

Proposal for “Teaching the Social Media of the English Revolution: Rethinking Gender From the Female Petitioners to the #MeToo Movement”

- 1) **TOPIC:** Teaching the Social Media of the English Revolution: Rethinking Gender From the Female Petitioners to the #MeToo Movement
- 2) **SUMMARY:** In our current moment, students’ immersion in the digital universe and social media means that they are constantly steeping in issues of genre, form, and representation. This workshop will explore how teaching the history of the seventeenth-century can help students navigate our ever-changing media landscape, and how their own media participation can help them understand the relationship between the expansion of print and the political significance of genre in the English Revolution. Workshop members will share and develop assignments, syllabi, and teaching strategies, as well as discuss ways to theorize the relationship between gender and texts in the English Revolution, and gender in our own media revolution. In particular, we will consider how digital circulation is at the core of current resistance movements including the Women's March, the #MeToo movement, and Black Lives Matter.

3) **ORGANIZERS/FACILITATORS:**

Erin Murphy

Boston University

Disciplines: English and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

ermurphy@bu.edu

Emily Griffiths Jones

University of South Florida

Discipline: English and Digital Humanities

egjones@usf.edu

- 4) In our current moment, students’ immersion in the digital universe and social media means that they are constantly steeping in issues of genre, form, and representation. This workshop will explore how teaching the history of the seventeenth-century can help students navigate our ever-changing media landscape, and how their own media participation can help them understand the relationship between the expansion of print and the political significance of genre and form in the English Revolution. Though we will attend to theoretical and historical issues, our primary concern will be to share and develop pedagogical approaches to this material. Workshop

members will share and develop assignments, syllabi, and teaching strategies, as well as discuss ways to theorize the relationship between gender and texts in the English Revolution and our own media revolution.

We will consider how the rich on-going, scholarly discussions of gender, agency, and the seventeenth-century public sphere might help us think about concepts of “space” and political participation in a digital age. By considering a variety of texts, including petitions, recipe books, spiritual autobiographies, political memoirs, diaries, letters, biblical meditations, emblems, orations, masques, elegies and other poems, plays, romances, newsbooks, commonplace books, woodcuts, we will discuss how texts created by women, as well as issues of gender in texts created by others, changed ideas of politics and participation, and how those changes might be related to the role of social media in recent political movements like #Me Too, Black Lives Matter, and the Women’s March.

The first half of the workshop will be structured around the following questions:

- a. How did women’s in-person protests, print, and other textual/visual forms shape political ideas, activity, and community? How might students’ expertise in social media contribute to on-going scholarship on gender and “the public sphere”?
- b. How did issues of embodiment and textuality emerge in the context of the English Revolution and its immediate aftermath? How do these issues relate to contemporary discussions of social media and politics, including conversations both within and outside of academia?
- c. How do different textually-enabled political movements of the seventeenth-century build on/ borrow from/ interact with each other, and how might that

be related to current discussions about intersectionality and the politics of social media?

In advance of the conference, we will also exchange syllabi and assignments (both ones already used in classes and those in formation), which we will discuss in the second half of the session. The coordinators will ultimately structure the workshop sections based on these submissions, so timing may be adjusted depending on the kinds of submissions and the interests of the participants. We will have a breakout period in which small groups will converse about the teaching materials, then report back to the larger group.

Though the sharing of course materials will be our primary preparation for the session, we will also read a brief selection from the introduction to Mihoko Suzuki's field-shaping *Subordinate Subjects: Gender, the Political Nations, and Literary Form in England, 1588-1688*. This reading will provide some common ground for discussing the political activism of women during this period, as well as some starting points for brainstorming about useful theoretical paradigms to help students make connections between this early moment and our own. To this end, the seminar participants will also collaboratively develop a bibliography of additional resources, including scholarship on the early modern period, gender and digital media, and relevant websites/digital projects.

6) **READING:** Introduction to Mihoko Suzuki's *Subordinate Subjects: Gender, the Political Nations, and Literary Form in England, 1588-1688*, ps. 1-26.

Subordinate Subjects

Gender, the Political Nation, and Literary Form in
England, 1588–1688

MIHOKO SUZUKI

University of Miami, USA

ASHGATE

© Mihoko Suzuki 2003

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

The author has asserted her moral right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the author of this work.

Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Gower House
Croft Road
Aldershot
Hampshire GU11 3HR
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington, VT 05401-4405
USA

Ashgate website: <http://www.ashgate.com>

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Suzuki, Mihoko, 1953-

Subordinate subjects : gender, the political nation, and literary form in England, 1588-1688. - (Women and gender in the early modern world)

1. English literature - Early modern, 1500-1700 - History and criticism
2. Women in politics - England
3. Apprentices - England - Political activity
4. Petition, Right of - England - History - 17th century
5. Women and literature - England - History - 17th century
6. Politics and literature - England - History - 17th century
7. Great Britain - Politics and government - 1558-1603
8. Great Britain - Politics and government - 1603-1714

I. Title

828.3'0099287

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Suzuki, Mihoko, 1953-

Subordinate subjects : gender, the political nation, and literary form in England, 1588-1688 / Mihoko Suzuki.

p. cm. - (Women and gender in the early modern world)

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 0-7546-0605-8 (alk. paper)

1. English literature--Early modern, 1500-1700--History and criticism.
2. Politics and literature--Great Britain--History--17th century.
3. Feminism and literature--Great Britain--History--17th century.
4. Women and literature--Great Britain--History--17th century.
5. English literature--Women authors--History and criticism.
6. Sex role in literature.
7. Literary form. I. Title. II. Series.

PR438.P65 S88 2002

820.9358--dc21

ISBN 0 7546 0605 8

2002025859

Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall

Wee the subordinate Subjects of this Commonwealth, do Declare our selves to joyn with the Apprentices of this City, &c, by way of down-right Honesty for the encrease of the City Force against this Army-fied Parliament.

Declaration of the Maids of the City of London (1659)

And as for the matter of Governments, we Women understand them not; yet if we did, we are excluded from intermeddling therewith, and almost from being subject thereto; we are not tied, nor bound to State or Crown; we are free, not sworn to Allegiance, nor do we take the Oath of Supremacy! We hold no offices, nor bear we any Authority therein; we are accounted neither Useful in Peace nor Serviceable in War, and if we be no Citizens in the Commonwealth, I know no reason we should be subjects to the Commonwealth. And the truth is, we are no Subjects, unless it be to our Husbands.

Margaret Cavendish, *Sociable Letters* (1664)

The *publicum* developed into the public, the *subjectum* into the [reasoning] subject, the receiver of regulations from above into the ruling authorities' adversary.

Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962)

There are two meanings of the word *subject*: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.

Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" (1983)

The analysis of subjection is always double, tracing the conditions of subject formation and tracing the turn against those conditions for the subject – and its perspective – to emerge.

Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997)

Introduction

In mid-seventeenth-century England, Parliament opposed, went to war against, tried, and executed the king. In these extraordinary circumstances, amid a heightening of popular political activity, apprentices and women repeatedly petitioned Parliament. In his recent study of popular politics in Civil War London, Keith Lindley observes: "Apprentices and other young Londoners forgot their place and presumed to intervene in the affairs of church and state ... even women temporarily abandoned their housewifery to make their own political contribution" (410). While historians have often acknowledged that "subordinate subjects" – non-aristocratic men and women – have not left the kind or amount of textual traces left by their superiors, the breakdown of censorship in 1640–41 allowed these petitions to be published in their own right and as part of newsbooks.¹ Thus the political activity of apprentices and women was discursively constructed and produced discursive effects. These texts can therefore give access to what Antonio Gramsci has called "the history of the subaltern" – necessarily fragmented and episodic – as well as to the history of political thought "from below" (see Krantz; Hobsbawm).²

¹On the explosion of print culture in the 1640s, due to the abolishing of the Star Chamber and the consequent breakdown of the monopoly by the Stationers Company, see Hill, "Censorship," 40–1. Hill points out that the object of censorship was to prevent the circulation of subversive ideas among the people (32–3). See also Freist, chap. 2, "Politics of Censorship." The publications during this period are exceptionally well preserved, because the bookseller George Thomason attempted to collect every pamphlet that appeared in print during 1640–60; his collection of over 20,000 texts was purchased by George III and is housed in the British Library. The British Library catalogue contains one entry concerning apprentices during the period 1550–89, two entries during 1590–1639, and seventy-one entries during 1640–60, thus indicating the explosion of publications – and their unusual preservation – by and about apprentices during the English Revolution.

