groomed by her husband Carlisle and her lover Buckingham, Lucy made her entrance on the stage of court politics in 1626 by becoming Queen Henrietta Maria's Lady of the Bedchamber. Through her intimate relationships with the royal favourites, Carlisle and Buckingham, as well as her access to the queen, Lucy had immediate access to power and could hence influence politics and the arts ("Intimacy and Innovation" 71-75).

Contemporary authors were not blind to the changes in the cultural landscape. Over a dozen court poets soon became preoccupied with Lady Carlisle's beauty and wit (Betcherman 173; Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 10). Nevertheless, the countess's poetic representation was ambivalent. Some writers praised her for her kindness and virtue, while others accused her of being an immoral, egocentric and self-seeking intriguer. Were these negative representations of Lady Carlisle justified? It seems likely that a double standard was in operation. The conduct of the two men who prepared Lucy for her role as Lady of the Queen's Bedchamber was far from impeccable and it seems likely that Lucy herself took much of the criticism that might more fairly have been directed towards them. In fact, Lucy's promiscuity was not that different from the adulterous behaviour of the Duke of Buckingham, nor did her extravagant indulgence differ from her husband's spending habits. Lucy's admirers sought to win her favour to obtain patronage. Some of her rival courtiers may have attempted to undermine her powerful position at court, and negative literary representations of Lucy suited them well.

In a misogynist world, it required an extreme talent to exercise political power over men, even if women occupied the position of favourite, belonged to the aristocracy and were

privileged as the arbiters of taste and judgement. Lucy used her descent, beauty, cunning and wit to exert political power. In this way she played her part in the ongoing debate at that time over what constituted “natural” behaviour for women. In *Histriomastix* (1633), the Puritan pamphleteer William Prynne (1600-1669) condemned the fashions and activities of court life that he associated with immorality and vice. Prynne warned against the corrupting influence of court women, who performed on stage. Lady Carlisle acted as one of Queen Henrietta Maria’s masquers. Prynne feared that the increased dramatic freedom of women would encourage female insubordination and would eventually lead to a rise of female power (Veevers 89-91; Sanders, “Caroline Salon” 449). Courtier William Murray (d. 1655) expresses his misgivings about Lady Carlisle’s influential position in a letter to Sir Henry Vane (1589-1655), member of the Privy Council and ambassador to Sweden:

My Lord Holland’s friendship with Lady Carlisle is fully perfected. Her friends hope his credit may restore her to the Queen’s favour [after Buckingham’s assassination in 1628, Lucy’s position as the queen’s favourite became increasingly volatile], his apprehend her pride may endanger him, for my part I incline to the latter (8 December 1631, TNA SP 16/204 f.111r).

In a climate in which court women’s growing influence evoked hostility and criticism, Lady Carlisle became a source of inspiration to many poets.

In order to understand better the ways in which contemporary poets conceived Lucy, Chapter 1 will analyse five of Edward Waller’s and two of John Suckling’s poems composed c. 1626-1640 and dedicated to Lucy, as well as William Cartwright’s “Panegyric to the most Noble Lucy Countess of Carlisle” (1638) and Tobie Mathews’s “A Character of the Most Excellent Lady, Lucy Countess of Carlisle” (1636). Moreover, Chapter 1 will investigate the Countess of Carlisle’s significance within the context of the salon culture in England in

general and elite female self-fashioning in particular. As Erica Veevers and Julie Sanders have pointed out, Lucy had established a salon of her own, independently from Queen Henrietta Maria (Veevers 35-37; Sanders, “Caroline Salon” 453-455). According to Veevers, Henrietta Maria had created a cult which promoted “woman-worship” by emphasizing devoutness and modesty. In contrast, Lady Carlisle cultivated a movement in which women would be admired for their wit and sensual beauty by a number of (male) followers (Veevers 35-37). Her position in the centre of this alternative literary circle therefore invites particular scrutiny.

Subsequently, Chapter 2 will discuss how Lucy presented herself at court by examining the masques in which she performed: Ben Jonson’s *Chloridia* (1631) and Aurelian Townshend’s *Tempe Restored* (1632). Demonstrating how Lucy used her two performances in the queen’s masques to consolidate her key position at court, it will also show how Lady Carlisle’s powerful position can also be detected in her *absence* from other masques sponsored by the queen.

Finally, in an attempt to reveal further some of Lucy’s own ideas and aspirations, Chapter 3 will discuss the letters to her most political correspondent Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641), from 1632 Lord Deputy of Ireland, from 1640 first Earl of Strafford, as printed in *The Earl of Strafford’s Letters and Despatches* (1740); those letters Lucy wrote in her own hand to her sister Dorothy Sidney (1598-1659), Countess of Leicester, which are collected and edited in *The Correspondence (c. 1626-1659) of Dorothy Percy Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (2010); and Lucy’s handwritten letters to her husband James Hay, Lord Carlisle, as preserved in The National Archives, Kew. This thesis will demonstrate that Lucy Carlisle, as a lady-in-waiting at Queen Henrietta Maria’s court, played a major role in the politics of the Stuart Court.

Chapter 1

The Ambivalent Representation of Lucy, Countess of Carlisle in Caroline Court Literature

A curious dichotomy of Lucy, Countess of Carlisle, recurs noticeably in the comments contemporaries made about her. On the one hand, she was celebrated for her beauty, wit and influence. Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641), Earl of Strafford, Lord Deputy of Ireland, confided to Archbishop William Laud (1573-1645):

I judge her to be very considerable [worthy of consideration or regard, *OED* A3] for she is often in place [present, at hand, *OED* P2b] and is extremely well skilled how to speak with advantage and spirit for those friends she professeth unto, which will not be many (Smuts, "Religion," 19-20).

On the other hand, many jealously coveted the power she held as the queen's favourite and the doyenne of so many influential men – and many feared her too. In a letter of 20 April 1628, a Mr John Hope predicts that Lady Carlisle would soon be sent from court because of her affair with the Duke of Buckingham and her friendship with the queen:

for both the Duke's mother [Mary Villiers], his lady [Katherine Manners] and his sister [Susan Villiers, later Lady Denbigh] do hate her even to death, not only for my Lord Duke's lying with her but also for that she has the queen's heart above them all, so as in comparison she valueth them at nothing (TNA SP 16/101 f.93r-93v).

By having close access to the queen as well as to the Duke of Buckingham, Lucy weakened the powerful position of the duke's female relatives. Contemporary correspondence

demonstrates that Lady Carlisle was both admired and despised for the influence she exerted over key figures at the Stuart court.

Besides being discussed in letters, Lady Carlisle was also the subject of court poetry. Cultural historians have long recognized that court poetry helped create and maintain the public image of a courtier (see, for instance, Greenblatt 3-4) – and that strong critiques can also lie between the lines. This chapter seeks to understand the ways that poets interrogated both Lucy’s public persona and the shifting cultural power dynamics around her. In order to gain a better understanding of the reactions of contemporary poets to Lucy, I will analyse five of Edmund Waller’s and two of John Suckling’s poems dedicated to her (all written in the years 1626-1640), plus William Cartwright’s “Panegyric to the most Noble Lucy Countess of Carlisle” (1638) and Tobie Mathews’s “A Character of the Most Excellent Lady, Lucy Countess of Carlisle” (1636). Close reading of these poems will demonstrate the extent to which Lucy’s personality inspired poets to shape the identity of a muse. As will become clear, poets felt the need to invoke a different muse who would provide a more tangible subject of adoration than the queen’s concept of the ideal untouchable woman.

I want to argue that these poems cannot be interpreted adequately without an understanding of the nature of the royal bedchamber – the political context for their production and dissemination. In seventeenth-century society control of resources, political power and social status still partly depended on access to the royal court, ultimately to the king and queen. David Starkey talks of “the politics of intimacy” to communicate the dependence of power and political influence upon access to the king’s Privy Chamber, the private rooms where the king remained with his intimate entourage (“Introduction” 9; “Intimacy and Innovation” 71). The queen’s Bedchamber, too, was a centre of power. Noblewomen like Lucy Hay, as Ladies of the Bedchamber, had significant influence as patrons and brokers, as they were in a position to facilitate meetings and treaties between

powerful men and their queen (Akkerman and Houben 4). In order to approach the centre of power, poets took ladies-in-waiting as their muses, addressing lyrical tributes to their platonic mistresses and hoping for increased access to the monarch's private circle.

By the 1630s Queen Henrietta Maria had inspired a fashionable interest in Platonic Love, brought from France. Platonic Love celebrated the spiritual bond between women and men and served as a formative model for courtly behaviour. A woman's beauty and virtue was thought to inspire a higher, chaste love, purged from physical passion (Veevers 14-15). French Platonic Love was a fashion prone to change and developed into different strands in England. Erica Veevers suggests that Queen Henrietta Maria adapted the extreme woman-worship of *Préciosité*, which focusses on "the beauty who dispenses her beneficent influence to a coterie of admirers, who in turn immortalize her in verse", into a more religious version called *Honnêteté* (37). *Honnêteté* accentuated certain feminine virtues, such as devoutness and modesty, which were considered essential in a woman's role as creator of social harmony, and were believed to be instrumental in leading a virtuous court life. Henrietta Maria's spiritual attitude towards love contrasts with Lucy's intellectual approach, which could turn love into a game. Veevers finds it plausible that the countess became the centre of a salon type of *Préciosité* fashion, which coexisted with the queen's fashion of *Honnêteté* (35-37). Both salons celebrated Platonic Love and attracted courtiers and poets who were in need of a source of inspiration.

These two salons were attended by poets who sought new opportunities to express their loyalty in return for potential patronage. One such poet was Edmund Waller (1606-1687), "the unofficial laureate of the Percy interest" (Raylor, "A New Poem" 218). He formed a strong alliance with the Percy faction, Lucy's family, characterized by their critical view of royal policy and their affiliation with parliament. Having successfully gained the favour of Charles I, Lucy's brother Algernon Percy, tenth Earl of Northumberland (1602-1668) was

appointed Lord Admiral in 1638. Waller used the Percys to launch a career as a poet and addressed his earliest poems to Lucy's brother Algernon, to her nieces Dorothy Sidney (1617-1684) (aka "Sacharissa") and Lucy Sidney (1630-1685) and finally to Lucy herself. Through Lucy he attempted to attract the queen's attention, possibly because he wanted to obtain an office at court or sought further literary patronage.

In "The Countess of Carlisle in Mourning" (c.1636-1637), Waller devotes the greater part of his panegyric to Lady Carlisle by praising her transcendent nature in a Précieux-like manner. Waller was influenced by the French Précieux poet Vincent Voiture (1597-1648) who himself was one of Lady Carlisle's admirers during a visit in 1633 (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 11). The concept of an elevated Précieux society, created by a group of aristocrats at the French court, was based on a social movement which attempted to refine both court manners and speech. Gallantry was not a representation of the purification of human feelings but sooner a mannerly play to cover up sexual desire and lack of virtue (Kaminski 20). As Thomas Kaminski points out, Waller demonstrates the ambiguity between public behaviour and private conduct in a Précieux society (20).

