

ROGER BOYLE, CHARLES  
DAVIES, INGELO NATHANIEL И  
ДР.

**PREFACES TO FOUR  
SEVENTEENTH-  
CENTURY ROMANCES**

**George Mackenzie**  
**Charles Maurice Davies**  
**Roger Boyle**  
**Nathaniel Ingelo**  
**Prefaces to Four Seventeenth-**  
**Century Romances**

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*Prefaces to Four Seventeenth-Century Romances / Roger Boyle, Lord Broghill, preface to Parthenissa (1655) Sir George Mackenzie, «Apologie for romances,» prefixed to Aretina, the serious romance (1660) Nathaniel Ingelo, preface to Bentivolio and Urania (1660) Robert Boyle, preface to Theodora and Didymus (1687):*

# Содержание

INTRODUCTION	5
THE PREFACE	13
To all the Ladies of this Nation	18
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	20



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long argument about Romance somewhat apart from the developments which preceded the emergence of the novel proper in eighteenth-century England. The secret antinomy in their authors with regard to the art they are practising is as clearly revealed by the compulsion to give Romance a new and, above all, a serious purpose as by the embarrassing discovery of so much that was otiose in the already existing forms. At heart they shared with Arnauld the opinion he expressed of Scudéry's *Clelie* in his famous letter to Perrault. "Que ce soit, si vous voulez, le plus beau de tous les Romans; mais enfin c'est un Roman. C'est tout dire."

A further insight into their ideas and purposes is gained if one remembers the part they played (Mackenzie and Robert Boyle especially) in the experimental crisis through which seventeenth-century rhetoric was passing. All four works were written in self-imposed styles and were attempts to discover the nature of a common measure for the narrative prose their age demanded. Romance *à la Scudéry* was never indigenous in English soil. Even Roger Boyle had never succumbed wholeheartedly to its sophistications which explains why his book was so lamely sponsored by diffidence, dubiety and want of will. His language could never compass the idiom in its entirety nor could "the matchless Orinda" (who was Boyle's friend) command as zealous or intelligent a following as that which crowded the Hôtel de Rambouillet. "*Parthenissa* is now my company,"<sup>1</sup> writes Dorothy

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Osborne, "... I am not very much taken with it though he makes his people say fine handsome things to one another, yet they are not easy and Naïve like the french." A long tradition, culminating in the *Poetics* of Scaliger, had established the kind of "truth" both poet and romancer were in search of and contrived a set of *schema* amenable to variations by even a mediocre talent. Broghill's plan pays due attention to suspense and elaboration, without which, as Ménage said, "the end would arrive too soon." He, like others, resorted to history for the balance of the parts and the establishment of *vraisemblance* in terms of what would address itself to the reader as representative and probable. These were now the commonplaces of the romancer's art. In his *Preface to Birinthea* (1664) John Bulteel sets his face against those who "can relish no Romance that is not forced with Extravagant Impossibilities." The tale, however told, should be limited to the scope of "that predominant faculty of the Soul, the Judgement." And in 1665, John Crowne, amusingly enough in the *Preface to Pandion and Amphigenia* had maintained, with an eye to character, that "my endeavours have been rather to delineate humors and affections, than to affect humorous delineations." Whole volumes filled with "Phlegmatic conceipts" and "such empty inflations, inherit the Office of a foot-ball." But alas! while Romance endeavoured to bring the heroic into stricter, more reasonable consonance with its ordinary, realistic counterpart of everyday, the extension of range brought about

by all the means of emotional contagion produced none but amorphous results. It was Madame de la Fayette who finally achieved the expression of the personal will in a universe of privately conflicting motives, but only by the rigorous exclusion of those elements, literary and historical, which had confused Roger Boyle.

The stylistic aspect of the Romancer's problem is well illustrated by the *Apologie* prefaced to his *Aretina* (1660) by Sir George Mackenzie. This is the critical exercise of a young man in search of a style. Sidney, Scudéry, Barkley and Broghill are his saints and patrons if only because they had shown a distaste for "things impracticable ... above the reach of man's power" such as filled the pages of *Amadis de Gaulle*. But *serious* Romance (and *Aretina* is that) can "strain the crystal streams of virtue from the puddle of interest"; it allures "lazy Ladies and luxurious Gallants ... to spend in their Chambers some hours, which else, the one would consecrate to the bed and the other to the Bordell." The one real contribution he makes, however, is in his insistence on avoiding "the style which because of its soaring pitch was inimitable." In his own writing there is much that savours of copy-book conceits but a style "flourished with similies," such as "Barrasters" use, is by no means to be condemned. Mackenzie seems to be in two minds, pulled this way and that in response to two guiding notions and allegiances. In his *Idea Eloquentiae Forensis Hodierna* (1681) he maintains that "Eloquence is not only allowable, but necessary ... where Passions are to be