²The *OED* dates the meaning of "subaltern" as "Of a person or body of persons: Subordinate, inferior," to 1581. It appears in James VI and I, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598), 76. Although Gramsci's use refers to social groups subordinate to the hegemonic and dominant groups within Italy, current uses of the term most frequently refer to the colonial or postcolonial subject. See, for example, Spivak, "Subaltern Studies"; "Can the Subaltern Speak?" For a critique of the widely held Straussian distinction between political philosophy and "political pamphleteering," and an argument for the need to consider political theory in its historical dimension as

According to political theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, the political imaginary of equality – the ability to conceive of democratic equality as an ideal – originated with the French Revolution and in particular the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1791), which affirmed the rights of all male citizens; their theory centers on the late-twentieth-century extension of this imaginary to other social relations to form a radical pluralist democracy, which includes multiple subordinated groups (155, 188). Yet more than a century before the French Revolution, the petitions by apprentices and women in England give expression – however inchoate – for perhaps the first time to an egalitarian imaginary and democratic pluralism.³ By the very act of petitioning, both groups were claiming political rights they did not possess: apprentices were excluded from the franchise because they were neither householders nor citizens, and women, who designated themselves as “wives,” were incorporated in the political and legal persons of their husbands. Both groups thereby expressed their refusal to acquiesce to their subordinate position and their exclusion from political participation.

The apparently ephemeral eruption into the political arena of these heretofore disempowered groups had both precedents and consequences – discursive conditions that made possible the expression of the egalitarian imaginary and discursive effects even after the Stuart Restoration of 1660. This book proposes to study the construction of the early modern political subject through these discursive practices and the consequent widening of the political arena in terms of both gender and what Gramsci called the “national-popular” (see also Forgacs). Gramsci’s term is useful for my purposes because it carries at once political and cultural meanings. Politically, it designates the collective will of what he calls the “people-nation” – not limited to or bounded by a specific economic class and its interests. In seventeenth-century England apprentices constructed and consolidated a subject position that designated themselves as the representatives of this national-popular. In cultural terms, Gramsci’s designation refers to the literature and textual production of the people – including the petitions, but also other examples of popular and non-

ideology, see Ashcraft, “Political Theory,” 691. Linebaugh and Rediker similarly interrogate “the violence of abstraction” in the writing of history – an unquestioned focus on the nation-state that represses and makes invisible “sailors, slaves, and commoners” as subjects of history (7). See also Harris’s recent collection, *Politics of the Excluded*.

³Zaret has recently argued that the widespread petitioning and the printing of the petitions during the English Revolution constituted practices that created the conditions for the theorizing of liberal democracy; his discussion, however, focuses on male citizens, rather than on apprentices and women.

hegemonic cultural production – that make possible and articulate the imaginary of political equality.⁴

The wide dissemination of these petitions through publication had already brought about the rational political debate in civil society that Jürgen Habermas designated as the public sphere and traced to the coffee houses and newspapers of later seventeenth-century England (see Zaret). Although Habermas considers the public sphere to be an arena of discourse constitutive of democracy where relations of domination and subordination can be suspended, Nancy Fraser points out that subaltern participants in the public sphere cannot wield equal influence because their rhetoric marks them as disempowered, and because their concerns can be excluded by the dominant participants as being “private” and not of common concern. For these reasons, Fraser posits a multiplicity of “subaltern counterpublics” (137, 124). Apprentices and women in these petitions rhetorically – and strategically – marked themselves as subalterns, even though the very act of petitioning contradicted their acknowledged disability as political subjects; in addition, they initially expressed concerns that can be bracketed and dismissed as “private.” Yet both groups eventually go beyond their narrowly defined “authentic” interests – as women, and as apprentices – in addressing themselves to issues of national import; they thereby move from a “counterpublic” to a public sphere.⁵

As I have already suggested, this extraordinary confluence of the two groups’ articulation of political rights as “subordinate subjects” was not a spontaneous occurrence, but had important historical antecedents in the first half of the seventeenth century. I will be tracing the gradual construction during this period of the identities and subject positions of apprentices and women as political agents, no longer acquiescing in their subordinate status in either the family or the social and political order. I will further argue that the failure of the English Revolution, and the Restoration of Charles II, did not succeed in completely dissipating these political aspirations and energies; rather they reemerged in new forms. In taking this position, I am contesting the views of “revisionist” historians such as J. C. D. Clark and J. P. Kenyon, who have designated the repudiation of monarchy as a “Rebellion” rather than a

⁴Gramsci, however, does not include women in the concept of the national-popular except as readers of serialized popular novels who choose the family newspapers, which are not “purely political papers or papers of pure opinion” (“National-Popular,” 207). He thereby strongly implies that women do not interest or involve themselves in wider political issues of national import. Walby also points out that most theorists of nationalism and citizenship do not take gender as a significant issue (235).

⁵On “authentic” interests as “prediscursive objective interests” of a class, which constitutes the “essence” of identity, see A. Smith, 44.

"Revolution," de-emphasizing its relationship to the period preceding it and its significance for the period that followed.⁶

Literary scholars also have tended to divide English literature at mid-century, usually treating the years up to 1642, 1642–60, and after 1660 as three separate periods. I propose to take as my focus the "long seventeenth century" – on the analogy of the "long eighteenth century" (1660–1820). In an essay aptly titled "The Enclosure of English Social History," Keith Wrightson has observed "an urgent need to break through, or at least loosen, the constraints of received periodisation," and has called for a "rejection of conventional terminal dates in order to pursue particular problems over spans of time appropriate to the tracing of significant social change" (70). More specifically, I am in agreement with Jonathan Scott, who argues against the "historiographical dividing line of 1660," and emphasizes the continuity of English history from the Spanish Armada to the Glorious Revolution (*Algernon Sidney*, xiv; see also *England's Troubles*, 25–6). Lawrence Stone has also remarked upon the "widespread public participation in significant intellectual debate on every front" during the years 1590 to 1690, explaining this phenomenon by what he calls "the educational revolution" between 1560 and 1640 and the resulting high rate of literacy even among the poor (78, 80). The publication and performance history of many of the literary texts I treat here, for example *The Maid's Tragedy* and *The Changeling*, spans the seventeenth century, and indicates that they continued to perform cultural work for the very different set of circumstances that prevailed in periods later than those in which they were initially published.

In addition to examining the shifting reception and cultural intervention of specific texts that enjoyed an extended afterlife, I will also focus on the ideological transformations evident in the deployment of literary forms over time. For this reason, using Fredric Jameson's theory of the "ideology of form," I hope to elucidate the deployment of literary forms in articulating – as well as policing, by those intending to discipline – this egalitarian political imaginary. As a counterpoint to transhistorical theories of literary genre, Jameson's model is useful for my purposes because it allows us to understand genres as "literary *institutions*, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public" ("Magical Narratives," 106; emphasis in original) – though his exclusive focus on modes of production needs to be revised to take into account the question of gender.

Following the Jamesonian model, we can explain the importance of plays in representing apprentices throughout this period by the significant presence of apprentices in the theater audience (Gurr, 5–6; Whitney, 435–6). City records

⁶For challenges to revisionist historiography, see Hill, "Parliament and People"; Sommerville, 224–65; Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger*, 9–45.

show that apprentices attended plays in groups and at times rioted at playhouses (Chambers, 4:321). The pre-Civil War comedies that feature apprentices represent them as on the whole merry and obedient, if at times rambunctious, workers; the minority who may be dissolute hardly pose a threat to the social order. Beginning in 1642, the apprentices sought to represent themselves through petitions to Parliament in which they fashioned themselves as reasoning political subjects. The Restoration comedy, *The Knavery in All Trades* (1664), which was performed by apprentices, is notable for its representation of domesticated apprentices after their spirited political activity at mid-century. The later shift from comedy to tragedy in George Lillo's *The London Merchant* (1731), which targeted apprentice audiences and was traditionally performed on Shrove Tuesday, the holiday for apprentices, indicates a shift to the ambivalent representation of and identification with the prodigal apprentice as an exemplary modern subject.