Waller sought an opportunity to address Lucy. When her husband died of a stroke in 1636, Waller composed his poem in her praise. Lord Carlisle's death may have finally given Waller the opportunity to address the countess. Waller describes Lady Carlisle's power of turning grief into joy. By having induced the "new-formed light" (l. 9) Lucy overcomes the "eternal night" (l. 10) (that is, the death of her husband). Waller illustrates the countess's capability of influencing the world around her. However, when Waller takes the liberty to describe the nature of her mourning her dead husband, the tone of the poem becomes less flattering. The poet insinuates that Lucy's sorrow may be opportunistic and used to glorify herself. He urges her to stop her excessive mourning:

Then mourn no more, lest thou admit increase

Of glory by thy noble lord's decease.

We find not that the laughter-loving dame

Mourn'd for Anchises; 'twas enough she came

To grace the mortal with her deathless bed,

And that his living eyes such beauty fed (ll. 11-16).

Lines 11 and 12 seem to question the countess's decision to show her grief in public. Just as Venus, "the laughter-loving dame" (l. 13), did not publicly mourn for her lover Anchises (l. 14), the countess should mourn in private; in public, she should continue performing her role as muse and being a source of inspiration because "those eyes were made to banish grief" (l. 19). Lucy's beauty is there to ease the sadness and sorrow others may feel for the death of the earl. Waller is critical. He commands Lady Carlisle to cease her overt mourning when he writes: "If thou lament, thou must do so alone; / Grief in thy presence can lay hold on none" (ll. 23-24). Waller seems to acknowledge Lucy's power and encourages her to continue to publicly perform her role of the beautiful muse so that others may find comfort.

In the poem's first ten lines, Waller uses tropes like "sun", "heaven", etc., in exalted overstatements to praise his mistress: "But just so much as lets the sun appear / Heaven then would seem thy image, and reflect" (ll. 2-3). Waller implicitly puns on his subject's first name to contrast Lucy's brightness (*luce*) with the darkness of grief and mourning: "When from black clouds no part of sky is clear" (l. 1), "Those sable vestments, and that bright aspect" (l. 4), "A spark of virtue by the deepest shade" (l. 5). Next, Waller praises the countess's ability to make the sun appear, and compares her beauty to "A Venus rising from a sea of jet!" (l. 8).

In other words, her beauty is so overwhelming that darkness disappears and light prevails. Waller uses, perhaps with a twist of irony, hyperbolic language to confirm how far the countess's power reached. Lucy's virtue and beauty attract the light and the sun, thus opening the way to heaven and the love of God. As it was commonplace to compare the king to the sun, Waller might even suggest here that Lady Carlisle has the power to attract the attention of the king and open the way to favour and access to the Queen's Bedchamber. The poet acknowledges Lady Carlisle's influence at court as muse but perhaps also as broker.

As Raymond Anselment and Kaminski have suggested, Waller's poem "Of Her Chamber" (c.1636-1637) seems to refer to Lucy's salon-style gatherings (Anselment 221; Kaminski 23). Once more the countess is idolized and worshipped. Waller compares attendance at one of Lucy's gatherings to a paradisaical experience: "But we this paradise approach alive" (l. 2). All men present are driven by one passion: to become one of Lucy's favourites. Waller's depicted Lucy as a dominant figure, who is the inspiration of ambition and hope, as well as the cause for men to lose themselves. She is both "Phoebus" (l. 21) – Apollo, the sun god, an epithet normally used for men – and the desirable woman who is admired: "Born for no one, but to delight the race of men" (l. 20).

In "The Country to My Lady Carlisle" (c.1636-37), Waller contrasts the court (city) and the country. This poem and two of Waller's other poems, both entitled "At Penshurst", are closely associated with Penshurst Place, the Sidney family's country estate run from 1623 by Lucy's sister, Dorothy Percy Sidney (1598-1659), Countess of Leicester (Brennan, Kinnamon and Hannay 31). Ben Jonson's country house poem "To Penshurst" (1611) served as a model for Waller. Like Jonson, Waller sought the patronage of the Sidneys and celebrated the family's country estate. Both poets were admirers of Sir Philip Sidney (1554-

1586), a poet and courtier, and great-uncle of Dorothy Sidney, Lucy's niece, whom Waller chose as his muse "Sacharissa".

In the first "At Penshurst" poem, the speaker leaves his mark on a tree, "Go, boy, and carve this passion on the bark / Of yonder tree, which stands the sacred mark / Of noble Sidney's birth" (ll. 25-27). Here Waller follows Jonson's poem "To Penshurst":

That taller tree, which of a nut was set

At his great birth where all the Muses met.

There in the writhèd bark are cut the names

Of many a sylvan, taken with his flames (ll. 14-17).

The poet's determination to inscribe his words on Sidney's tree seems to be a metaphor for Waller's ambition to gain patronage from the prestigious Sidneys, even perhaps to become a member of the family by marrying "Sacharissa". Being part of the Sidney family would increase the chance of obtaining a career at court. However, Waller had to abandon any prospects of achieving kinship with a Sidney through his poetry written for, and courtship of, "Sacharissa". In the second "At Penshurst", the poet finds solace in woods of Penshurst while expressing his indignation. It is "Sacharissa" (Dorothy) who seems out of place in Penshurst's natural harmony, not behaving like one of Sir Philip Sidney's descendants, the speaker argues:

To thee a wild a cruel soul is given,

More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven!

Love's foe profess'd! why dost thou falsely feign

Thyself a Sidney? From which noble strain

He sprung, that could so far exalt the name

Of love, and warm our nation with his flame (ll. 7-12).

Waller seems to contrast Dorothy's "cruel" behaviour with that of Dorothy's grandmother, Lady Barbara Sidney (c. 1559-1621), Countess of Leicester, who was praised by Jonson for her "high housewifery" and warm hospitality (Jonson, "To Penshurst" ll. 85-88; Akkerman, "A Triptych").

Timothy Raylor suggests "The Country to My Lady Carlisle" is connected with Waller's two "At Penshurst" poems because all three poems pay tribute to the soothing and idyllic scenery of Penshurst: "the peace and glory which these alleys have" ("At Penshurst" [I], l. 4), "while in this park I sing, the list'ning dear / Attend my passion, and forget to fear" ("At Penshurst" [II], ll. 1-2), "your beauty next to our solitude invades / And warms us, shining through the thickest shades" ("The Country to My Lady Carlisle", ll. 5-6). Moreover, the figure of Orpheus appears in all three poems, who despite his ability to charm all living things with his music was unable to retrieve his wife Eurydice from the underworld (Raylor, "The Early Poetic" 258-259). Waller alludes to the doomed relationship between Orpheus and Eurydice. Perhaps in doing so, he expresses his frustration of having ruined any prospect of a career at the queen's court as a result of his failure to become associated with Lady Carlisle and the Sidney family.

After her husband's death, Lucy stayed with her sister at Penshurst for several months. Waller's tribute to the countess, "The Country to My Lady Carlisle", might have been composed to welcome her to the country estate (Raylor, "The Early Poetic" 259). Waller portrays the country as the unbiased setting for addressing his mistress: "Mirrors are taught to

flatter, but our springs / Present th' impartial images of things" (ll. 11-12). Once more Waller celebrates Lady Carlisle's beauty, but at the same time he expresses a more critical view. In the final lines of this poem, Waller implies that the countess is far from harmless and warns against Lucy's almost 'unnatural' power: "From Phoebus rage our shadows and our streams / May guard us better than from Carlisle's beams" (ll. 23-24). The poet may have turned on Lucy because she was the aunt of his "cruel nymph" ("At Penshurst" [II], l. 41). Lucy was trying to find a suitable husband for Dorothy, but Waller was never considered as an eligible candidate (Akkerman "Triptych"). In "The Country to My Lady Carlisle", Waller demonstrates Lady Carlisle's important position within the Sidney family. Waller's poetry, as discussed in this chapter, acknowledges Lucy's influence as a broker of patronage. The poet depicts an ambivalent image of the countess. He both idolizes her beauty and fears her potential abuse of power.

Sir John Suckling (1609-1641?) was one of King Charles I's courtiers. The poem "Upon my Lady Carlisle Walking in Hampton-Court Garden" presents a dialogue between Suckling and fellow poet Thomas Carew (1594/5-1640). Still, as Thomas Clayton explains, the poem was most likely entirely written by Suckling (x-xi). It contains two views of Lucy. The first speaker, Thom., i.e. Carew, admires her and considers her to be "a thing so near a Deity" (l. 19) – yet he also fears her power. The second speaker, J.S., i.e. Suckling, neither seems to share Carew's platonic admiration nor fears her the power of her beauty: he detects neither "divinity" (l. 41) nor "danger" (l. 41) in her face. Instead, his worship is of "flesh and blood" (l. 24). Suckling fantasizes about undressing Lady Carlisle:

I was undoing all she wore,

And had she walkt but one turn more,

Eve in her first state had not been

More naked, or more plainly seen (ll. 28-31).

What is more, Suckling implies that he does not need to have any scruples about his desires for Lucy, since so many others have made love to her before:

Troth in her face I could descry

No danger, no divinity.

But since the pillars were so good

On which the lovely fountain stood,

Being once come so near, I think

I should have ventur'd hard to drink.

What ever fool like me had been

If I'd not done as well as seen?

There to be lost why should I doubt,

Where fools with ease go in and out? (ll. 40-50).

Clayton notes the existence of variant texts of this poem in which these last ten lines have been omitted (ix), the ones in which Suckling notably alludes to her promiscuity. Even though it was common knowledge that from 1619 until 1628 Lucy had had an adulterous affair with the Duke of Buckingham, Suckling's degrading commentary might have gone a step too far for some of the scribes who copied the poem.

Raymond Anselment argues that in "Upon my Lady [...]" Suckling parodies Carew's poetic elevation of the countess as revealed in Carew's poems "To the New Year, for the Countess of Carlisle" (1631) and "A New-Years Sacrifice. To Lucinda" (1632). Carew wrote

those two poems as New Year's gifts for Lady Carlisle. Suckling questions whether Carew's poetry is a sincere homage; Carew's inspiration may have been induced by opportunism instead of being engendered by the countess's greatness (Anselment 224). The poet might have felt resentful because he did not receive Lucy's patronage while Carew and others clearly did.

In 1637 Suckling composed "The Wits" in which he accused another poet Tobie Mathews (1577-1655) of opportunism while writing "The Character" on "your sorry Lady Muse" (l. 63), Lady Carlisle. Suckling argues in "The Wits" that it was only because of Lucy's influence at court that Mathews became a royal favourite. Suckling's words about Lady Carlisle are derogatory and he refuses to play the coterie game with the countess. Like Carew and Mathews, he uses Lucy's reputation of being a wanton seductress as a source of inspiration. Unlike Waller, Suckling, in an arrogant and degrading way, contributes to Lucy's image of being an influential Court Lady.

Lady Carlisle's queen-like image was revealed in the works of William Cartwright (1611-1643). He was an Oxford Christ Church scholar and one of the "club of great Wits at Oxford" (Blakemore Evans 11). He was a royal favourite who also wrote several plays to entertain the king and queen, amongst which are *The Royal Slave* (1636) and *The Lady Errant* (1636/37). Cartwright's "Panegyrick to the most Noble Lucy Countess of Carlisle" (1638) contradicts Suckling's negative portrayal of the countess. It was written during the height of her court influence, when her brother Algernon had been made Lord High Admiral. Cartwright's elaborate praise of Lucy is comparable to a tribute to a queen, using words such as "Lustre" (l. 22) and "Majestickness" (l. 24). In fact, Gwynne Blakemore Evans has pointed out that fragments of this poem are found in Rawlinson Manuscript D. 951, in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, transcribed from Cartwright's printed *Works* (1651), and in these excerpts

the poem is entitled “To the Queene” (676). In Cartwright’s account, the impressive position of the countess becomes apparent:

Whiles you appear a Court, and are no less
Than a whole Presence, or throng’d glorious Press;
No one can ere mistake you. ’Tis alone
Your lot, where e’r you come to be still known (ll. 89-92).