excited.” To “the profluvium Asiaticum” of the Codex and the (so-called) novels of the lawyers, he opposes the narrowness of “the short or Laconick Way” which was the only excellence of judges. In his condemnation of bombastic periphrasis and the “carminated” hyperbole of Browne and Charlton, he would have included some, at least, of the pretty effects so carefully studied by “a ridiculous caball of Ladies at Paris.” Nevertheless the one style he recommends is that “where the cadence is sweet, and the epithets well adapted ... and this is that style which is used at Court, and is patterned to us by eloquent Scuderie.” He never attained to that kind of writing himself in *Aretina* but the new style, for all that, was presently to be succinctly catalogued in all its essentials by the members of the Royal Society and was to provide the staple of the English novel when it ventured outside “the circumference of wit” and attained popularity in Defoe and Fielding.

Ingelo takes us at once into the narrower realm of traditional commonplace. “The whole Rhapsody of Homer’s Iliads and Odysseis,” he quotes, “beginning and End, is but a woman.” Even the chastest delights are dangerous to the “Dignity of Reasonable Souls.” Like Ascham, he castigates all those whose “chief design is to put fleshly Lust into long Stories” and laments “the Excellent Wits thrown away in writing great stories of Nothing.” There is nothing new in this or in his effort “to lay the design of Romance deeper than the Shallows of Fancy,” though to do it, he inured himself and his readers “to ingenious schemes of Discourse –

Apologues, Parables and such-like modes of signification,” the object being to keep in mind the schematic range of moral values that recommended itself to “little capacities.” There is in him more than a hint of Spenser’s allegory and a curious but uninspired anticipation of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. In the *Preface* to the second part (Books 5 and 6 in the second edition, 1669) he admits he has been prolix and “shorter in the Historical Narrations.” The sisters Theonoe and Irene are concerned to give a better account of their Time to Almighty God than mere narrative can comprehend and Ingelo’s task is to turn men’s minds from the gross errors of the Atheists, the Epicureans, the Scepticks and all those who magnify “the Degeneracy of Humane Nature.” *C’est tout dire*. The gravamen of his charge against the degenerate beasts of *Theriacene* and “the Reproach of Many Falshoods” in his concluding book, of the *Elenchus*, is essentially a recognition that his method is inadequate to the demands he has made on it. The arguments of Hobbes could only be countered by a morality that adopted the subtle calculus of a Descartes and revealed the passions for what they are in the wide orbit and common perspectives of human nature.

Robert Boyle, author of Boyle’s Law, Fellow of the Royal Society, and like Roger Boyle, a son of the great Earl of Cork, makes an odd appearance in this company. His *Preface to Theodora and Didymus* (1687) has psychological rather than historical significance. He, too, considered gravely the claims of history against the rival attractions of fiction and imagination

but his remarks have the merit of focussing a problem which was of immediate importance to him and called for nicety and skill in finding a solution. The story he was contriving into a “voluminous romance” was one of tragic import. There is nothing that savours of Cyrus or Oroondates. “True examples,” he maintains, “do arm and fortify the Mind far more efficaciously than Imaginary or Fictitious ones can do.” Yet how could this effect be realized when the scanty materials provided were insufficient to give body to his book? Besides, the nature of the theme forbade those “Imbellishments which, in other themes, are wont to supply the deficiencies of the matter.” Boyle is not won over by the siren voices which might have urged him to give imagination full rein. His integrity makes such a course impossible, but he fully realizes the nature of his quandary. Theodora’s sad choice between death or ravishment and her request to Didymus that he should kill her with his sword rather than let her be dishonoured, opened a new vein for the sentimental school and set a problem in speculative ethics of which Richardson, with his nicely adjusted views of heavenly rather than poetic justice, would exploit with resounding success in *Clarissa Harlowe*. There is a hint, even in Boyle, that these vicarious pleasures are concocted to a recipe that is intended to please the guests at the feast rather than the cooks who prepared it. Defoe’s principle that all should be left to “the gust and palate of the reader” receives perhaps its first expression here and helped create a sense of the relativity of all values without which,

in every age, the novelist would find it difficult to pursue his avocations or stimulate his readers' interest.