Throughout this period, plays also featured female characters, addressing female theater-goers whose presence in the audience is documented (Gurr, 6–9, 55–9). As in the case of apprentices, the “representation,” if not self-representation, of women on the early modern stage began to carry political meanings; as such, the early modern stage can be considered a nascent public sphere, where interventions by subalterns are marked by their rhetorical and political disability. The pre-Civil War plays that concern the possibilities of women's political participation most often take the form of tragedies, rather than comedies; these tragedies apparently punish the female transgressors, even while dramatizing their rebellious speech and acts. With the coming of the Revolution, women, like apprentices, began to actively petition Parliament; yet perhaps because women's political activity was always more vexed than that of apprentices – as evidenced in the authorities' more favorable reception of apprentice petitions – women writers made use of many other literary genres besides the petition. Even before the Revolution, because publication for women was also a problematic obstacle, women chose to write in more private genres – for example, Aemilia Lanyer's devotional poetry addressed primarily to aristocratic women patrons; even Rachel Speght's defense of women, though addressed to middle-class women readers, found only a limited public compared to Joseph Swetnam's extremely popular misogynist attack. Following the publication of women's petitions during the Revolution, the Restoration saw a continued expansion of the public addressed by women's writing, an expansion indicated by the genres which they deployed: the political tracts by Elizabeth Cellier and broadsides by Elinor James incorporated or made reference to the genre of the printed petition, which enabled them to publicize their own views on the polity and to “represent” themselves as rational political subjects despite their lack of access to the franchise. Their greater access to print culture afforded them publicity – or

notoriety – as they answered male opponents and addressed both male and female middle-class readers.

Subordinate Subjects seeks to intervene in a field that has been particularly lively and productive in recent years. In *Forms of Nationhood*, Richard Helgerson states that

those discursive forms that emphasize state over nation, power over custom and individual conscience, are also more upper-class and male. Those that emphasize nation over state include – and even identify with – women and commoners. From this perspective ... the issue of power and the issue of inclusion coalesce. Inclusion emerges as an inverse function of power. The more intensely a discursive form concentrates on the centralized power of the state the more exclusionist it is likely to be with regard to class and gender. And, conversely, the more inclusive it is, the greater place it gives women and commoners, the less concerned it will be to assert the prerogatives of monarchic rule. (297–8)

I find useful Helgerson's distinction between state and nation, for it cuts to the heart of the difference between my project with its focus on the aspiration of women and apprentices (as representatives of the commons) to be included in the English nation, and other studies, which have focused on the centralized state and its institutions. For example, Claire McEachern draws her texts from high canonical literature that found social unity in "the ideological affiliation of crown, church, and land ... as a projection of the state's own ideality" (5); by contrast, I focus primarily on popular forms of discourse, including non-literary texts, as sites where women and subaltern males imagined a political nation that included their voices.

While literary scholars of early modern women have largely studied their position in the patriarchal family, Theodora Jankowski in *Women in Power*, and more recently, Jodi Mikalachki and Megan Matchinske have examined the question of gender and the nation state.⁷ As her title suggests, Jankowski focuses on female sovereignty in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, as does Mikalachki, with her focus on the figure of Boadicea in Shakespeare and in other texts from the early and late seventeenth century; I seek to discuss the place of female subjects in the political nation as represented in both dramatic and non-dramatic texts throughout the century. While Matchinske treats women writers and female subject formation, I place women's political

⁷Among recent general studies by historians of early modern women, Fletcher's does *not* concern itself with "the prominent sites on which masculine relationships worked themselves out in the public sphere ... or about how precisely such institutions affected women" (401); but see Mendelson and Crawford, chap. 6, for an extensive treatment of women's political roles.

participation and the symbolic deployment of gender in a larger discursive field that includes male subalterns. Mark Thornton Burnett has contributed to our understanding of apprentice culture in terms of the relationship between masters and servants; my approach differs from his in arguing that apprentices constructed a subject position as representatives of the political nation, a subject position that at times was embraced by those who were no longer apprentices. Further, I maintain that the construction of this subject position depended on antagonisms against women and immigrants as demonized others, excluded from participating in political discourse. While I treat the imbrication of gender and rank, especially in analyzing the subject positions of aristocratic and middle-class women, I diverge from Rosemary Kegl's study of gender and class in late Elizabethan literature by questioning the adequacy of "class" as a category of analysis; I also challenge her emphasis on the foreclosure of strivings on the part of the subaltern and the difficulty of imagining progressive alternatives to the existing social order.

My study also joins recent work on popular pamphlets and their role in constructing a Habermasian public sphere – Sharon Achinstein's on the English Revolution and Alexandra Halasz's on the late Elizabethan period. And my book is based on the premise that the theater, too, was an important site of political commentary and contestation, as are Karen Newman's and Jean Howard's on Shakespeare and Jacobean drama, Rebecca Bushnell's on early Stuart drama, Susan Wiseman's on drama during the Revolution, and Susan Owen's on Restoration theater during the Exclusion Crisis. In taking as its subject the development of the imaginary of political equality in popular discourse – including pamphlets and dramatic works – over the course of the tumultuous seventeenth century, *Subordinate Subjects* seeks to study changes in the construction of this political imaginary – however uneven, however recursive.

The political identity of apprentices reached its most heightened articulation during the years of the English Revolution and Commonwealth, and a lesser, but significant manifestation during the Exclusion Crisis, but waned thereafter; women's political activism followed a similar trajectory. In her study of "French Feminists and the Rights of Man," Joan Scott has cautioned against constructing for feminism an evolutionary and cumulative, "orderly and continuous historical tradition" (*Only Paradoxes*, 1). The dates I refer to in the title of the book, 1588 and 1688, are significant for the history of disparity and discontinuity that I seek to trace. In 1588 England under Elizabeth Tudor defeated the Spanish Armada, a victory over a more powerful Catholic nation that was to become a defining – almost iconic – moment for the English nation. Elizabeth's famous address to her troops at Tilbury – which, as Susan Frye has shown, was published later as a critique of her

successor James when he contemplated a Spanish match for his son ("Myth of Elizabeth") – constructed Elizabeth as a monarch of the people.

Even during her reign, Elizabeth's relationship with her people was affirmed, for example, in *The Quene's Majestie's passage* (1559) which included staged dialogues between her and the citizens of London, as well as in the exchange of letters between Elizabeth and the citizens of London published as *The True copie of a Letter from The Queenes Majestie, to the Lord Maior of London* (1586) to celebrate her deliverance from the Babington Plot. Throughout the seventeenth century, and especially at political flashpoints such as the early years of the Revolution (1641, 1642, 1643), the Exclusion Crisis (1680), and the Glorious Revolution (1688), her speeches to Parliament were republished in order to glorify her as an icon against Stuart absolutism; a typical example from 1680 was titled *A Pattern or President [precedent] for Princes to Rule by, and for Subjects to Obey By*. Although John Knox in 1558 famously excoriated female sovereignty as a "monstrous regiment," Elizabeth was adept at justifying her rule, partly through her appeal to her people and paradoxically by emphasizing her gender – as wife and mother to her people. Her own ambassador to France, Sir Thomas Smith, based her right to rule on her exceptional status as "absolute Queene"; he stipulated, however, that she must nevertheless be guided by the wisdom of male counsellors, for all other women were denied participation in politics and public affairs (65).

Carole Levin has found that many women were prosecuted for circulating rumors alleging that Elizabeth had given birth to illegitimate children (66–90); the tenacity of these rumors indicates that her gender was considered to be disabling and her own female subjects sought to bring her down to their level by sexualizing the "Virgin Queen." Yet despite this evidence of Elizabeth's female subjects' antagonism toward their sovereign, I will show that she offered a legitimizing example for women who were beginning in the course of the seventeenth century to imagine themselves as political subjects. This case of Elizabeth's effect on the political imaginary demonstrates particularly well that "women" did not necessarily share a subject position, and that they do not necessarily share an "authentic" interest based on their gender. Elizabeth thus became an enabling object of identification for some female subjects, and for others a transgressive object of antagonism, against which they defined their subject positions as women who assented to patriarchal excoriations of women in power. While these women shared a subordinate position as gendered subjects in seventeenth-century England, they did not agree on *how* to interpret that position.