Moreover, Cartwright expressed his admiration for the countess’s independent spirit:

All is your own, and Native: for as pure
Fire lends it self to all, and will endure
Nothing from others; So what you impart
Comes not from Others Principles, or Art,
But is Ingenite [innate; natural, *OED* 1] all, and still your Owne,
Your self sufficing to your self alone (ll. 105-110).

Here Lucy’s egocentricity is not considered immoral. She is seen as a virtuous person “by daring to be good at Court” (l. 62).

Cartwright’s descriptions of Lucy accord with the conventions of the queen’s ideal of love, which permitted women to use “their beauty and virtue in such a way as to make cordial relations between the sexes and for a general social harmony governed by religion” (Veevers 3). However, the panegyric seems to contain another more political purpose. Not only did

Cartwright suggest that Lucy represented her own 'court' – “Whiles you appear a Court, and are no less / Than a whole Presence, or throng'd glorious Press” (ll. 89-90) – he also implied that the countess possessed an inner beauty that was the reflection of her “proportion'd Soul” (l. 31). Veevers claims that Cartwright's lines “that Light which we find / Streams in your Eye, is Knowledge in your Mind” (ll. 39-40) describe Lucy's intellectual rather than emotional attitude towards love, a *Précieux* quality the queen did not have according to Veevers (38). Even if the “Panegyrick to the most Noble Lucy Countess of Carlisle” may not be as eloquent as the eulogies Cartwright dedicated to the royal family, as Blakemore Evans claims (38), the poem does show that Lucy's image was elevated enough to compete with the queen's.

A final piece of poetical evidence can be supplied by Tobie Mathews's eulogy “Character of the most excellent Lady, Lucy of Carlisle”. As Lucy's confidante, Mathews benefited from the close connection the countess had with the queen, as Suckling had implied in his poem “The Wits”:

Toby Mathew (pox on 't! how came he there?)

Was busily whispering some-body i'th'ear,

When he had the honour to be nam'd i'the Court;

But Sir, you may thank my Lady Carlile for't. (ll. 57-60)

Mathews's “Character” of Lucy is an almost religious adoration of the countess, whose lustrous beauty and sharp wit cannot be surpassed. Yet Mathews's frankness exposed a side of the countess that could be interpreted as less favourable. The image of a flawed character emerges, who seems more interested in the merit of love than the spirit of love, and incapable of true passion. According to Mathews, the countess “will freely discourse of love” (l. 9) but

“seem not to understand it” (l. 14). Mathews continues his satire and characterizes Lucy as a person who “cannot love in earnest” (l. 16), “So con / tenting her self to play with love, as with a child” (ll. 17-18).

Thus, the countess is depicted as a powerful yet unloving and narcissistic person whose “un-numbered perfections” (ll. 22-23) do not include inner beauty. Writing satiric portraits to tease and embarrass one another was fashionable amongst courtiers, and Lucy is believed to have anonymously written an even more witty retort that is now lost (Smuts, *Court Culture* 191). Perhaps Mathews’s disguised criticism of Lucy was seen as pure entertainment. Contemporaries such as Suckling dismissed it as “a ridiculous piece” (Anselment 227) because it echoed Platonic rhetoric of the disdainful mistress. Be that as it may, Mathews’s satirical “Character” underlines the ambivalent representation of the countess.

The Countess of Carlisle was often the idolized subject of court poetry. Platonic love and morality were issues frequently discussed in such poetry. The need to have some sort of reference point for a more realistic subject of adoration than the *honnête femme* concept of what the ideal woman should be like is prevalent. This could never have been the queen herself of course, but a noblewoman like Lucy might serve the purpose. Although some of the characteristics Lucy was associated with were immoral, the image of a powerful and resourceful ‘real’ woman predominates. During her prime, in the 1630s, courtiers and poets worshipped the countess according to the Platonic conventions and attested to Lucy’s influence at court. At the same time, there were those who wanted to undermine her powerful position, foregrounding Lucy’s wanton reputation. By doing so, poets created an ambivalent portrait of a woman whose presence at court had become vital, despite her not meeting the requirements of the queen’s platonic ideal of a woman. In a sense she was given the part of

the anti-heroine, the rival queen. Lucy's strong, albeit ambivalent, representation in court literature bears witness to the influential position of aristocratic noblewomen at the Caroline court.

Lucy, Countess of Carlisle's Performance and Refusal of Performance in Court Masques

In the previous chapter Lucy, Countess of Carlisle's image was discussed as seen from a male perspective, through court poetry. This chapter will investigate her significance at the Caroline court in relation to elite female self-representation: female performance in court masques. Two masques will be examined: *Chloridia* (1631) by Ben Jonson (1572-1637) and *Tempe Restored* (1632) by Aurelian Townshend (fl.1583-1649?). Lady Carlisle performed in both these masques that were commissioned by Queen Henrietta Maria. Subsequently, this chapter will discuss Lady Carlisle's apparent refusal of participation in *The Temple of Love* (1635) by William Davenant (1606-1668), also commissioned by the queen, and explore a possible rationale as to why she only performed in two out of the thirteen masques the queen sponsored. If performance in masques can be seen as an indication and perhaps confirmation and renegotiation of the courtier's place at court, as Nadine Akkerman suggests ("The Goddess" 289), it is significant that Lady Carlisle only danced in two masques, whereas other Ladies of the Queen's Bedchamber such as Anne, Countess of Carnarvon (c.1610-1643) and Anne, Countess of Newport (d.1669) danced in at least five (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 102; Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque* 74). The fact that Lucy's performance was limited to two masques only could suggest that her position at court was relatively influential and stable. The moments she took the stage could therefore also be seen as more meaningful: at such times she felt a necessity to renegotiate or confirm her position. In short, in order to further determine the nature and stability of Lucy's influence at the Caroline court, not only her presence but also her absence in court masques will be analysed.

The masque can be described as

a form of courtly dramatic entertainment, often richly symbolic, in which music and dancing played a substantial part, costumes and stage machinery tended to be elaborate, and the audience might be invited to contribute to the action or the dancing (*OED*).

Although the masque is known to have been performed at the courts of King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I, it only became a clearly defined genre during the reigns of King James I and his son Charles I (and predominantly under the influence of their respective consorts). In 1605 Jonson introduced a tripartite structure of the masque, including the antimasque, presented as a world of disorder or vice, and the masque proper, the ideal world of order and harmony which was to overcome and supersede evil and chaos (Orgel, *The Illusion* 40). The revels, the third and final part, consisted of a dance, where the masquers would invite members of the audience for more dancing (Ravelhofer, "Dance" 175).

Peter Holman defines the masque as "a celebration of some special event in an act of courtly homage to the monarch; an event which by its magnificence flattered the man who paid for it all" (1). Often a masque sponsored by the king and rehearsed by the king's household, the king's masque, would be followed by the queen's masque, one sponsored by the queen and practiced by her household, using separate but complementary sets of images. The union of masculine and feminine qualities, such as body and spirit, earth and heaven, were reinforced by the harmonious union of king and queen (Veevers 111, 119). Jonson's masque for the king, *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis*, was performed on 9 January 1631. It was followed by the queen's masque *Chloridia*, at Shrovetide on 22 February 1631 (Orgel and Strong 2: 466). The king's masque, Townshend's *Albion's Triumph*, was performed on 8 January 1632. On 14 February 1632, to mark the end of the carnival, it was followed by the

queen's masque, *Tempe Restored*, a sumptuous masque in which Henrietta Maria was celebrated as "Devine Beauty" (Orgel and Strong 2: 479; Veevers 112).

Many critics have stressed the masque's political and ideological significance (see for instance, Orgel, *The Illusion* 38-39; Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 3; Veevers 110; McManus, "Memorialising" 3). On the one hand, court masques are seen as significant expressions of royal power (see for instance, Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 14; Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 3; Orgel, *The Illusion* 45; Veevers 9). Artists such as Jonson and Inigo Jones (1573-1652) were commissioned to stage magnificent illusions in which King James and Queen Anna and later King Charles and Queen Henrietta Maria would develop from rulers of a court to rulers of the universe, thus justifying the royal couples' autocratic reign (Orgel, *The Illusion* 45-56). When the king and queen themselves performed their roles on stage, the lines between fiction and reality blurred. As a result, masques became ceremonial performances through which royal power was legitimised. As Veevers asserts, their meaning can only be understood in connection to the cultural climate and intellectual interests of those who performed and those who perceived the masque (9-10), as will become clear. Masques presented at court were intended to be dialogues between king / queen and their subjects; they were to define areas of agreement and resolve areas of disagreement in order to reach an apparent consensus (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 29-30).

Masques also enabled the courtier to show his affiliation and confirm his closeness to power. Appearing in court masques could be a way of self-fashioning (Akkerman, "The Goddess" 289; Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 24, 26, 31). In this respect, masques were reflections of the manipulation of the social relationships within the court community. This became all the more apparent when the Duke of Buckingham's monopoly of royal patronage was cut short by his assassination in 1628. Masques were the arenas where courtiers competed for attention. Charles's masques increasingly displayed Whitehall as peaceful and orderly,

projecting the loyal subordination of courtiers to king (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 288). Yet, as said before, the king's masques were often followed by the queen's masques. The time that the masque stage was an arena of competition for courtiers who all desired to gain not only King Charles's favour but Queen Henrietta Maria's as well started soon after her arrival in England in 1625.

From the death of Queen Anna in 1619 until the arrival of Queen Henrietta Maria in England in 1625, there had not been a queen's court. Furthermore, due to the severe economic depression from 1620 until 1625, King James, and after his death in 1625, King Charles, could not afford to commission lavish court masques. As a result, there had not been a semi-private theatrical stage on which courtiers could compete for patronage and preferment during the years 1619-1625. Henrietta Maria's arrival in England showed a revival of the importance of the queen's court, which was reflected in the new queen's staging of her own innovative entertainments in which she favoured the court architect Jones over the court poet Jonson for the invention of her masques.

The cooperation between the two main inventors of court masques, Jonson and the Jones, turned into a struggle for power. The first twenty years of his theatrical career, Jones designed his stages almost exclusively for Jonson's masques. The two men had a contentious relationship, arguing about "whether spectacle was an expression of the text, or text an explanation of the spectacle" (Orgel and Strong 1: 16). Jonson seemed to have lost the battle. After *Chloridia* he would never be involved in the creation of a masque at Whitehall again, while Jones's role in the inventions of the royal couple's productions would only increase (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 89). A year later, *Albion's Triumph* and *Tempe Restored*, both invented by Jones with verses composed by Townshend, were presented at Whitehall Banqueting House 3 (Orgel and Strong 2: 453, 479).