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# THE PREFACE

*Though a Preface before a booke of this Nature is seldome writt, and seldomer Read, yet I could not herein Confine my selfe unto the Examples of others, but have rather elected to decline a Generall Practice, to follow my owne Inclination, than observe one, to immitate the inclination of others.*

*Amongst my many Faults, I know none which had a lesse Disputed Assendent over me, then a Detestation to Readeing and Studdy, in which vast unhappinesse I continued 'till I went to see the VWorld, and making some Residence in France, I assotiated my selfe with Persons of my owne Age, where I soone found, that he who was Ignorant of the Romances of these Times, was as fitt an Object for VVonder, as a Phylosopher would be, who had never heard of Aristotle, or a Methematician of Euclyd. This inforc't me to reade, Necessity performing what should have sprunge from a handsomer Principle. In the Perusall of those Bookes, I mett with the names, & some of the Actions, of those Hero's, whome I had heard off, in the Scoole; This gave me a passionate desire to seperate the Truth from the Fixion, in the effecting whereof, I became as much a Freind to readeing, as I had bin an Enemy to it. This experiment I esteem'd an ingratitude to Conceale; & I have cause to beleiuue since Romances Acted a Cure upom me, thy cannot fayle of doing the Like upon any other; & by the knowledge I haue of my selfe & according to a Proportionate*

*Degree of operation, much more upon Any other, then they have done upon me.*

*All the Readers of Parthenissa may wonder at my making of Spartacus and Perolla contemporaries, & that Artabbanes & Spartacus should be the same Person &c. But I hope they will noe Longer doe so, when I Minde them, that I write a Romance, not a History, and that therfore though all I Relate be not the Truth, yet if a Part be, I performe more then what the Title of my Booke does confyne me to. The Latter of these they will finde I doe, in the warre of Spartacus; In the warre betweene Rome and Carthage called the second Punick warre; In the warre betweene the Romans, and the Parthians, and in the warre termed the Metrydatick; In the Relations whereof I have punctually followed those Authors, who have most celebratedly bestowed the History of those Times to Posterrity, and where I have found any contradictions (as in most Historyes I have found some) I have gon according to the seeming'st Truth. Only in the second Punick warre, I have followed exactly Polibius, & the Excellent Sir VValter Rawly in who's Generall History of the VWorld, I finde more Harmony then ever I did in any perticuler History, of any Part of it. But to Evidence Chronologie is not essentiall in Romances, Virgill (who writes a Romance in Numbers, & who is as Famous now, as he was in Augustus Times) makes Æneas and Dido Lovers, when according to most Chronologers the Troian Preceeded her, at lest two Centuries and a Halfe of Yeares; The Former Living in the Yeare of the VWorld 2771; and the Latter in*

*the Yeare of the VWorld 3058, or as Alsted an Excellent Modern Chronologer will haue it, in the Yeare 3077. I Instance this for my Iustification, or at least to evidence I Err by a Famous and Authentique Example. Neither doe I thinke but such a Fault may be Pardonable, when by it I Present the Reader with two such signall, and True Historyes, as that of Hanniball, and that of Spartacus, which doe both contayne things worthy the Perusall, especially the Latter, which Past ages cannot Parrallell, neither doe I beleive the Future will. The Reuolt of Matho & Spendius from the Carthaginians in Antient Times, and of Massaniello from the King of Spayne in the Present, though they are Admirable Actions, yet are rather Foyles, then Paralels to Spartacus'es, who from a private Slaue, after the winning of many a Battell brought the Empire of Rome to the Stake in One, in which had he had successe, Pompey might have Lost the Name of The Great, or else have had a better Title to it, then he Deriu'd from his Asian or Priattike Victories.*

*I shall not here tell you in what Places I have intrench't upon, or borrowed of Truth, since that might silence a Curiosity, the raising wherof is one of my cheefest ends in writeing this Booke. Neither shall I here endeavour to Apologize for Romances, for though I thinke I could say something for them, yet I am certaine I can say more against them, & so much, that had I bin of the same Minde when this Romance was first Designed, as I am now of, at the finishing of the Fourth Tome, I had never begun the First; And if I should continue the two remaineing Last Tomes, it shalbe*