A century later, in 1688, William and Mary came to the throne, this time expelling the absolutist (and Catholic) James II. Elizabeth's example was adduced by those who supported Mary's right to succeed her father James; yet unlike Elizabeth, she did not exercise sovereignty alone, but was designated

joint ruler with her husband, William of Orange, who refused the position of consort (Schwoerer, "Images," 727-30). The Declaration of Rights of 1689 established constitutional monarchy and the rights of subjects, for example to petition. At the beginning and the end of the century, then, Elizabeth and Mary became figures around whom the Protestant English political nation was constructed. Yet the agreement by Mary to cede executive power and her acquiescence to her wifely position at the end of the century is perhaps emblematic of the retreat of women from the political public sphere after their bold interventions at mid-century.

Apprentices and Wives as "Subordinate Subjects"

In *The German Ideology* (1846) Marx and Engels discuss apprentices and journeymen as subordinates – like women – in the patriarchal family, but consider their vertical ties to their masters to be stronger than their horizontal ties to one another (70).⁸ Yet London apprentices did establish a distinctive political identity in early modern England. They gained visibility and prominence by their large numbers: by the mid-sixteenth century they constituted ten percent of the London population, and by the early seventeenth, their numbers more than doubled; moreover, they constituted a "national" culture in that eighty-five to ninety percent of their population consisted of migrants from other parts of England (Ben-Amos, 84). Even though, or perhaps especially because, they were deprived of political rights, being neither householders nor citizens, they emerged in English politics at the time of the Evil May Day Riots of 1517, when they rioted against immigrants.⁹ Throughout the 1590s they consolidated their political identity through their extensive and repeated rioting; as in the case of Evil May Day, some were tried and executed for treason. During the Revolution and even into the Restoration, they confirmed their identity through their active petitioning. On the one hand, Steven Smith has characterized these apprentices as "seventeenth-century

⁸Marx and Engels significantly find the origins of the division of labor in the activities of men and women engaging in sexual reproduction within the family, and, within guilds, in the separation between masters, on the one hand, and journeymen and apprentices, on the other. Although they do not draw explicit connections between the two types of division of labor, their discussion indicates that they are parallel instances of dominance and subordination that presage class divisions in capitalist society (44, 46, 74).

⁹On "anti-alien sentiment among Londoners" throughout the century, of which Evil May Day is the best known example, see Yungblut, 40-51.

adolescents" who formed a youthful "subculture."¹⁰ On the other, Peter Burke designates apprentices as participating in a "blue-apron" culture, following the analogy of "blue-collar" culture; but this designation suggesting their group identity as one based on class needs some qualification (32, 34). For even though they were bound to diverse trades with differing levels of status from goldsmiths at the top to shoemakers at the bottom, apprentices established a subject position and political identity *qua* apprentices that went beyond these status distinctions.¹¹ Rejecting as essentialist the Marxist reductionism to categories of class, Laclau and Mouffe claim that construction of political identities has little to do with strict class boundaries; rather, they see a subordination of the economic struggle to political struggle. The worker thus becomes a "citizen," and this shift marks the transition from class to nation as the primary focus of political activity (13, 19, 35). Indeed, apprentices gave expression to political aims that were not limited to demands directly related to their status and identity as workers, for example when they debated the rights of the "freeborn Englishman" granted by the ancient constitution. In designating themselves as such, and in articulating equivalences with other subordinate groups (for example, by issuing joint petitions with watermen, though significantly not with women – a point to which I will return), their identity as apprentices moves beyond the particular to claim representativeness and universality – as male political subjects.¹²

¹⁰Smith uses Erik Erikson's developmental psychology to conclude that apprentices suffered from "increased identity confusion, thereby strengthening the attempt to create a subculture and binding the members of that subculture more closely together" (160). He concludes, however, that their "'fraternal affection' ... [was] not unlike the class solidarity urged by labour leaders of a later age" (161). Ben-Amos counters that the activities of apprentices "need to be placed in the context of crowd action and social protest, rather than in the context of age relations" (183). Griffiths calls apprentices a "corporate body," whose "impression of unity was dispersed in print, news, and rumour" (162).

¹¹Seaver also points out that the social origins of apprentices seem to have made very little difference to their experiences as apprentices: "No great gulf of accent or education seems to have separated the gentle apprentice from his fellows recruited from subordinate classes" ("Declining Status," 146).

¹²Laclau, "Structure, History," discusses the movement from "concrete demands" to "historical aims" and the construction of equivalential relations among subordinated groups as the basis of constituting the universality of the "collective will" (209–10). H. Smith, *All Men*, argues that such "universals" have historically been "false" in their (often silent) exclusion of women. The consistent assumption that the designation "apprentices" referred exclusively to male apprentices – despite women's actual participation in the system of apprenticeship – confirms Smith's thesis.

Avid playgoers and readers, apprentices became the subject of plays, fiction, satiric poems, and even a political treatise during the course of the seventeenth century, with all these texts exemplifying the kind of popular literature designated by Gramsci as the "national-popular."¹³ They emerged as authors and subscribers of numerous petitions to Parliament during the Revolution. The apprentices' joining with watermen and other subaltern groups, as well as Leveller John Lilburne's use of the form of the apprentice petition (when he was no longer an apprentice), indicates that the apprentices' identity was not necessarily limited to that of an age group.¹⁴ Indeed, the fact that Lilburne, a gentleman's son, cast one of his most radical political tracts – one of the writings for which he was tried for treason by the Commonwealth government – as a petition by apprentices, indicates forcefully that he was making use of the subject position of apprentices as political activists and theorists. The apprentices during the Revolution thus take up the role of what Gramsci called "organic" – as opposed to "traditional" – intellectuals, in that they retain their ties to the subaltern group of their origin, using their attainments to direct and persuade, rather than to be "simple orators" ("Intellectuals," 10). Although the political activity of apprentices was curtailed after the Restoration, as their numbers diminished, apprentices – by this point split among Whigs and Tories – continued to petition during the Exclusion Crisis of 1680–81. Their retreat from politics by the eighteenth century – and the hegemonic culture's success in disciplining their aspirations – is indicated, as I will show, in Lillo's *The London Merchant*.

Antony Black has demonstrated the interplay between the medieval guild ethos of corporate self-government and the ideals of freedom and liberty that constitute civil society (72–4). Black thereby confirms Gramsci's notion of the reciprocity of the masses and intellectuals as well as his thesis that both the everyday discourse of workers and elite philosophical discourse exist within a specific historical context ("Philosophy and History," 344–5); yet political thought "from below" has been relatively neglected because it is considered unimportant in comparison to high political theory or state-centered practice. Such popular (and "disqualified") knowledge is a good example of what

¹³On apprentices' high level of literacy, see Ben-Amos, 198–9, who states that some apprentices could read and write while their masters could not. Burnett points out that apprentices' corporate identity manifested itself in "their consumption of popular literary materials," and in "the production of texts which addressed specifically apprentice interests" (*Masters and Servants*, 14).

¹⁴Griffiths maintains that the designation "apprentices" could have served as a "convenient catch-all to categorize an otherwise mixed bag of apprentices and other 'loose' groups including unpaid soldiers and sailors, vagrants, and the unemployed" (160).

Foucault called *le savoir des gens*, "subjugated knowledge," which by being local, discontinuous, and illegitimate, lacks a unitary body of theory and must be rediscovered ("Two Lectures," 82-3). The apprentices' interest in freedom and liberty most likely draws on this medieval guild tradition of self-government, which Black maintains was used by the artisans to challenge elite hegemony. Apprentices, however, were not participants in corporate government; perhaps *because* they were barred from this involvement, they sought other avenues, such as rioting and petitioning. Ironically, this exclusion led the apprentices to look beyond guild affairs to extend their intervention to matters of national import.