Like Jones, Lady Carlisle had rapidly become influential at the queen's court. Shortly after her arrival in England in 1625, Henrietta Maria's French household was replaced by English attendants, among whom Lady Denbigh, Buckingham's sister, and Lucy, Buckingham's mistress; those English attendants were keen for new opportunities to advance their social and political agendas (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 33-34). Henrietta Maria would have had no choice but to accept Buckingham's female clients as her ladies (Betcherman 92; Smuts, "The Structure of the Court" 18). By 1627 Henrietta Maria's initial aversion to the appointments of Lucy and Lady Denbigh as her Ladies of the Bedchamber had transformed into an acceptance. Still, she was determined to wield some influence of her own over the structure of her own household: she placed Lucy above Denbigh. Some critics, such as Karen Britland and Sarah Wolfson, point out that this could be interpreted as Henrietta Maria's way of getting back at her husband's closest favourite, Buckingham, favouring Lucy above Lady Denbigh (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 63; Wolfson 318). Lady Denbigh and Buckingham's wife, the Duchess of Buckingham, were excluded from private dinners that Henrietta Maria and Lady Carlisle attended (Wolfson 317). However, if getting back at Buckingham was the queen's intention, one can question whether the strategy was effective: after all, by granting Lucy, Buckingham's mistress, the most prominent position, his indirect influence in her household would hardly diminish, even if his sister was demoted.

Lucy's position changed in 1627. In that year her husband, James Hay, created Earl of Carlisle in 1622, opposed the war policy of the Stuart Crown against France, a policy which was fervently pursued by Buckingham. In retaliation, Buckingham had refused to support the Earl of Carlisle's endeavours to obtain the post of Lord Chamberlain to the king (Wolfson 319). Carlisle was promoting King Charles's dual foreign policy of concluding peace with France and fighting the pro-Spanish Habsburgs while at the same time initiating an Anglo-Spanish alliance in order to recover the Palatinate (once ruled by Frederick V, who was

married to Charles's sister Elizabeth). The Lower Palatinate had been annexed by Spain in 1620 (Schreiber 110-111, 113). The Carlises began to nurture a friendship with the queen in order to retain their influence over Charles, whose favour they had lost because of Lord Carlisle's fall-out with Buckingham (Schreiber 102). After his assassination in 1628, Buckingham could obviously no longer subdue the rivalry between his sister, Lady Denbigh, and his mistress, Lady Carlisle. Being a member of the Villiers family, Lady Denbigh was able to retain her pre-eminent position at the queen's court (Betcherman 127). Lucy needed to gain Henrietta Maria's favour on her own terms, in order to consolidate her position at court. Lady Carlisle's two appearances in the queen's masques in 1631 and 1632, in *Chloridia* and *Tempe Restored* respectively, seem to support the idea that the countess used her performances to strengthen the ties between her and the queen.

Another lady ready to replace Lucy was Isabel Rich (d.1655), wife of Henry Rich (1590-1649), first Earl of Holland; she was to be the queen's new favourite because her husband supported a French alliance. The French ambassador to the Stuart court, Charles de l' Aubespine (1580-1653), Marquis de Chateauneuf, clearly attempted to create a new pro-French faction surrounding Henrietta Maria (Wolfson 327). On this ambassador's instigation, Lucy, who no longer enjoyed Buckingham's protection, was temporarily removed from court in 1629. Lucy had publicly humiliated the ambassador by portraying him in a sharp-witted and critical way, which had provided him with an excuse to request her dismissal and Lady Holland's promotion (Schreiber 126; Betcherman 121-22). Furthermore, the French ambassador supported Lord Holland (former protégée of Carlisle and in favour of Parliament being recalled) to be appointed Lord High Admiral to replace the late Buckingham, even though Carlisle was against the appointment. Carlisle wanted to obtain the position of Lord Chamberlain, which could possibly be accomplished if William Herbert (1580-1630), third Earl of Pembroke, was made Lord High Admiral (Schreiber 117). Carlisle failed to secure the

position, which was granted to Philip Herbert (1584–1650), the first Earl of Montgomery and fourth Earl of Pembroke, who succeeded his brother William Herbert as Lord Chamberlain. The ambassador's meddling seemed to do the trick. Carlisle's pro-Spanish attitude caused Henrietta Maria's favouritism for himself and his wife Lucy to change. In support of her husband and herself Lady Carlisle clearly needed to find ways to accommodate Queen Henrietta Maria.

Only when the dispute between Carlisle and Holland was openly reconciled in February 1630 was Lucy allowed to return to Henrietta Maria's court. The French ambassador had tried to eliminate one of his opponents, Lord Carlisle, through striking at that opponent's wife. Yet the ambassador started to irritate the king. His meddling in the governmental affairs (manipulating the appointment of chief ministers) resulted in Charles's reaffirmation of Carlisle and Lucy's position (Schreiber 126). She was back at court within months. In this light it may be useful to note that she was originally placed at the side of Henrietta Maria by Buckingham, Charles's first minister (Smuts, "Religion" 18; Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 34; Wolfson 315). Having been reinstated at the queen's court in 1630, Lucy would look to dance in the queen's masques in an attempt to consolidate Henrietta Maria's favour. She wanted to regain her position at the queen's court, now occupied by Lady Holland. Lucy danced in *Chloridia* and *Tempe Restored*.

2.1 CHLORIDIA

Besides being a platform for the struggle for power at court, masques were used to promote the harmonious image of the royal couple. In the only sequential pair of masques Jonson wrote for Charles and Henrietta Maria in 1630-31, *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis* and *Chloridia*, he launched the concept of using masques as a tool to shape the romantic image of the couple, presenting the monarch as a heroic knight and the consort as

his spiritual and virtuous mistress (Butler, “Jonson” 34). As masques resonated with current affairs (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 27), the apparent occasion to stage *Love’s Triumph* was the Treaty of Spain of 1630, which ended five years of Anglo-Spanish war.

Nevertheless, the entertainment seems also to have focused on internal issues rather than on foreign policy alone, since none of the foreign ambassadors were allowed to attend (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 289). Even the Spanish ambassador, Carlos Coloma (1566-1637), was denied attendance. At the time, the control of London’s overpopulation was a matter of domestic concern. Charles attempted to purge the infection caused by the plague, fostered by the uncleanness and chaos of the large community of pauperized people in the metropolis, by regulating expansion of buildings and establishing common standard of hygiene and orderliness (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 291-292). “Heroic Love” (*Love’s Triumph* 1. 122), personified by the king, would be able to legitimize the government’s plans for a regenerated capital once he would possess “Divine Beauty”, embodied by Henrietta Maria. This emphasized the harmonious and fruitful union between the king and the queen (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 289-290) and seemed to underline Henrietta Maria’s political power as “Heroic Love” cannot act without “Divine Beauty”.

Chloridia was the queen’s response to the king’s display of triumphant imperialistic power in *Love’s Triumph Through Callipolis*. The fact that *Chloridia* starts where *Love’s Triumph* had ended, in a garden (Orgel and Strong 1: 56), may confirm the idea that both masques share the same vision to glorify the Stuart nation. The last lines of *Love’s Triumph* articulated the image of a potent royal symbiosis, a partnership between England and France, the bond between Charles and Henrietta Maria, which would prove to be beneficial to all, as Venus, with the Chorus, describes:

Bring not more peace than these, who so united be
By Love, as with it earth and heaven delighted be
And who this King and Queen would well historify
Need only to speak their names; those them will glorify;
Mary and Charles, Charles with his Mary named are,
And all the rest of loves or princes famed are (ll. 202-207).

Erica Veevers argues that *Chloridia* was mainly a commentary upon English domestic affairs. The queen's masque paid tribute to their reconciliation after their earlier turbulent years of marriage. In *Chloridia* the agitators were symbolized by the antimasque characters, the vices Jealousy and Disdain, who were brought from hell by Cupid to trouble the gods Zephyrus and Chloris, who were seen as representative of Charles and Henrietta Maria (ll. 135-136). Domestic harmony is brought by Chloris, goddess of spring, through her connection with spirituality. After the wild dances of the Tempest, the four Winds, the Lightnings, Thunder Rain and Snow, the scene is transformed into a peaceful garden by Chloris and her nymphs. The nymphs or Henrietta Maria's ladies-in-waiting were sitting in a bower, ornamented with garlands and fragrant flowers (ll. 162-170) (naturally, Lucy was among them, as will be explained below). After having been praised, Chloris and her nymphs descended to earth and started to dance, initiating the masque proper (ll. 193-194). Chloris (the queen) danced and "impressed the earth and made such various / flowers to grow" (ll.199-200), after which the heaven opened to reveal Juno and Iris: "The air is clear, your bow can tell, / Chloris renowned, spite fled to hell" (ll. 217-218). By virtue of the queen's regenerating powers, harmony, order and pureness had been restored. In *Chloridia* and in *Love's Triumph* the same images of peace, nature and order emerges:

there shooteth up a palm tree with an
imperial crown on the top, from the root
whereof [French] lilies and [English] roses
twining together and embracing the stem flourish
through the crown (*Love's Triumph* ll. 192-196).

Both masques celebrate the Stuart royal couple, a French princess and English prince, as a model of virtue, love and of competent government.

However, Henrietta Maria's retort to Charles in *Chloridia* seems to have been of an ambivalent nature. It seems that the queen also foregrounded her French Catholic identity to express her own political concerns. Britland's reading of *Chloridia* explains that the masque demonstrates the queen's possible role as peacemaker between opposite parties in her native country France (*Drama at the Courts* 83). *Chloridia* was written shortly after the Day of the Dupes in 1630. Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642), close confidant of King Louis XIII (1601-1643), Henrietta Maria's brother, had been expelled from his king's council because of a dispute with the Queen Mother, Marie de' Medici (1575-1642). However, a few months later, Richelieu was reinstated by Louis XIII. The Queen Mother's attempts to remove Richelieu from power led to her expulsion from France (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 82; Smuts, "Religion" 23). Apart from *Chloridia*'s focus on English domestic affairs, Britland suggests that *Chloridia* may have been a reflection of the struggle for power at the French court, with Henrietta Maria as Chloris to perform the role of mediator between Cupid (Richelieu) and Juno (Marie de' Medici) (*Drama at the Courts* 83-84).

According to Britland, Henrietta Maria expressed her political engagement in *Chloridia* (*Drama at the Courts* 84). If so, Lucy's performance in it would have been the

perfect opportunity for the countess to show her support for the queen. The masque's text resonates with the events of the Day of Dupes in November 1630. In the second song Cupid is shown to have taken offence because his authority is not recognized in the council of the gods (ll. 78-82). The fact that Cupid is referred to as a "child" (l. 82) hints moreover at Richelieu's dependent position: after all, he was Marie de' Medici's former servant (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 83). In the French *ballet de cour*, the equivalent of the Stuart court masque, the favoured identification of the Queen Mother was with Juno (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 85). Furthermore, in the second entry of the antimasque, Cupid, having returned from hell, and the vices characters, Jealousy, Disdain, Fear and Dissimulation, dance together. Britland considers these vices to be "attributes of the struggle that saw Richelieu turning a simulated departure from court into a political triumph" (*Drama at the Courts* 84). If *Chloridia* is to be read as an allusion to French politics, the masque could be seen as an opportunity for the queen to articulate her own concerns, as well as a demonstration of her political engagement in international affairs (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 88). Performing alongside the queen as ally against Cardinal Richelieu, provided an opportunity for Lady Carlisle to express her loyalty to the queen. Henrietta Maria supported her mother's efforts to diminish Richelieu's power.