*as a Penance for having writt the foure First. Yet I may say that this way of writing Romances is lesse ill, than any I have yet seene Originally in our Language; for all that have bin presented to the VWorld First in English have bin Purely Fabulous; This contayning much of Truth 'tis like Ore in which the Refyner will have Drosse, and Mettle, and indeede almost the best Historians, differ herein, not in the Quallity, but the Quantity; at least as to the causes & retayles of VVars, sometimes even in the very events; Though many Historyans, write the same History, yet they write not the same things; now it being impossible that there should be but one Truth, 'tis as impossible that those Disagreeing writers should all write that Truth; which cleerely evinces, that Historyes are for the most Part but mixt Romances, and yet the Pure Romance Part, may be as Instructiue as, if not more than, the Historicall; since 'tis not the Truth of a wise Councill, or Ingenious Designe which inuites Men to an immitation thereof, but the Rationallity and Probability of it, whither it be reall or Imaginary; had the Histories of Cæsar or Hanniball bin as meere a fable as they are the Contrary we might yet have Deriu'd from thence as much instruction as wee now can, or doe. Besides, Romances tell us what may be, whereas true Historyes tell vs what is, or has bin, now what may be, is more vncircumscrib'd than what is, or has bin, and consequently affoards a Larger Feild for instruction, and inuention.*

*But I feare I doe herein speake against what I have spoken, I shall therefore only add. That though a desperate Cure (for so I*

*account of reading Romances, as an inuitation to Studdy) be not  
alwaies to be made use of, yet it is not alwaies to be declyn'd;  
That this Romance is the Idle Fruit of some Idle Time; That I have  
euidenc't my weaknesse in Print but to let those Freinds see the  
Power they have ouer me, which could inuite me to it; And in  
the Last place I must desire the Reader to mend the faults in the  
Printing, which I cannot but conclude are too many since they  
almost equall those in the VVriting.*

# To all the Ladies of this Nation

Fair Ladies,

*I Do, like Moses trembling mother, leave this my first born upon the banks of envies current, exposed to the muddy and impetuous streams of merciless censure; wishing, that the fair hands of the meanest of your number would vouchsafe to dandle it in the lapp of your protection; It is but an abortive birth, posted to the world before its time, by an unavoidable emergent, and so I fear shall never prove strong, nor be able to go much abroad: Yet if it be admitted to suck the breasts of your favour, it may possibly prove strong enough (shielded by your affection) to grapple with malice, and all other opposition. Whilst my winged curiositie, pilgrimaged through all the corners of my memory; desirous to know wherewith it was fittest to adorn the porch of this mean structure; duty at last pleaded, that it was lese-majesty against your supremacy, even to doubt whether it was fit to give you the precedency. For, since the best eyed fancy, cannot observe any traite in your peerless faces, wherein nature hath not prodigalled her charmes; so perfection were imprudent, and so no perfection, if it palaced not it self in such accomplisht creatures. And if there be any Orthodox maxime in Phisognomy, we may conclude, that such excellent faces are assorted with excellent souls: Providence being like these prudent Artists, who bestow the choisest cases only upon the richest pieces. And seing one look darted from your*

*irresistible eyes, is able to conquer, in a moment, these over whom neither reason, nor courage, could never raise their trophies; we may conclude that there is something in you, which nothing in man (who seigneurises over all other creatures, and who can pretend to nothing stronger then courage and reason) can ever equal. It is to pleasure you that wit is studied, and were it not that ye might be pleased, certainly providence had placed wit beyond the reach of our studies: it is to sooth your humor that men school themselves in patience; and by your miraculous voice, the storms of their passions are calmed; from your beauty, cowards borrow courage, and niggards liberality; so that all these scattered colonies of vertues, which are squandred amongst men, are all originated from your example. But as it was duty, so it is prudence in me to beg your patronage; for how can the body of this Book be abissed, and sink in the gulf of scorn, if its head be handed up by such admired beauties; neither think I, that malice can be so malicious, as to along a thurst at the author, who ensconces himself behinde such sacred persons; lest the blow destined for him should wound them who targets him. I have chosen so many patronesses, to evidence that there is none of your never enough admired sex, but may lay claime to the patronage of all that drops from my pen; as also, fearing that among such a number, I should scarce finde one who would be so excessively hospitall, as to lodge in her Cabinet or Chamber such an unacknowledged Orphelin. The disappointment of my fears in this, is rather the wish, then the expectation of,*

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