The apprentices' construction of their political identity beginning in the early sixteenth century and continuing throughout the seventeenth indicates that the repeated process of subjectification was enabled by historical precedent and collective memory. The apprentices who petitioned Parliament in 1642 or 1647 were not, of course, the same apprentices who rioted during Evil May Day in 1517 or in the 1590s. Apprentices during the Revolution were careful to assert their legitimacy and insisted on the orderliness of their political intervention; this self-representation was clearly intended to distinguish their actions from the "disorderly" nature of earlier political activities. In addition, apprentices confirmed their political identity across space – the "imagined community" of apprentices – when Bristol apprentices published a "letter" in support of London apprentices.¹⁵ And Restoration apprentices cited the precedent of petitioning apprentices from the 1640s but generally suppressed the less desirable history of apprentice riots and prosecutions for treason (with one notable exception, when in 1668 they deployed their traditional Shrove Tuesday rampage against brothels in order to attack Charles II's licentious court). Despite the change in historical circumstances, then, these apprentices clearly believed that they shared a continuity of political identity with earlier generations of apprentices *as* apprentices, and that they participated in and carried on a tradition of political discourse across generations. This legitimizing appeal to historical precedent enables political action, especially on the part of disempowered groups; even

¹⁵ *A Letter of the Apprentices of the City of Bristol, to the Apprentices of the Honourable City of London* (1660). Although Benedict Anderson dates the origin of nation-formation to the eighteenth century, his theory of "imagined communities" across space made possible by widely disseminated print publications and a common vernacular closely corresponds to the apprentices' conscious formation of and participation in a national print culture in seventeenth-century England (see 6-7, 44). Ben-Amos points out that Bristol, like London, included a large proportion of apprentices – ten percent of the population in the seventeenth century – as well as a large proportion of migrants (84, 86).

the negative constructions of apprentices as disorderly paradoxically helped to establish their political identity as oppositional subjects, as it did in the case of the Bawdy House Riots.

The apprentices' intense focus on their "guilt" (concerning disorder and violence) on the one hand, and "conscience" and "reflexivity" (in their mastery of legitimizing political discourse) on the other, indicates the importance of the internalization of the law and self-discipline in the process of subject formation (see Butler, *Psychic Life*, 113–15). To this end, they moved from demanding redress of specific grievances – e.g., the regulation of immigrants within the guild or the establishments of days of recreation – to petitioning Parliament concerning the rights of the "freeborn Englishman." They strategically displaced the violence of their brothel-destroying rampage (through which they supposedly "disciplined" licentiousness in order to counteract their reputation for consorting with prostitutes) onto discursive violence against "whores" as existing at the limits of the political and social order.¹⁶ Robert Ashton points out that prostitutes were objects of official and exemplary punishment (15); thus apprentices demonstrated their alliance with the law through these actions and discourses. This legitimizing self-representation, which indicates the "mastery" of social and discursive protocols, corresponds to the apprentices' "mastery" of their craft; the attainment of the position of master would entail the assumption of a full civic role.¹⁷

Although London apprentices in theory would eventually attain the status of masters, householders, and citizens, and could justify their participation in politics through this expectation of enfranchisement, women found more difficult their entry into the public sphere, for such literal and figurative extradomestic interventions were considered inappropriate or scandalous. Moreover, the greater degree of publicity apprentices historically enjoyed as a group made it easier for them to consolidate their political identity. In this respect, apprentices thus still possessed privilege as males that women did not. Because publicity for women was to be shunned at all costs – "public" women were considered to be transgressive because not confined within the home – women were enjoined from publishing their works, as many scholars have

¹⁶On "London's Apprentices and the Bawdy Houses," see Griffiths, 213–21, who discusses a large number of cases of apprentices consorting with prostitutes as recorded in the Bridewell courtbooks.

¹⁷Yet many apprentices did not attain the position of masters. Both Rappaport, 311–14, and Ben-Amos, 130, report that fewer than half of all apprentices completed their terms. *The Apprentices of Londons Petition presented to the Honourable Court of Parliament* (1641) complains that even apprentices who completed their training could not set up; masters often preferred cheaper apprentice labor to that of journeymen (Ben-Amos, 218).

pointed out (see, e.g., Wall, 279–83). It is therefore no accident that almost all the individual women I discuss were notorious or scandalous in some way, for they emerge as subjects (and authors) by resisting the injunction to acquiesce to their subordinate (and non-speaking) status. Aemilia Lanyer prominently discusses the plight of royal mistresses, calling attention to her status as the discarded mistress of Lord Hunsdon. Margaret Cavendish was labelled “mad” and called “Welbeck’s illustrious whore” even though her extensive publication in pursuit of “Fame” was authorized by her husband. Women petitioners were satirized as “women in Parliament” with transgressive political aspirations and insatiable sexual appetites. After the Restoration, the “Popish midwife” Elizabeth Cellier was prosecuted for libel and treason. Similarly, the printer’s wife and later widow Elinor James was ridiculed as the “She statesman” and even imprisoned in Newgate for petitioning Parliament, the lord mayor and aldermen of London, as well as for seeking to counsel the king. These women sought to define a concept of “public,” political women whose activity was not limited to the domestic sphere; they also contested the designation of women as inherently “disordered,” and thus unable to intervene rationally in public discourse.

Despite – or precisely because of – this injunction against women’s political participation, women claimed identities as authors and sought to enter the *literary* public sphere, initially writing in forms that were not explicitly marked as political, such as devotional poetry, in the case of Lanyer.¹⁸ While oppositional male writers such as Deloney and, later, Marvell work within the available paradigms, and confirm the prevailing ideology of forms, women writers often subvert the implications of the forms they use. This difference between oppositional males and females indicates the greater degree of difficulty women faced in becoming authors, as well as the greater degree of resistance to the dominant ideology they registered through their writing. For example, Lanyer subverted the conservative gender ideology of devotional poetry to question women’s subordination. And Cavendish and Cellier rearticulated and redirected the discourse of misogynous satires. Thus women frequently manipulated the ideology of form as a means to contest the dominant ideology; such interventions allowed them to resist their negative construction by patriarchal discourse.

Addressing a limited public – as evidenced in Lanyer’s bid for aristocratic patronage among an apparently private network of female patrons, and Speght’s single edition by contrast to the multiple editions of Swetnam whom she was contesting – these women writers nevertheless constructed a

¹⁸See Sanders on the “construction of gender identities through dissimilar literacies” (8). Original composition was constructed as masculine, while transcriptions and translations of devotional texts were considered appropriately feminine (172).

"counterpublic" in which they articulate an imaginary of political equality. With the coming of the English Revolution, women entered a more extensive public sphere of discourse by means of their printed and widely disseminated petitions. In focusing on texts such as printed petitions as well as anonymous examples of material culture such as caskets embroidered with scenes from biblical texts, I hope to heed Margaret W. Ferguson's caution against an exclusive focus on "major" literary genres and the notion of the author's "personal autonomy," a focus that leads to a skewed sample of aristocratic and well-educated authors ("Moderation," 361). During the Restoration, Elizabeth Cellier and Elinor James continue to participate in the public sphere through political tracts and printed petitions, forms that came into prominence during the Revolution. Even though the Restoration has been considered as marking a political retreat for women, the effects of women's increased access to print during the Revolution – as evidenced by the large number of printed prophecies as well as petitions by women – persisted in the ability of these middle-class women to publish without having to appeal to aristocratic patrons as Lanyer had been compelled to do.¹⁹ The more explicitly political nature and form of their writings, as well as their prominence in the culture despite their middle-class status, I argue, marks a heretofore unacknowledged legacy of the English Revolution.

Unlike the self-consciously continuous tradition of apprentices' political activity throughout the century, the history of women's political writing appears to have been more discontinuous; that is, later writers were not necessarily familiar with or based their own writings on that of their predecessors. Yet they nevertheless deploy strikingly similar rhetorical and literary strategies in challenging patriarchal ideology, indicating the recurring need to negotiate the structural constraints of patriarchal regimes, and the similarity of their position of subordination and disability therein. Despite this lack of a continuous historical tradition, all seventeenth-century women did have available to them one salient historical precedent to validate their position as political subjects. Although Allison Heisch has argued in "Queen Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy" that Elizabeth did not change, nor was she interested in changing, the lot of women in general, she did become a visible and useful model and precedent for women in the generation that followed her. Elizabeth's reign became a watershed not only for aristocratic women such as Cavendish, but also for the middle-class Lanyer and petitioning women of the

¹⁹Crawford, "Women's Published Writings," has found a dramatic rise in the number of women's published writings after 1640, which with some falling off persisted into the Restoration; during the 1680s and 1690s (when Cellier and James were active) their number matched and exceeded the level of the 1640s (see esp. 212, fig. 7.1).

lower classes during the English Revolution, as well as for the Restoration writers Cellier and James, because it marks a moment when a woman was acknowledged as a legitimate agent in public and political history (see Suzuki, "Elizabeth").