However, the queen's promoting the advancement of the Catholic religion together with the protection of English Catholics, and her backing of the Queen Mother against Richelieu, would not necessarily coincide with the issues the king wished to address in the masque. The opening lines of *Chloridia* suggest that Charles was in fact pulling the strings, not only by having co-commissioned the masque, "The King and Queen's majesty having given their command / for the invention of a new argument" (ll. 1-2), but also by being associated with Jupiter who had issued "an absolut decree" (l. 9), which led Chloris to change into the goddess of flowers (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 75). This raises the question of the

extent to which Henrietta Maria was in charge of the content of this masque. Charles's intentions to maintain peace with France would make an alliance with the dissident Queen Mother a liability. Completing Charles's ideal image of political and spiritual leadership may have provided the queen with sufficient power to address her own interests. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the queen would have been allowed to compromise the king's position with respect to the Anglo-French alliance in the presence of the French ambassador, Francois du Val (1594?-1665), the Marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 87).

Lucy's role in *Chloridia* appears to bear witness to her closeness to Henrietta Maria. She formed part of the living tableau that entered the scene, introducing Chloris and her nymphs. Their costumes, embroidered in silver and gold, agreed with the visual splendour of the masque as a whole. According to "The Names of the Masquers as they sate in the Bowre", Lucy was mentioned first in the list of fourteen masquers to accompany the queen (Orgel and Strong 2: 419). She presumably sat close to Henrietta Maria who occupied the most eminent place in the bower beyond which a rainbow appeared: "Beyond all this in / the sky afar appeared a rainbow" (ll. 167-168). The rainbow connects to the motto of the masque "Till then the earth was of one colour" (Orgel, *Ben Jonson* 462). The queen ruled the colours and in fact generated them (Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque* 160; Veevers 127). Lady Carlisle's position confirms her affiliation to the French-born Stuart queen. As Henrietta Maria started to develop her own French policies, while supporting her mother Marie de' Medici, her anti-Richelieu sentiments as well as her opposition to her brother Louis XIII grew. The queen collaborated in the rehabilitation of the Carlisles since they had the king's faith and could prove to be useful allies. While Lucy sat closest to Henrietta Maria in the bower, the other spouses of Charles's favourites, such as Isabel Rich, whose husband Lord Holland attempted to establish a French alliance with King Louis XIII, were either absent or were placed at a

distance (Orgel and Strong 2: 419). *Chloridia* seemed to celebrate the re-continued relationship between the countess and the queen.

2.2 TEMPE RESTORED

In spite of being manifestations of continuity, the masques commissioned by the queen also reflected change. Although female performance in Stuart masques was not a new phenomenon, as the performance of Queen Anna and her attendants demonstrates, Henrietta Maria's sponsorship of court masques brought its own innovations: that of singing and speaking women on stage, thereby literally giving women a voice. In *Tempe Restored*, the queen introduced the first women to sing upon an English stage: Madame Coniack and Mistress Shepherd who are mentioned in the texts as "The Song of Circe, represented by Madame Coniack" and "Harmony presented by Mistress Shepherd" (ll. 107, 154). The precise identity of these women remains uncertain. Contrary to earlier assumptions that they were professional singers, Britland argues that Madame Coniack may have been one of Henrietta Maria's ladies while Mistress Shepherd was a young woman (perhaps even a child) connected to the aristocratic Pembroke family (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 91-96; Booth 533; Tomlinson, "Theatrical Vibrancy" 188). Previously, female roles in antimasques were taken by boys or male actors (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 156-157; Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 6). The spoken and agitated performances of the male actors in the antimasque contrasted the silent and calm acts of the queen and the ladies of the court in the masque proper. Martin Butler explains that the masque form was not a static one but instead transformed to accommodate the changing relationship between crown and subjects (*The Stuart Court Masque* 31). It is of interest to explore the role of Circe / Madame Coniack with regard to Lady Carlisle's performance in the queen's innovative masque.

The queen's appearance in *Tempe Restored* as Divine Beauty alludes to the Catholic Virgin Mary. Henrietta Maria is associated with the light, moon and stars (Veevers 122). Veevers stresses the importance of the visual symbolism of the two great opponents, false beauty or Circe (Eve), and Divine Beauty (Mary), a contrast which can also be found in Catholic imagery (131). This image of two opposite female qualities or powers was likewise present in the court poetry that paid tribute to the queen and the countess, as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. If Divine Beauty, the queen of the main masque, is associated with Henrietta Maria, then Circe, the queen of the anti-masque, is linked to Lady Carlisle, the sensual beauty. Madame Coniack, the French singer who performed Circe, is described in Thomas Randolph's poem: "Upon a very deformed Gentlewoman, but of a voice incomparably sweet" (Tomlinson, *Women on Stage* 52). Even though Madame Coniack may not have been physically attractive, her vibrant and passionate performance and the emotional pleasure she is able to provoke, resembles Lady Carlisle's representation in poetry. *Tempe Restored* seems to use the Eve-Mary dichotomy while contrasting false beauty and Divine beauty.

The reason why Lady Carlisle did not perform the role of Circe herself may be explained by the fact that it was too controversial at the time for English women of her class to publicly perform a speaking (and singing) role (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 93). While the role of Circe in *The Balet Comique de la Royne* (the main source of *Tempe Restored*), staged at the Valois court in 1581, had been played by a female courtier (Tomlinson, *Women on Stage* 54), some fifty years later, the pamphleteer William Prynne's (1600-1669) condemned (French) female theatrical performance in his publication *Histriomastix: A Scourge of Stage-players* (1632). One month before *Tempe Restored* was staged, Prynne's depiction of women actors as "notorious whores", was seen as an attack on Henrietta Maria's performances in masques. Henrietta Maria reacted by ordering Prynne's ears to be cut off; he

was fined £5000, and sentenced to life imprisonment (Lamont, *ODNB*). Nevertheless, Prynne's fierce criticism caused the court theatre to appear more demure. Hence, the restrictive protocol governing noble female's public performance on stage at the Stuart court might have prevented Lady Carlisle from performing the role of Circe.

Tempe Restored appears to recall Lucy's temporary falling out of the queen's favour in 1629 and foregrounds Charles's role as mediator. Circe has to leave the scene: "Circe and her nymphs retire towards the / palace from whence she came" (ll. 148-149) before Harmony may enter with her song, which ends in: "Though some foresee, all must like obey" (ll. 158-159). As Sophie Tomlinson has pointed out, Circe's final submission is accomplished by both Divine Beauty (Henrietta Maria) and Heroic Virtue (Charles): "and the Queen / seated under the state by his majesty" (ll. 258-259). The analogy between the king's role (Heroic Virtue), assisting as a peacemaker between Circe and Divine Beauty, and Charles's contribution in Lucy's rehabilitation at court in 1630 (Betcherman 124) seems to be apt.

In other words, *Tempe Restored* may be linked to the rivalry that existed between the chaste queen Henrietta Maria and her wanton favourite Lucy. Unlike *Chloridia*, where the queen and the countess sat in one bower, *Tempe Restored* stages two simultaneously descending clouds with stars which carried Lucy and some of the queen's ladies and a separate golden chariot adorned with gems which carried the queen (ll. 190-197). The masque possibly foregrounds the differences between Lady Carlisle and the queen while attesting to their dependence on one another as well.

In 1634, a few years after her performance in *Tempe Restored*, while having established a circle of her own with a number of devoted and influential "servants" (Sanders, "Caroline Salon" 451, 454), Lucy retired from the queen's court out of rancour against her mistress, who favoured Lady Denbigh again (Betcherman 142). It seems Lucy's masque

politics were in vain because it had not been able to permanently hold her the position of favourite.

2.3 LUCY'S RELUCTANCE TO PERFORM IN MASQUES

The first attempt of Lady Carlisle, then still Lady Hay, at sponsoring her own masque, *The Masque of Amazons*, of which the text is lost, was unsuccessful. It was to be presented to King James I and Queen Anna on New Year's Day 1618. However, the performance was cancelled since the masque was met with royal disapproval: "neither the Quene nor King did like or allow of yt", as the court correspondent John Chamberlain commented (Chamberlain, *Letters* 2: 126). Audaciously, Lucy had cast herself as the Queen of the Amazons. Queen Anna had danced the role of warrior queen Pallas/Athena in *The Vision of Twelve Goddesses* (1604) and Lucy Harington-Russell (1581-1627), Countess of Bedford, Queen Anna's prestigious lady-in-waiting, had performed as the Queen of the Amazons in *The Masque of Queens* (1609). Reasons for the rejection of Lucy's masque have been attributed to the queen's annoyance about Lucy's inappropriate and presumptuous usurpation of this role (Betcherman 51; Raylor, *The Essex House* 54).

Martin Butler, however, relates the cancellation of Lucy's masque to King James's fear of once more being accused of unstable kingship. As mentioned previously, in 1609, Queen Anna sponsored Jonson's *The Masque of Queens*. That masque foregrounded the connection between feminine assertion and masculine authority. It celebrated masculine power while female resistance was crushed by male force. The martial heroines, performed by Queen Anna and her ladies in the masque proper, and their subversive counterparts, the witches in the antimasque, clearly opposed one another. However, the hags were allowed to blend in the masque proper (ll. 676-678). Consequently, the images of obedient and disobedient females intertwined; the disobedient females were not obliterated completely.

Butler argues that *The Masque of Queens* shows flaws in James's management of authority. In the masque, the king, in his character as "Heroic Virtue", is represented as "Perseus", Fame's father (l. 358), who is determined to triumph over evil embodied by powerful women. He could only triumph by combatting female resistance (ll. 366-368). Perseus is the ambiguous hero, who by offering Medusa's head to Pallas encourages female militant power instead of undoing it (Orgel, "Jonson and the Amazons" 129-130). As Butler paraphrases Orgel, "Dangerous women were necessary, if only for the sake of male empowerment" (*The Stuart Court Masque* 138). However, this only worked when those dangerous women were completely disempowered. In *The Masque of Queens*, they were not. As such, James's authority was questioned rather than ascertained. The masque resonated the adversity between the king and queen, which affected the stability of James's rule (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 137-143). Lucy's masque would presumably again have celebrated female authority, while exposing poor leadership by men, as she had cast herself in the role of the Queen of the Amazons.

More importantly, in 1617, King James had been absent from his English court for six months, having returned to Scotland in August. The reason for James's progress to the north was to attempt to make the Church of Scotland adopt a liturgical reform of Calvinist practices of the Church of England (Wormald, *ODNB*). Meanwhile, the queen's court at Greenwich Palace had become the rival of the leaderless king's court at Whitehall. In *Cupid's Banishment* (1617) written by Robert White (*fl.* 1617), organized by the Countess of Bedford, and danced at Greenwich Palace, Queen Anna was the absolute centre of power, a position normally reserved for the king. As Clare McManus explains, in 1617 the influence of Queen Anna's court increased during the king's absence, which contributed to the questioning of the absent monarch's authority ("Memorialising" 81-85). When Lucy planned to stage her

Masque of the Amazons, James might not have felt inclined to witness another celebration of female power.

Another reason for James I to cancel Lucy's first masque might have been the appearance of a number of women from the aggressively pro-Protestant Sidney and Rich families (Raylor, *The Essex House* 54). This could have been seen as a manifestation of militant aristocratic (Protestant) female power. It seems that James's court was not ready for yet another controversial performance of female rule like Lucy's masque seems to have been. The cancellation of the countess's *Masque of the Amazons* may have discouraged Lucy from performing in future masques (Betcherman 51).