While apprentices were apparently able to come together in their political actions despite the stratifications in status between, for example, goldsmiths and shoemakers, for women the differences in rank have been more vexed. In the wake of the post-structuralist interrogation of identity as a given, and the affirmation of the constructedness of subject positions, to discuss "women" as an undifferentiated group invites charges of essentialism. In fact, some recent scholars have criticized others for celebrating the "community" of women without attending sufficiently to class differences (see Coiro, Schnell). Yet the critics of essentialism often stress division and antagonism among women to the point of making it difficult to imagine effective or coherent political practices against patriarchy. By extending to gender Laclau and Mouffe's insight into the hegemonic articulation of equivalences among different elements of the subaltern, I will argue that although the women writers I discuss do not constitute a self-evidently homogeneous or identical category of subjects, women of different ranks can and did articulate equivalences against patriarchy. As Judith Butler says, the "unity" of the category of woman need not be presupposed for effective political action to take place. Butler thereby affirms both the acknowledgment of differences among women and the constructing of provisional identities in accomplishing concrete political practices (*Gender Trouble*, 15-16).²⁰ For one thing, women were attacked as a group in misogynist invective such as Joseph Swetnam's. And writers such as Aemilia Lanyer and Rachel Speght are clearly responding to these negative interpellations in mounting defenses of women.

Iris Marion Young's concept of "gender as seriality" offers another answer to the critics who fault feminism for essentializing women, for normalizing the experiences of some while marginalizing those of others. Rather than claiming to identify specific *attributes* all women have, Young focuses on how the material organization of social relations – enforced heterosexuality and the sexual division of labor – positions women in a *structure* of constraints and expectations. Thus women constitute for Young not a group, but a series, members of which can on occasion come together as a collective. Young's theory allows for an acknowledgment of differences among women who can yet join in a strategic alliance to protest against common structural constraints; thus Lanyer appealed to aristocratic women in order to publish a defense of women against misogynous constructions that justify the subordination of *all*

²⁰For the links between the positions of Laclau and Butler, see Butler, "Further Reflections," 14; and now Laclau, "Structure, History," 193-5.

women. Young's concept of "seriality" can be extended from a focus on classes to include a historical dimension that encompasses women of different generations: those who independently arrive at similar literary and rhetorical strategies of argument in contesting patriarchy, and those who regarded Elizabeth as a model for women's political agency.

In addition to studying how specific women writers constructed themselves as political subjects, this book also analyzes the construction of "women" and "woman" as subordinate terms in political discourse – and its discursive effects in excluding women from political participation.²¹ Extending Carole Pateman's theory that the denial of political rights to women has been justified by reference to their "disorder" – first in the socio-political sense of "civil disorder" and in the second sense of an internal malfunction, a disordered imagination ("Disorder," 18) – I will analyze the common strategy during the century of demonizing women as "whores" in order to delegitimize their political interventions. Moreover, the allegorical representations of Britannia as well as the use of Elizabeth as an icon of English nationalism are based upon the exclusion of actual women from the polity; scholars of the French Revolution such as Joan Landes have demonstrated a similar dialectic between the use of woman as an allegory to represent the state and the absence of women from the political public sphere.

Negative interpellations of apprentices and women by the dominant discourse performed the cultural work of disciplining and disempowering them as potentially upstart and unruly subalterns. (Here, I am adopting Louis Althusser's notion of how the dominant order constitutes subjects by interpellating them [173–6].) These interpellations functioned to stigmatize these groups as illegitimate and marginal, and therefore to be discounted. Though their aim was to demonize and control them as subversive subjects, these negative interpellations nevertheless constructed apprentices and women as having a collective identity, and made that identity available and intelligible to them. Examples such as Elizabethan proclamations against rioting apprentices, Elizabethan domestic tragedies that construct wives as murderous, Stuart plays that stereotype apprentices as disorderly and thieving, and satires of political women during the English Revolution and Restoration, can and did have consequences, I argue, unintended by their authors. As Butler says in *The Psychic Life of Power*, a social category can be interpreted as either an

²¹See Riley for the historical shifts and instabilities in the discursive construction of the category of "women," which she claims undergoes an increasing degree of sexualization between the late seventeenth and nineteenth centuries (14). On "woman" as a category of subordination, see also Mouffe, "Feminism, Citizenship," 382; on gender as a signifying practice, for example in constructing the idea of class, see Joan Scott, "On Language, Gender."

affirmation or an insult, and can be politically enabling or paralyzing, due to "the incommensurability of the symbolic demand (the name that is interpellated) and the instability and unpredictability of its appropriation" (96). For discourse can never be completely controlled by its users, and hence "discourse can produce the possibility of identities that it means to foreclose," in that "the articulation [of foreclosure] can become rearticulated and countered" (Butler, "Competing Universalities," 158). I will argue that negative interpellations of both apprentices and women can and did help to consolidate the political identity of both apprentices and wives as "subordinate subjects," as they appropriated or redirected the identity to positive uses.

Articulation of Equivalences between Wives and Apprentices

In *The Sexual Contract*, Carole Pateman argues that the marriage contract is a kind of a labor contract, and that the position of wives might be compared to that of slaves, servants, and workers (115–17). Indeed, wives and apprentices occupied similar positions as subordinates within the household, under the power of the husband and the master. There were legal similarities between the position of apprentice and wife. Both the apprentice contract and the marriage contract were arranged by parents and relatives, and parents in both cases made a payment at the beginning of the contract – a dowry (in the case of marriages) or a bond (in the case of apprenticeships). As marriages were recorded by the parish, so the names of masters and apprentices were entered in the city and company records at Guildhall (see Dunlop and Denman, chap. 1). Moreover, apprentices and women, though members of guilds, took no part in the business of their administration (Hibbert, 39–40).²² Finally, Blackstone places wives, apprentices, and children in the same category when he speaks of "domestic chastisement": "For, as he is to answer for her misbehaviour, the law thought it reasonable to intrust him with this power of restraining her ... in the same moderation that a man is allowed to correct his apprentices or children ... But with us, in the politer reign of Charles the second, this power of correction began to be doubted" (qtd. in Staves, 144–5).

²²For an extensive documentation of the presence of women in guilds, see Stopes, *Sphere of "Man,"* chap. 3, "Women in the Trade Gilds of London." See also H. Smith, *All Men*, chap. 3, on gender and early modern guilds, where she argues that while women – not just widows, as previously assumed – were active guild members as apprentices, mistresses (taking apprentices), and wearers of livery, the organization of the guild focused on male stages of advancement, hence undercutting the accomplishments of women. On women apprentices, see Ben-Amos, 135–45.

Yet there were significant differences that gave apprentices more rights than wives. Perhaps most important, the apprentice contract was temporary, while the marriage contract was not. As a 1656 satire, ventriloquizing wives, baldly stated: "we have been, and still are deprived of our Liberties, living in the bonds of servitude, and in the Apprentiship of slavery, (not for term of years, but during life)" (*Now or Never: Or, A New Parliament of Women*, A2). Theoretically, apprentices could eventually attain the position of masters, while only their husbands' deaths could free wives from their subordination as *femes covert*. Moreover, the apprentice contract could be voided if the master did not fulfill his obligations, or even for incompatibility between master and apprentice (Ben-Amos, 103–6, 109–10). In fact, apprentices not only actively negotiated their contracts with their masters, but sometimes petitioned the court against their masters, negotiating better terms with a new master before leaving old ones (Ben-Amos, 210–14; see also Seaver, "Declining Status," 134–46). An increase in the number of gentlemen's sons in the course of the seventeenth century promoted a sense of equality between apprentice and master, so that by 1726 Defoe in *The Complete English Tradesman* described apprentices as behaving "more like companions to their masters than like servants" (Lane, 199, 242). Although prescriptive texts concerning marriage promoted reciprocity and companionship alongside the more traditional hierarchical relationship based on wifely obedience, marriage contracts, unlike apprentice contracts, could not be voided. Karen Newman points out that it was precisely in "the often-quoted so-called companionate handbooks," such as William Whately's *A Bride-bush* (1619), that "the wife's subject relation to her husband is found," and that "the reciprocity of the contract is not a 'solution' to the gender hierarchies of marriage and sexual relations but rather an important site of their production" (26, 23).