In any case, there seems to be a remarkable discrepancy between Lucy's acting in masques and that of the Countess of Bedford, who managed to become the closest English friend to the foreign Queen Anna, a position which Lucy would later attempt to equal with Queen Henrietta Maria. During Queen Anna's stay in England between 1603 and 1619, Bedford, First Lady of the Bedchamber, danced in five masques, while the queen herself performed in six masques (Akkerman, "The Goddess" 288). Bedford was the closest personal friend of Lady Carlisle's mother; as such, she might have been a role model for Lucy (Betcherman 13; Brennan, Kinnamon and Hannay 6). Lady Bedford hosted two masques, White's *Cupid's Banishment* (1617) for Queen Anna and Jonson's *Lover Made Men* (1617) for Lord Hay, and acted as marriage broker between Lucy and Lord Hay in 1616/17 (Akkerman, "The Goddess" 309; Wynne-Davis 91; Britland, "Women in Royal Courts" 133). Whereas Lady Bedford had been closely involved in the organization and presentation of Queen Anna's masques, Lucy's association with the masques Henrietta Maria commissioned seemed to have been less strong.

Lady Denbigh had already been acquainted with Henrietta Maria's French masque/ballet in 1625, when the queen had just arrived in England (Britland, "Queen Henrietta Maria's Theatrical Patronage" 57). She was appointed as Mistress of the Robes to the Queen in 1627-1628 (Hibbard 120). Consequently, she had a large amount of control over expenditure and facilitated access to the masque (Britland, *Drama at the Courts* 62). Lady Denbigh's influence on Queen Henrietta Maria possibly led to Lady Carlisle's losing the battle for favouritism at the queen's court and may have influenced Lucy's disposition to performing in the masques.

Lucy declined to perform in *The Temple of Love* in 1635. Along with Butler, Julie Sanders speculates that her refusal to perform in Davenant's Platonic-themed masque *The Temple of Love*, sponsored by the queen, was an act of defiance: they argue Lucy refused to play second fiddle to the queen (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 288; Sanders, "Caroline Salon" 455). This speculation is based on a statement of second Viscount Edward Conway (1594-1655) in his letter of 20 January 1634 to Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641) which comments on Lucy's absence from court:

Now and a long time she hath not been at Whitehall, as she was wont to be, which is as when you left her: But she is not now in the Mask. I think they were afraid to ask and be refused, and she would not offer herself (Knowler 1: 363).

A few days before, in a letter dated 11 January written to Lord Wentworth by the Reverend George Garrard (n.d.), the following passage appears:

There is some resolution for a Mask against Shrovetide, the Queen and fifteen Ladies are to perform, whose Names I will send your Lordship with this. My Lady Northumberland and my Lady Carli[s]le are not in the Number, they have

got their Friends to excuse them, and it is not ill taken. My Lady Carli[s]le lives now constantly in Court again, gave a very fine New Year's Gift to the Queen, which was well accepted (Knowler 1: 360).

Garrard reported frequently to Wentworth about court entertainments (Howarth 205). The reverend's comments seem to indicate that Lucy's not participating in the masque had neither offended the queen nor the king. Moreover, it shows how powerful Lady Carlisle and "her friends", possibly Lord Holland and Lord Northumberland, were. In addition, Lucy's absence from Davenant's masque may have suited Henrietta Maria: she did not have to compete with the countess's beauty and possibly overwhelming presence.

In either way, Lucy's rejection or refusal made her once more the centre of attention. The absence of such a prominent courtier would have probably provoked more debate than acting in one of the royal couple's disciplined entertainments. *The Temple of Love* served as a model for the court in chaste love and advocated orderliness as a moral code for behaviour (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 161). Perhaps Lucy did not aspire to be part of the platonic "foreplay" of the reunion of the king and queen, forcing women to be desirable but simultaneously to have self-control and discipline. Davenant's masque was again designed by Jones, and was consecutively presented on 10, 11, 12 and 14 February 1635 (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 374), a year before the completion of the queen's Catholic chapel at Somerset House, which was also designed by Jones. According to Veevers, the appearance of "The Temple" (ll. 458-465) is the climax of the performance. The entertainment foregrounded Henrietta Maria's interests in Catholicism by using Platonic Love as an instrument to promote her religion at court (133-137). The queen's iconographical illusion of a blissful, pious and disciplined harmony contrasted too much with the reality of Lady Carlisle's own world that was permeated with extravagance and promiscuity (see Chapter 1 of this thesis). Moreover, there would have been no opportunity for her to outshine the queen, nor to express her wit and

intellect in order to seduce the other sex. Her acting in the queen's masques at this point in time was neither opportune nor constructive. Instead, she may have commissioned rival entertainments to those of the court in the later 1630s (Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque* 130; Sanders, "Caroline Salon" 455), which would exclusively have put her in the spotlight.

In conclusion, Lady Carlisle's presence and absence in the masques presented by Queen Henrietta Maria are significant for the renegotiation and manifestation of the countess's power. As one of the queen's masquers, she strengthened her image of being the royal favourite. This position enabled her to have influence with the queen (and indirectly with the king). In *Chloridia*, Lucy renegotiated and confirmed her close position to the queen, whereas *Tempe Restored* acknowledged the growing distance between Lady Carlisle and Queen Henrietta Maria. It seems by the 1630s that Lady Carlisle no longer needed the exposure generated through performance in the queen's masques to consolidate her key position at court. As will be detailed in Chapter 3, to secure her own welfare and that of her family the countess had established relationships with powerful statesmen of which she seemed more in control than of the volatile friendship with her queen. In this way she was able to set her own agenda, no longer having to dance to the tunes of the queen. Once more the image of a powerful female courtier emerges.

Chapter 3

The Correspondence of Lucy, Countess of Carlisle

While the previous two chapters were concerned with Lucy, the Countess of Carlisle's image as seen through court poetry and court masques, this chapter focuses on Lady Carlisle's private interests and rhetorical strategies, as revealed in her correspondence. This chapter will discuss the letters to her most political correspondent Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641), from 1632 Lord Deputy of Ireland, from 1640 first Earl of Strafford, as printed in *The Earl of Strafford's Letters and Despatches* (1740); those letters Lucy wrote to her sister Dorothy Sidney (1598-1659), Countess of Leicester, which are collected and edited in *The Correspondence (c. 1626-1659) of Dorothy Percy Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (2010); and the letters to her husband James Hay, Lord Carlisle as preserved in The National Archives, Kew.

A closer examination of Lucy's correspondence demonstrates her access to (confidential) intelligence and news which confirms her strategic position at court. Acting as a broker of news and information, she became central to the political order and patronage system. In this capacity she could protect and promote her own interests and those of her family and friends.

Noble women's letters in the early modern period were written for a wide range of purposes. Elite women engaged in letter-writing to oil the wheels of patronage or to request favours by offering gifts. Moreover, women wrote to intervene in disputes, to facilitate the granting of petitions or to advise their husbands and to inform those absent of both domestic and public affairs. As James Daybell argues, for those women who had enjoyed an education,

My Lord
I hope this messenger will
much haste your coming
& be seen me at consent
you nearby and many
apprehend your return
line infinit. desire to see
your coming, you will
find many changes in
this court, and the you
that you left absolutely
forgetting I expect some
me you for you are
thought hear highly Spanish
& which must have some
more assured of, then
acomone report before
I can give much credit
13 (6.)

Letter of Lucy, Lady Carlisle, to her husband, 22 December 1628 (TNA SP16/123 f.8r)

a distinction can be made between business correspondence and private and personal writing. The former was technical and routine and best delegated to a secretary, while the latter consisted of private and personal writing more likely to have been written in the woman's own hand (*Early Modern Women's Letter-Writing* 1-15). As the procurement and maintaining of preferment depended on physical proximity to the king and queen, communication through correspondence was crucial for those stationed away from court. Connections to the centre of power were conducted through personal letters but written communication often did not suffice (Schneider 39-40). Noblemen who were anxious about their positions and reputations, also needed "a friend" or broker at court who could not only keep them informed but could also promote their cause. Lady Carlisle seemed to have fitted these purposes rather well.

3.1 RHETORICAL STRATEGY

Various rhetorical strategies were employed in early modern correspondence, which defined the language of the letters (see for instance, Daybell, *The Material Letter* 26, 229; Schneider 55). Preservation of epistolary continuity seemed to be vital. It was uncertain whether a letter would reach its recipient, since delivery was dependent on the trustworthiness and the functionality of the carrier (Schneider 55-56). In fact, the messenger was also used in the letter as a formula. Blaming the messenger for miscarrying a letter could serve as a pretext to renew communication. The anxiety of a letter being lost and failing to respond underlines the social duty of correspondence (Schneider 60). Lord Wentworth begins his letter of 25 May 1637 to Lucy's brother, Algernon Percy (1602-1668), tenth Earl of Northumberland, by apologizing for having left unanswered three of Northumberland's letters (Knowler 2: 76). Returning letters was seen as a social contract that strengthened the ties between correspondents. Deliberately neglecting to reply could be an indication of discouragement or anger (Schneider 59).

Early modern letters were likely to be exposed to and perused by a third party. This was not always desirable. Sensitive content could either be leaked or shared (Schneider 22-25). Therefore, Lucy's letters to her sister Dorothy often contain cryptography; a number corresponds to the identity of an individual or the gender (of pronouns) is reversed (Brennan, Kinnamon and Hannay 50): for instance, the number "93" refers to Wentworth, "114" to Queen Henrietta Maria, "116" to the countess herself and "ladies" refers to lords. Lucy expressed her concern about a possible interception or miscarriage of her letters: "Let me know whether you understand my writing this way [in cryptographic manner] and whether there be danger of having letters either lost or intercepted, for I have some things I dare scarce write you" (Hay 148). Nadine Akkerman suggests that these unsigned and coded letters such as the one written by Lucy on 21 November 1639 could have been meant for Dorothy's husband, the Earl of Leicester, head of the Stuart embassy in France. As the embassy was infiltrated by Cardinal Richelieu's spies, Lucy may have intentionally leaked the secrets to the Cardinal via Leicester ("A Triptych", referring to Hay 147. The Cardinal was supporting the leader of the Scottish covenanting movement, Archibald Campbell (1605?-1661), the eighth Earl of Argyll, who pledged to defend Scottish Presbyterianism against Charles I's attempts to impose Anglican forms of worship (Willcock 86; Stevenson, *ODNB*). While using the ciphers, as well as systematically switching the genders of the persons mentioned, Lucy appears to be attempting to confuse potential third parties who could possibly intercept her letters to her sister Dorothy.

First and foremost, the reciprocal pattern of the epistolary exchange between Lucy and her sister seemed important. On several occasions, Lucy commented on failing to receive Dorothy's letters from France on time, and thus having to write to her sister before a return response was obtained. On the other hand, Lady Carlisle excused herself repeatedly for not having written sooner or more, due to physical indisposition. Such apologetic rhetoric was

another approach used to account for any epistolary delay (Schneider 67). Moreover, it seemed to emphasize the importance of continuity and reciprocity of their correspondence.

3.2 LETTERS TO CARLISLE

In May 1628 Lord Carlisle departed for the continent on a mission to form a middle European alliance, including the Dutch Republic, Lorraine, Savoy and Venice, in order to have influence on the European balance of power between France and Spain (Schreiber 103). While Carlisle was residing in Venice, he was informed of Lord Buckingham's assassination on 22 August 1628. On 3 September, Lord Henry Percy, Lucy's brother, wrote his brother-in-law that: "the desirer and plotter of your [i.e. Lord Carlisle's] ruin and destruction is possessed with a death, not unfit for him, because [it was] correspondent to his life, which was granted by all men to be dishonourable and odious". In the same letter, Lord Percy also mentioned that Lucy had fallen ill with smallpox but was out of danger. Percy stressed the queen's devotion to Lady Carlisle during her illness: "When the Queen parted from her, the Queen was extremely troubled both with tears and discontent" (TNA SP 16/529 f.24r-24v).