In mid-seventeenth-century England, however, the marriage contract became the basis of theorizing the contract between the sovereign and his subjects, and that analogy in turn affected the understanding of the contractual nature of marriage; if subjects could overthrow the yoke of a tyrant, then wives might legitimately refuse obedience to a despotic husband (Shanley, 83–5). Ironically, or predictably, when Milton advocated the dissolution of an incompatible marriage in *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643), he took the perspective of the unhappy husband. Similarly, the famous divorce cases of the late seventeenth century – brought by the Lord Roos (1670) and the Duke of Norfolk (1692–1700) – both concerned aristocratic husbands who sought and succeeded in obtaining divorce from their adulterous wives in order to protect their lineage. A satiric poem linked the forced abdication of James II and the divorce of the Duke of Norfolk, thus indicating the popular understanding of the analogy between the contract theory of monarchy and marriage (Stone, *Road to Divorce*, 313). While participating in this debate,

Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Wife* (1697) deviates from the male-centered norm in having a wife articulate the analogy from her own perspective: "The argument's good between the king and the people, why not between the husband and the wife?" (I.i.73-4).

Writers in seventeenth-century England frequently signalled their understanding of the equivalence between wives and apprentices. Most striking were the negative interpellations, for example in the 1659 satiric petition, *A Declaration of the Maids of the City of London* – cited as the first epigraph to this book – that designates both apprentices and women as "subordinate subjects."²³ Yet even in 1617 the pseudonymous Ester Sowernam addressed the second dedication of *Ester hath hang'd Haman* to the London apprentices as allies against "old fornicators" (A3v) such as Joseph Swetnam, the author of the popular misogynous pamphlet, *The Araignment of Lewde, idle, froward, and unconstant women* (1615). Edmund Bolton's *The Cities Advocate* (1629) calls attention to the similarity between the position of wives and apprentices: "Apprentises now come commonly like wives with portions to their Masters" (33). And Margaret Cavendish in *Bell in Campo* (1662) shows "citizen Wives and their apprentices" (Part 2, V, xx, p. 630) celebrating the triumph of the woman warrior Lady Victoria. Finally, as the Restoration printer and publisher Francis Kirkman gives an account of his own apprenticeship in his 1673 autobiography, *The Unlucky Citizen*, he addresses apprentice readers: "let me tell thee Reader, whoever thou art, if an Apprentice, that I consider the Tye of an Apprentice to be, for the time, as solemn as that of *Matrimony*; for we should resolve to live together as married folks do, *for better for worse, for rich or for poor, in sickness and in health*" (52). Kirkman here indicates the close relationship between the legal and social subordination in apprenticeship and marriage. Significantly, many of the writers who acknowledged equivalences between wives and apprentices were neither apprentices nor wives. For example, it is now the scholarly consensus that Ester Sowernam was probably a male writer masquerading as female. And Bolton, Lilburne, and Kirkman were no longer apprentices when they wrote from the subject position of apprentices. Such examples indicate that these subject positions were not natural or essential: men could write against misogynous assaults, and adult males could write from the position of apprentices.

Apprentices and wives thus shared structural positions in the household and the social and political order that made them potentially allies against the hegemony of the patriarchal family and the English state. Laclau and Mouffe argue that different elements of the subaltern can go beyond alliances – in

²³ Another example of a satire that links women and apprentices is *Pray be not angry: or the womens new law. With their severall votes, orders, rules, and precepts, to the London-prentices ...* (1656).

which the elements retain their subject positions – to articulate new subject positions through an understanding of their “equivalences” in relation to the dominant order; in doing so, they can construct a hegemonic antagonism against the dominant order (64–5). I am not arguing here that alliances or equivalences between women and apprentices reach the level of such a hegemonic antagonism before the Revolution. Still, as early as 1563, *The Mirror for Magistrates* has Jane Shore state, “In maryage, a prentyse was I bound / When that meere love I knewe not howe to vse”; (ll. 108–9); it thus represents her marriage as an apprenticeship and as a bond that thwarts the exercise of her subjectivity. Significantly, Shore is presented as one who “vpholde[s] the common weale” (l. 199) whose “power was prest to ryght the poore mans wrong” (l. 204). The text thereby acknowledges the equivalence between wives and apprentices as subordinates bound to a master or husband, often against their will; moreover, by having Shore champion the rights of the commons and the dispossessed, the authors indicate the effect of such ideological understandings, for Shore states that she promoted the cause of the powerless “as it had bene mine owne, / And helpt them vp, that might have bene orethrowne” (ll. 202–3).

Despite this striking and early example, instances of the awareness of these equivalences between women and apprentices only manifested themselves unevenly and intermittently. In fact, apprentices were intent on constructing their political identity in opposition to women: one of their trademark forms of political protest was destroying brothels on Shrove Tuesday. Since even as subaltern males they enjoyed patriarchal privilege over women, they identified upward with male citizens rather than with women; in fact, by excluding or differentiating themselves from women, they sought to legitimate themselves as political subjects.²⁴ Although the apprentices’ actions bear out Laclau and Mouffe’s theory that antagonisms and exclusions are the basis of defining social and political identity, Laclau and Mouffe do not sufficiently distinguish between antagonisms against the dominant order and exclusions of other subaltern groups for the purpose of self-legitimation.²⁵ This critique would also

²⁴This construction of masculine identity by subaltern artisans appears not to have been limited to England. Wiesner discusses German journeymen who defined their own honor in contradistinction to women, refusing to work in shops where women were employed or even in the same shops as journeymen who had worked alongside women (“*Wandervogels*”; “*Guilds, Male Bonding*”). See also Joan Scott, “On Language, Gender,” who discusses Chartism in terms of the “gendered construction of the working class” (64) – as masculine.

²⁵See, for example, Laclau, “Uses of Equality,” 6: “a society without exclusions is impossible ... politics is, to a large extent, a series of negotiations around the principle of exclusion which is always there as the ineradicable terrain of the social.” But in

apply to Slavoj Žižek, who has similarly maintained that ideological positions are constructed and made coherent through antagonisms against others (*Sublime Object*, 124–8).²⁶ The apprentices' scapegoating of women as licensed and licentious "whores" on the one hand and of foreigners as wealthy and privileged "strangers" on the other reveals such figures to be Žižekian figures of projected fantasy – of debasement and desire. Yet the middle-class Restoration satires of apprentices and "whores" show the equivalence of both – from the perspective of hegemonic discourse – and unmask the construction of ideology whereby apprentices seek to differentiate themselves from women; at the same time, as I will show, the satires also make apparent the constructedness of their own middle-class ideology that seeks to expel both of these "lawless" elements from the social order.

By contrast with apprentices who sought to repudiate their equivalences with women, in 1640–41, women as a group began to petition Parliament following the example of other male subordinates – most notably apprentices. In 1649 they petitioned on behalf of the imprisoned Leveller leaders, although the *Leveller Agreement of the People* (1649) did not consider women to be included in its proposed universal male suffrage. After the Restoration, Elizabeth Cellier refers to Lilburne's *Malice detected* (1653) in the title of her political tract *Malice Defeated* (1680), and Elinor James's publication of her numerous petitions to government authorities clearly refers to the political form deployed by both apprentices and women during the English Revolution. Although apprentices may have been reluctant to articulate hegemonic equivalences with women as "subordinate subjects," women by contrast found enabling their use of political, discursive, and literary forms associated with apprentices. Through their use of these forms, women such as Cellier and James constructed themselves as writing from the subject position of the national-popular. More than a century before Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which argued for women's rights as a logical consequence of the rights of non-aristocratic males, then, seventeenth-century English women's understanding of these equivalences with "freeborn Englishmen" allowed them to begin constructing new subject positions for women based on the political imaginary of equality.

I have already indicated how the shift in political identities in the course of the seventeenth century can be theorized as a shift from the counterpublic to

"Subject of Politics," he also argues that such exclusions deconstruct themselves, resulting in "radical undecidability" (53).

²⁶For a critique of Žižek from a feminist perspective, see Butler, "Arguing with the Real," 196–7. In *Metamorphoses of Helen*, where I treat the scapegoating of women in service of the construction of the epic (male) community, I offer a similar critique of René Girard's theory of scapegoating (6–9).

the public sphere – both apprentices and women move from addressing “private” concerns to “public” issues before the nation. In addition, they move from “a strategy of opposition” to “a strategy of construction of a new order” (Laclau and Mouffe, 189): the apprentices go from rioting in protest to theorizing democracy, and Elizabeth Cellier goes from indicting English judicial practices to proposing the establishment of foundling hospitals and a professional society of midwives. This change can be theorized in another way with the help of Althusser, who claims, referring to Pascal’s well known discussion of the wager, that actions can bring about identities that do not yet exist (178–9):²⁷ just as Pascal’s wagerer acts as if he believes in God, thereby constructing his subject position as a believer, so the rioting of apprentices as a group helped constitute a political identity that they themselves did not articulate explicitly until the mid-century petitions. Similarly, women wrote for a public that in many ways did not yet exist: Aemilia Lanyer presented copies of her book to aristocratic women patrons whose favorable reception of her work is by no means certain; and Margaret Cavendish sent her handsome folios to libraries, though she was not taken seriously by most of her contemporaries. Nevertheless, through the very act of writing and publishing, these authors constructed themselves as subjects who did not acquiesce to the injunction of silence and obedience to patriarchy, and thereby advanced a claim for gender equality, however wishful. Indeed, a public for many of these women’s writings did not come into being until the late twentieth century.

This last observation leads me to explain my use of post-structuralist and post-Marxist theories to understand the textual production of seventeenth-century England. I began research on this project not with a theoretical framework in place; yet these theorists offered useful tools that helped me to think about the construction of political identities by bringing together psychoanalysis and political theory.²⁸ This convergence can be seen most notably in the paradoxical and ambivalent relationship between subjection and subjectification – signified in the word *assujettissement* – as the epigraphs to this book from Foucault and Butler indicate (see also Riley, 17; Dollimore, 55). And just as late twentieth-century feminist theories that emphasize the differences among women sharpen our understanding of women who were separated by rank in seventeenth-century England, so perhaps it is appropriate

²⁷See also Žižek, who maintains that this theory of the construction of identity resembles Rosa Luxemburg’s description of the formation of the working class into the revolutionary subject (*Sublime Object*, 84).

²⁸E. Bellamy has called for a “psychoanalytic politics” that attends to “the complex interaction of the unconscious and the sociopolitical” (37), though she finds that Laclau and Mouffe’s deployment of psychoanalysis remains on the level of the metaphorical. I suggest that Butler has been more successful in integrating the two.

that political theorists of late capitalist societies who seek to go beyond class divisions help conceptualize the political situation of an early modern, nascent capitalist society.²⁹

* * *

I aim in this book to demonstrate how, in the course of the seventeenth century, women and subaltern males were interpellated by the dominant culture, yet came to imagine themselves as participants in political discourse and the public sphere. Rather than discuss the two groups' construction of their subject positions as separate and distinct, I am interested in showing how they defined themselves through an asymmetrical process of identification and disavowal: while women modelled themselves after apprentices, apprentices often defined themselves in antagonism against demonized women. To this end, I examine the political work performed by popular discourse and the way that literary forms can perform ideological tasks; my method can be described as formalism in the service of historical analysis.³⁰ Finally, I seek to show how discursive texts reveal the workings of ideology, even as they engage in ideological constructions themselves.

The first chapter maps the dialectic between, on the one hand, the apprentices' construction of a subject position that emphasizes political agency and protest, and, on the other, their interpellation by the dominant discourse. Here I examine the London apprentice riots of 1590s, Thomas Deloney's *Jack of Newbury*, four apprentice comedies, as well as Edmund Bolton's treatise, *The Cities Advocate*; by contrast with the historical record that disapprovingly represents disorderly and rebellious apprentices, these predominantly comic texts wishfully construct the apprentice as a productive and cooperative member of the social order. While the ideology of comic form marks the necessity for apprentices, as they complete their bond, to be integrated eventually into the social order, the tragic form proves more useful for disciplining women, or expressing a tragic ambivalence toward their

²⁹See Barrett for a treatment of Althusser, Laclau and Mouffe, and Foucault as post-Marxists. She considers the two salient characteristics of the post-Marxist paradigm to be the questioning of class essentialism – “whether ideology should be seen as ‘class-belonging’” – and the theorizing of the subject in ideology (159).

³⁰Roland Barthes has also called for a methodology that merges formalism and historicism: “the specific study of forms does not in any way contradict the necessary principles of totality and History. On the contrary: the more a system is specifically defined in its forms, the more amenable it is to historical criticism” (112). Jameson's theory of the “ideology of form” coupled with his injunction to “always historicize!” is of relevance here as well.

aspirations. Turning to the problem of women's place in the political order, the second chapter begins with the interplay between discourses concerning Elizabeth Tudor's sovereignty on the one hand, and unruly wives and women on the other. As late Elizabethan domestic tragedies dramatize women's crimes within the family, they also have the effect of disabling women as political subjects; later tragedies ambivalently chart an equivalence between outlaw women and subaltern men, constructing an imaginary of rebellious (yet political) women. The third chapter considers the works of middle-class women writers, Aemilia Lanyer and Rachel Speght, to examine Stuart women's responses to their representation by patriarchal discourse, and their as yet wishful imagining of themselves as legitimate political subjects. In order to ground and justify their positions, they deploy a common strategy of at once appealing to historical precedent and radically revising authoritative literary forms.

The fourth chapter, on the English Revolution, examines petitions by apprentices and women that constitute the first breakthrough into public political discourse by each subaltern group. The satiric responses to women's strivings to participate in the political process at once acknowledged their presence in the public sphere and attempted to discredit the legitimacy of their participation by labelling them as licentious and disorderly. The fifth chapter examines two ambivalent responses of apparently royalist women to women's political activity during the Revolution. Taking as its subject the embroidered caskets by aristocratic young women and the political writings of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, I argue that gender complicates and creates slippages in subject positions that have heretofore been assumed to be transparent, self-evident, and "authentic," on the basis of royalist allegiance.

The sixth and seventh chapters focus on the Restoration, in assessing the effect of the political activity of women and apprentices during the Revolution. The first of these juxtaposes the political activity of apprentices during the Exclusion Crisis, the anti-royalist satires authored by aristocrats and middle-class males (including Andrew Marvell) in *Poems on Affairs of State*, and Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*. The articulation of equivalences between men of different ranks is accomplished by the shared demonizing of women as "whores," an articulation that indicates the significant cultural role gender played in political discourse during these eventful years. The final chapter focuses on the political writings of Elizabeth Cellier and Elinor James as legacies of the English Revolution; although after the Restoration women no longer petitioned as a group, Cellier and James articulated their subject positions by reference to the discursive genre of the subaltern's petition, and sought to make reasoned interventions in the political controversies of the day. The epilogue takes up Lillo's *The London Merchant* to show how by the early eighteenth century, the status of the "subject" has shifted from political

subjectation that enables subjecthood – in the sense of political agency – to subjectivity – in the sense of interiority.

Both the indefatigable petitioner Elinor James and the dramatic character George Barnwell find themselves turning inward to express a complex subjectivity. While this subjectivity may signify an awareness of the loss of political efficacy, it is nevertheless predicated on the political identities attained by women and apprentices – albeit discontinuous and uneven – during the course of the seventeenth century. For at the beginning of the period under study, subjectivity was a privilege enjoyed largely by male monarchs and aristocrats; rarely was it ascribed to subaltern males or women.³¹ By the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, a retreat from the imaginary of political equality is accompanied by the increasing prominence of the imaginary of the equality of psychological subjects that will find further development in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

³¹There have been a number of studies from various perspectives on the question of subjectivity (or its lack) in early modern England. See, for example, Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*; Belsey; Barker; and Hanson. Maus considers the pervasive disjunction between interior and exterior to arise from the English Reformation and the consequent religious realignments throughout the sixteenth century that brought about “the awareness of a secret interior space of unexpressed thoughts and feelings” (16). See also Cunningham’s recent *Imaginary Betrayals*, on the legal construction of subjectivity, specifically in reference to treason trials.