Akkerman suggests that Lucy pretended illness to her husband when in fact she was mourning for her lover Buckingham ("A Triptych"). Again, illness might have been used as an excuse for not writing. It took Lucy almost two months to send her husband a letter with news of her remarkable recovery: the smallpox had not left a single blemish on her face. In this letter, written from Penshurst, Lucy also commented on Henrietta Maria's behaviour: "Did not think the heart of a Queen could have been so sensible of the loss of a servant". Lucy furthermore writes about the strong affection between the king and queen and their high opinion of the earl. Lady Carlisle ends her letter by asking for Carlisle's speedy return from his mission on the continent (3 October 1628, TNA SP 16/118 ff.19v-20r).

After Buckingham's death, the importance of the Carlises collaborating became more apparent as the struggle over Buckingham's offices at the court began. Carlisle seemed to be the logical candidate to succeed the late duke as chief minister (Schreiber 117). Lucy appeared to be determined to promote her husband's interests. Several sources confirmed her devotion to her husband's cause (Betcherman 113). On 13 November 1628, she wrote to him that she had no great desire to return to court after her illness because he was not there (TNA SP 16/120 f.89v). It appeared that any past differences between the couple had been settled (Betcherman 63). As Lord Goring wrote to Carlisle in his letter of 22 November 1628, "Goring's dear mistress [the Countess of Carlisle] is the Earl's careful friend beyond that of ordinary in a wife. Let not Goring hear a syllable at the Earl's return of old quarrels" (Betcherman 113; TNA SP 16/121 f.47r).

Lucy and her entourage continued urging Lord Carlisle to return to England, before all important offices would have been distributed. However, Carlisle had to remain in Savoy until November 1628 as Charles delayed to recall him. The postponement was caused by Charles's shock at Buckingham's assassination. Furthermore, the detainment of the earl was encouraged by Carlisle's rival, the Earl of Holland, who during Carlisle's absence became the new leader of the French party (Schreiber 115; Betcherman 112). Both Lucy in her letter of 22 December 1628 (TNA SP 16/123 f.8r) and one of Lord Carlisle's servants, Sir David Murray, in his letter of the same date, warned Carlisle of schemes to defer his return: "There has been a secret working for your continuance abroad by those who carry an outward show of friendship to you" (TNA SP 16/123 f.10r). Meanwhile, it had become obvious that Carlisle's diplomatic endeavours had failed during his embassy (Schreiber 111, 113). The only remaining solution to limit the power of King Louis XIII and Richelieu seemed to be an (temporary) alliance with Spain. As a result of France's continued war against the Protestant Huguenots in La Rochelle, Carlisle was prepared to become pro-Spanish for the sake of the

Protestant cause (Schreiber 110, 111). Rumours of Carlisle's controversial standpoint reached England. Lucy was put in a difficult position because the queen she served evidently detested Spain and the Spanish party at court (Betcherman 114). Although Lucy seemed to be reluctant to believe that her husband had turned pro-Spanish, she needed assurance from him on this matter. In her letter to him of 22 December 1628, she wrote:

you are thought here hugely Spanish, which I must have some more assurance of than a common report before I can give much credit to it but the noise of it does trouble some of your best friends [that is, possibly, Henrietta Maria and her party]. All these reports will vanish at your presence, and I shall joy and be happy as (TNA SP16/123 f.8r-8v).

Lord Goring confirms the queen's reaction to Carlisle: "The Queen cannot believe you Don Diego [referring to Carlisle's Spanish sentiments], of all men living" (22 December 1628, TNA SP16/123 f.12v). In fact, Queen Henrietta Maria herself wrote a letter to Lord Carlisle in December 1628, in which she affirms her friendship for him and expresses her disbelief in his alleged defection:

vous assurer que vous me trouverez toujours telle et que nul chose du monde ne pourra pas mon expecterer encore que vous me ayes oublie [you can be assured you will find me the same and that nothing in the world will make me expect that you have forgotten me] (TNA SP 16/123 f.96r).

Lucy's efforts to deny the rumours and to convince the queen that Lord Carlisle was still on their side seemed to have been in vain. By February 1629 when he finally returned to London, his political reputation had been damaged (Schreiber 121).

However, once being reunited, the Carlises were able to regain their influential positions at court. The earl once again became an intimate of the king. Charles appointed Lord

Carlisle as one of his privy counsellors in the committee of foreign affairs and of trade and plantations. Next the earl was installed as a minister (Schreiber 121, 128). Lord Carlisle's pro-Spanish tendency had weakened the relationship between Lucy and her mistress.

Nevertheless, Lady Carlisle became once more the queen's preferred companion in May 1629. The Carlisles were closely attending the royal couple when Henrietta Maria delivered a stillborn child in May 1629 (Betcherman 119; Schreiber 124). In February 1631, Carlisle accepted the post as Groom of the Stole, which made him First Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber. In this capacity the earl had continual access to the king, which suited his role of informal adviser well (Schreiber 128). Lucy also acted as one of the queen's masquers and further consolidated her position as favourite to the queen, albeit an unsteady position from time to time. The Carlisles' partnership had proven to be fruitful.

3.3 LETTERS TO WENTWORTH

In 1630 the cultivation of a friendship with Thomas Wentworth, then Lord President of the North, may initially have been another team effort of the Carlisles. Lord Carlisle had extensive interests in Ireland. He hoped that a dispute over land (Byrnes Country) could once and for all be settled with Wentworth's assistance (Betcherman 139-140; Schreiber 162-164). According to Roy Schreiber, it is likely that Lord Carlisle persuaded Charles to appoint Wentworth as Lord Deputy of Ireland (165). As the earl had used his wife before in order to secure his privileged position (he had facilitated Lucy's affair with Buckingham), he may have encouraged Lucy to be receptive to Wentworth's attentions that were possibly amorous. Enclosed in one of the earl's letters to Wentworth in September 1635 was one of compliment from Lucy (Schreiber 167).

Lucy's interest in Lord Wentworth intensified after Lord Carlisle's death in 1636, when she inherited all of her husband's Irish holdings and properties (Brennan, Kinnamon

and Hannay 30). In a letter dated 19 October 1636, Dorothy informed her husband: “My sister [Lucy] is yet at Nonsuch in expectation of my Lord Deputy [Wentworth] who is now with the King, but she looks for him this week” (Sidney 67). On 25 July 1636, Wentworth wrote an extensive account from London, “how all stands with us on this side” (Knowler 2: 13), to Sir Christopher Wandesford, “Master of the Rolls and one of the Lords Justices of Ireland”, in which he stated “my Lady Carlisle never used me with so much respect” (Knowler 2: 22). Lucy’s efforts to acquire Wentworth’s support for the career advancement of her brother Algernon were rewarded. In 1638 Northumberland was appointed Lord Admiral.

However, the attraction between Lady Carlisle and Lord Wentworth seems to have been mutual. The countess and the viscount sealed their friendship by exchanging portraits, painted by court painter Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) (Betcherman 169). Traditionally, portraits were presented as gifts to patrons or loyal friends. They helped advertise ties of dependence and alliance within the court and the upper levels of society (Smuts, “The Structure of the Court” 9). The reciprocal nature of the friendship between Lady Carlisle and Lord Wentworth demonstrates that her influence was firmly established. As a result of her position at court she could manipulate a powerful statesman like Wentworth.

In fact, Lord Wentworth may have used Lucy’s close connection to the queen to create a more pro-Spanish climate at the queen’s court (Wolfson 338-339). As France had entered into war with Spain in 1635, Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu sought an alliance with Charles I. Henrietta Maria’s support for this Anglo-French alliance was crucial (Wolfson 335-336). Richelieu and Louis XIII were out to gain the queen’s favour while she continued to have control over the king’s affections (Smuts, “The Puritan Followers” 35). Watt Montagu, one of the leaders of the queen’s faction, persuaded her to support the French war against Spain. However, the very same Montagu, after his conversion to Catholicism in 1637, together with Marie de Rohan (1600-1679), Duchesse de Chevreuse, and the queen’s own

mother Marie de' Medici succeeded in reversing Henrietta Maria's politics into being pro-Spanish in 1639 (Smuts "The Puritan Followers" 41-42). Chevreuse and Marie de' Medici conspired against Richelieu, King Louis's chief minister, who had diminished the influence of Marie at the French court by advising Louis to exile her from France. Henrietta Maria's mother and the duchess supported Spain in order to cause Richelieu's downfall. Supported by Lady Carlisle, Lord Wentworth would assist in attempting to persuade Henrietta Maria to a pro-Spanish position.

As stated before, the friendship of Lady Carlisle and Lord Wentworth was strengthened by reciprocal interests, after her husband's death in 1636. Lucy's sister Dorothy reports in a letter to her husband that Wentworth was staying at Nonsuch, the royal palace where Lucy had been granted some lodgings as her late husband had been keeper of it, and that he was offering his services to the Percy family (Brennan, Kinnamon and Hannay 30). Lady Carlisle would have assisted in the queen's swing back to being pro-Spanish and support of Wentworth because of personal and dynastic interests that derived from her friendship with the king's favourite minister (Wolfson 337). Consequently, Wentworth, who was known for his pro-Spanish sentiments, was fully supported by the queen and her party.

As testimony to the close relationship between Lucy and Wentworth, there are many allusions in Wentworth's correspondence. In his letter of 3 October 1637, Lord Viscount Conway, inquiring after Wentworth's health, wrote "I hope you are now recovered of your gout, which my Lady of Carli[s]le told me you had" (Knowler 2: 124). The Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, requested Wentworth to convey his gratitude to the countess: "I pray when your Lordship writes next to my Lady of Carli[s]le, will you be pleased to return my humble Thanks to your Ladyship?" (Knowler 2: 100). Apparently, Laud was attempting to gain Lucy's favour through Wentworth. In his letter of 27 of November 1637, Wentworth confirms to the archbishop to have written to Lucy: "I have writ fully to my Lady Carli[s]le,

and am very confident, if it be in her Ladyship's Power, she will express the Esteem she has your Lordship in, to a very great Height" (Knowler 2: 138). In his letters to his friend and cousin Sir George Radcliffe (1593-1657), written between 1639 and 1640, Wentworth frequently underlines the importance of paying Lady Carlisle her dues: "For love of Christ take order that all the money due to my Lady Carlile be paid before Christmas; for a nobler nor more intelligent friendship did I never meet with in all my life" (Radcliffe 221).

3.4 LETTERS TO HER SISTER

The regular correspondence between Lucy and her sister Dorothy, written between November 1639 and May 1641, seemed to have mainly revolved around the securing of a higher position for Dorothy's husband, Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, who had been appointed by Charles I, at the instigation of Henrietta Maria, as ambassador-extraordinary to France in 1636 (Brennan, Kinnamon and Hannay 30). During this time of turbulence and change, when Charles fought and lost the Bishops' Wars, and the Stuart court became a supporter of Spanish interests, under influence of Queen Mother Marie de' Medici, it was crucial to maintain royal favour. Both the Percys and the Sidneys as well as Lord Wentworth benefited from Lady Carlisle's intimacy with the queen while they became part of the queen's royalist entourage.

The letters to Dorothy not only illustrate that Lady Carlisle was a staunch ally to her sister's husband, in his pursuit of court offices; they also demonstrate that meanwhile Lucy was protecting her own interests. On 21 November 1639, Lucy writes: "93 [Wentworth] will certainly serve 85 [Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester] to all he can possible" (Hay 147). Apparently, Lucy had engaged Lord Wentworth to promote the Earl of Leicester's interests. On 5 December 1639, Lady Carlisle states:

93 [Wentworth] is of opinion that 68 [Lord Chamberlain] will be put from her place and that it might be gotten for 85 [Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester]. But I am absolutely of another opinion and that we shall never see any such thing done in our court (Hay 147-148).

In a letter to Dorothy on 14 January 1640/41, it seems that Lucy was considering her options:

If I considered only 116 [the Countess of Carlisle], I should more wish to have 85 [Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester] 93 [Lord Deputy of Ireland] than 95 [Secretary of State], for it might be of greater advantage to 116 [the Countess of Carlisle], as having more to do there. But when I am told that the other will be more considerable and that 116 [the countess] shall have your company, I confess that carries me, though I must tell you that with all your [my?] prejudice, I will undertake 93 [Wentworth] shall do her [his] uttermost to make 85 [Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester] 93 [Lord Deputy] (Hay 162).

On the one hand, Leicester's appointment as Lord Deputy of Ireland meant safeguarding the countess's Irish holdings, including both estates and lucrative monopolies that she inherited after the death of her husband in 1636. As Lord Deputy of Ireland, Lord Wentworth had looked after Lucy's Irish interests, attempting to serve both the Crown and Lady Carlisle, as he explained in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1637: "as being desirous to fetch this Grant [impost upon wines] back to the Crown as also to serve her Ladyship" (Knowler 2: 106). On the other hand, her brother-in-law taking office as Secretary of State would "be more considerable and that 116 [the Countess of Carlisle] shall have your company". Having been separated from Dorothy for years, Lucy would have welcomed her sister's company and would not have wanted to see her move to Ireland.

Lucy's determination in procuring the position of Lord Deputy for her sister's husband and hence protecting her properties in Ireland become apparent when the countess writes to her sister in January 1640/41:

Since I writ my letter 114 [Henrietta Maria] tells me he [she] is confident 85's [Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester's] business will have a good conclusion. 116 [The Countess of Carlisle] has often heard him say he [she] hopes it, but never with that belief that is now expressed. My joy is too great not to tell [i]t, for I say with truth I desire it more than you (Hay 163).

In a letter written to his brother-in-law Leicester almost a year before, on 21 November 1639, Northumberland reports of the failure to secure the position of Secretary for Leicester. Betcherman argues that Charles I, trying to impose sobriety on his diplomats, denied Henrietta Maria's request to make Leicester Secretary because of his extravagant life style as ambassador extraordinary in Paris (202). Perhaps, the failure to secure the position of Secretary for Leicester was furthermore the result of Lucy's disinclination to support this idea. In her letter of 17 December 1640 to Dorothy, Lucy writes:

I find some of opinion that 82 [Northumberland] is so little pressing 65 [Charles] and so backward in engaging herself [himself] in this time as she [he] will have less power to serve 85 [Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester] (Hay 161).

The relationship between Northumberland and the king seemed to have deteriorated because of Northumberland's cooperation with the parliamentary leadership (Smuts, "Religion" 33). Lucy suggests to focus on the position of Lord Deputy, of which the appointment could be decided between the queen and Lord Wentworth, the two persons Lucy could manipulate without the assistance of her brother Northumberland. Lucy writes: "For 93's [Lord Deputy's]

place, I believe 114 [Henrietta Maria] and 93 [Wentworth] may together effect that without her [Charles I?]" (Hay 161). In November 1640 Wentworth was impeached on charges of treason by the Long Parliament (Smuts, "Religion" 32). He was executed in May 1641. One month later, in June 1641, Lucy's brother-in-law was appointed to take his place as Lord Deputy of Ireland.

In spite of the different nature of the letters Lady Carlisle wrote to her husband James, sister Dorothy, and friend Lord Wentworth, the importance of patronage, family and nurturing relationships seem to prevail. Her correspondence, written in her own hand, first and foremost, discloses her vital role as liaison between the court (the queen) and her family and friends. As one of Queen Henrietta Maria's ladies-in-waiting, Lucy was able to influence the queen's and ultimately the king's preferment for certain officers to be appointed in Their Majesties' service. Furthermore, being part of the queen's inner circle, Lucy was able to experience and report the queen's reactions and moods as well as have access to valuable information. The main purpose of Lady Carlisle's letters was to inform and advise in such a way as to help advance the positions of her family and friends in order to protect their interests. Besides, Lady Carlisle seemed to have secured her own interests; she may have enjoyed the rush of power.

Conclusion

Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) painted numerous portraits of Lucy and one of the paintings was shipped to Ireland in 1636 as a gift from Lady Carlisle to her friend Lord Wentworth (Betcherman 169). Van Dyck's portrait *Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle* painted in c. 1637, as shown on the cover of this thesis, presents the image of a woman who:

invites the viewers with an arched eyebrow to join behind the red curtain which hangs, invisibly supported, on the thresholds of a dark interior. She is the sensual heroine of a mysterious erotic drama, but she also has the quality of an unattainable vision. Although she parts the red curtain with a gesture of her right hand, she does not actually touches it to make it move. She is a sorceress, not a mere temptress, someone who seems to glide rather than walk and who can make things happen simply by willing them (Graham-Dixon 67).

This portrait of Lady Carlisle epitomizes what this thesis has also shown: Lucy Carlisle, a charismatic, mysterious and manipulative noblewoman, was one of the most influential ladies-in-waiting in Caroline England. Lucy's increasing impact is closely linked to that of her mistress Queen Henrietta Maria's growing influence over the politics of Charles I. Because of her access to the queen, Lucy was not only able to manipulate the appointment of officers, but she also became engaged in, and to some extent influenced, the queen court's foreign politics. She seems to have possessed a talent for catching the eye of the most powerful courtiers and statesmen; in particular, James Hay (whom she married in 1617); George Villiers, from 1623 Duke of Buckingham (her lover from 1619-28) and Thomas Wentworth from 1640 Earl of Strafford, who, as Lord Deputy of Ireland, protected her interests in Ireland from 1636 until 1640. Her alignments with these influential men enabled her to consolidate her powerful position at court.

Portraiture, like poetry, helped to create an image of the courtier (Smuts “The Structure of the Court” 9-10). Hence, Van Dyck’s portrait of Lucy may demonstrate how she perceived herself. More importantly, it may indicate how she wished to be perceived by others. The image that Van Dyck created is that of a glamorous, self-confident, dynamic woman who with her radiant beauty and imposing presence entices the viewer to join her behind the curtain. However, the brightness of the exterior sets off the darkness of the interior. This alludes to Lucy’s deceptive appearance: beautiful on the outside, foul (that is, dangerous) on the inside. Van Dyck’s powerful, yet conflicting image of Lady Carlisle concurs with the way in which she was represented in court poetry. The countess, as lady-in-waiting to Queen Henrietta Maria, was made the subject of worship; she was celebrated for her sensuous beauty and wit. However, she seems to have inspired court poets, such as Edmund Waller, John Suckling, not only to flattery and admiration, but also to disrespect and scorn: they also depicted her as a cunning, narcissistic person, a mere object of physical desire. Poets painted a portrait of an angel as well as a devil. Lucy appeared in court literature because of her influential position.

Lady Carlisle’s position as the queen’s favourite proved to be volatile, especially after the assassination of Lucy’s protector Buckingham in 1628. In the power vacuum which arose after the duke’s death, Queen Henrietta Maria’s influence on Charles I grew. The queen also became more interested in political (international) affairs. Courtiers began to compete, not only to gain the king’s favour but also that of the queen. The queen became the centre of a pro-French faction, while the king and his officers (such as Lucy’s husband, Lord Carlisle), promoted a dual foreign policy (attempting to form alliances with both France and Spain). Lucy’s position at Henrietta Maria’s court came under fire; it was compromised by her husband’s pro-Spanish inclinations. Moreover, Buckingham was no longer there to protect her nor to subdue the rivalry between her and his sister Lady Denbigh. In 1629 Lucy was

temporarily removed from court because she had offended the French ambassador, Marquis de Châteauneuf. As explained in chapter 2, her banishment from court was connected to Châteauneuf's efforts to strengthen the pro-French faction (Wolfson 327; Schreiber 126; Betcherman 123). Since her reinstatement at the queen's court in 1630 was instigated by the king rather than the queen, Lucy had to find ways to once more strengthen the ties between her mistress and herself.

As one of the queen's masquers, Lucy seemed to have consolidated her regained favour and promoted her powerful image of the firm favourite. The countess performed in Ben Jonson's *Chloridia* (1631) and Aurelian Townshend's *Tempe Restored* (1632). Both masques were commissioned by the queen. They portrayed the Stuart royal couple, a French princess and English prince, as competent rulers, a model of virtue and love. The queen collaborated in the rehabilitation of the Carlises, since they had the king's faith and could prove to be useful allies. In *Chloridia*, Lucy sat closest to Henrietta Maria in the same bower. The close bond between the queen and her confidant seemed to have been emphasized. However, in *Tempe Restored*, Henrietta Maria took seat in a golden chariot, while Lucy appeared separate. There the distance between Henrietta Maria and Lady Carlisle appears to have been foregrounded. By the 1630s it seems that Lucy's influence had increased to such an extent that she no longer needed the exposure generated through performance in the queen's masques to consolidate her key position at court.

Lucy's refusal to perform in the queen's masque *Temple of Love* (1635) affirms her independence and demonstrates how powerful she and "her servants" were. As Veevers and Sanders have suggested, she became the centre of an alternative literary circle, less focused on religion and virtue, more on political purpose and power (Veevers 35-37; Sanders, "Caroline Salon" 453-455). She attracted a number of followers and used 'her slaves' as her sister Dorothy labelled them (Betcherman 134) to protect and promote her family's as well as her

own interests. She also used the access she had to Henrietta Maria to facilitate the political purposes of her suitors, like Lord Strafford.

Finally, the significance of Lady Carlisle's position at the Stuart court is revealed through her correspondence. By examining her letters to her husband; to her sister Dorothy and the letters to her most political correspondent Strafford, it becomes evident that she played a crucial role as liaison between the queen's courtly faction and her family and friends. Not only do the letters demonstrate her access to confidential intelligence and news, confirming her strategic position at court, they also attest to her power to influence the queen's and indirectly the king's decisions. As a result, she was able to help advance the positions of her family and friends in order to protect their interests while never disregarding her own personal concerns.

After having looked at how Lady Carlisle was perceived by others, how she positioned herself next to Queen Henrietta Maria and finally how she expressed herself in her letters, the image emerges of a woman who was one of the most influential ladies-in-waiting during the seventeenth century. Indeed, as some critics believe, Alexandre Dumas may have had Lucy in mind when creating his powerful character Milady de Winter in *The Three Musketeers* (1844) (Schreiber 117; Betcherman 88). To further understand to what extent ladies-in-waiting shaped the politics of the Caroline court, it would be of interest to research other members of Henrietta Maria's household. After the rehabilitation of queens, it is now time to integrate ladies-in-waiting into the master narrative of court studies.

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