University of Alberta

Augustan Women's Verse Satire

by

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates women's contributions to Augustan verse satire. Verse satire was the dominant literary form of the Augustan age, but literary history would have us believe that Augustan women did not write in that genre. Rather, literary history associates that genre almost exclusively with male writers and masculinity. This study argues that seventeenth and eighteenth-century women *did* write verse satire and that this body of work is a compelling, vibrant oeuvre.

The introduction explores the origins and development of the myth of satire as masculine genre and how Augustan women negotiated around this myth.

Chapter one establishes a theoretical framework by considering the key debates in satire theory, theories of women's humour and comedy, and resistance theory. Satire is defined as a flexible genre of possibilities, offering women writers a powerful vehicle for a range of strategies of resistance.

The second chapter investigates contributions by Sarah Fyge and Mary, Lady Chudleigh, to a popular satiric sub-genre in the late seventeenth century: the satiric debate about women.

Chapter three explores Augustan women satirists' treatment of the theme of marriage in verse satire. This chapter looks at the differences between men's and women's marriage satire

and considers the way women's marriage satire changed over the course of the Augustan period.

The fourth chapter compares the cases of Elizabeth Thomas and Laetitia Pilkington as a means of examining the various ways Augustan women used verse satire--for displaying wit, articulating reformist views, exacting revenge, and making money—and how those ways changed.

The conclusion examines the persistence of the myths surrounding Augustan women's satire in both traditional and feminist versions of literary history.

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Introduction

Debunking Medon's Myth

> "I have pleasure in reminding you that a female satirist by profession is yet an anomaly in the history of our literature. . . ."
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> --Medon (male voice in the prefatory dialogue to Anna Jameson's Shakespeare's Heroines: Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, and Historical, 1832, p.9)

Jameson's Medon articulates a favourite myth of English literary history: that women have not written satire. According to this myth, satire is a "men's genre" from which women are doubly, if not triply, excluded--satire is written *by* men, *for* men, and *about* men's issues. Women's association with the genre, so the myth goes, is purely passive: they are the subjects of satire and not satirists themselves. (The satirist's "most ordinary theme," Dryden observes, is "the Weaker Sex".)[1] The prospect of a woman earning a living by *writing* satire, as opposed to earning a reputation by being the *subject* of it, strikes Jameson's Medon as preposterous and anomalous, "a deviation from the common order" (OED).

Jameson created the character of Medon in the 1830s, half a century after the great age of English satire, the Augustan period.[2] From the late seventeenth century to the middle of the

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[1] "Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" Works 4:60.

[2] There has been much debate about the usefulness and chronological boundaries of this term. Following Weinbrot and Erskine-Hill, I use "Augustan period" as a useful shorthand for describing a set of beliefs and tastes for some period between 1600 and 1800. See Howard Weinbrot, Augustus Caesar in "Augustan" England, (Princeton: Princeton UP,1978) and Howard Erskine-Hill, The Augustan Idea in English Litrature (London: Edward Arnold, 1983). For my purposes I define the "Augustan age" even more specifically as between 1680 and 1760.

eighteenth century, satire was the "dominant" literary genre (Nokes 1), the "instinctive literary form" (Trickett 20), "the major mode of expression" (Elkin 3), the most pervasive and representative style of the period, practised by all the great writers of the age. As Joseph Warton wrote in 1782, at the end of satire's reign, "If the moderns have excelled the ancients in any species of writing, it seems to be in satire" (2:6). Yet despite satire's prominence in this period, Medon's statement is *partly* true (as many myths seem to be): satire was not a major genre for women writers in the Augustan period, in the way, for instance, the novel was.[3] Nevertheless, many women *did* write satire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and my purpose is to debunk Medon's myth by exploring some of the rich but neglected body of work that is Augustan women's satire.

Medon is by no means alone in asserting that "female" and "satirist" are two words that do not go together. Until recently, most critics and theorists of eighteenth-century satire have been reluctant to acknowledge the existence or even the possibility of women's satire. While we may not be surprised that a 'traditional' critic such as David Worcester proclaimed in 1940 that "no woman has ever made a mark in satire" (13), it is remarkable that similar announcements are still being made today. Even a recent revisionist critic of satire, Dustin Griffin, only touches on the issue of women's satire long enough to wonder why there doesn't seem to be any: "Have they [women] . . . been excluded by male readers, or have they excluded themselves?" (189-90).[4] In my initial forays into satire anthologies in search of

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age" even more specifically as between 1680 and 1760.

[3] See, for example, Spencer.

[4] Similarly, in his 1991 study, satire critic John Snyder relegates women's satire to a single footnote: "Women, traditionally victimized by satire, have themselves historically preferred to write and read the harmonious comedy of manners, from the female Restoration dramatists to the practitioners of the mode in novel form from Fanny Burney and Jane Austen to Agatha Christie" (215).

Augustan women satirists, I felt like Virgina Woolf in the British Library looking for books written by women. The satire section was full of references to "women" but only as "subject of" satire; there was no mention of satire *by* women.

Even feminist critics, when they have turned their attention to Augustan satire, have tended to focus on how women are treated *in* satire and the genre's perceived "structuring misogyny" (Ballaster 218), rather than on satire by women.[5] For instance, in Felicity Nussbaum's groundbreaking The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660-1750 (1986), which analyzes how women are portrayed in Augustan satire, she admits that she has "not listened very closely to women's voices in this book, for that . . . is another endeavour" (7). And one of the few feminist critics who has written specifically on women's satire in this period, Jayne Lewis, wonders "why is there so little verse satire by women in a period so deeply informed by that mode of expression?" (33). She concludes that writing satire was a socially unacceptable activity for women in the eighteenth century and that when a few women did attempt satire, the result was self-defeating, an "unintentional conspiracy" with misogyny because it involved borrowing a "masculine" strategy (44).

In contrast, however, my answer to Lewis's question is that while Augustan women's relation to writing satire was certainly problematic, this did not stop them from doing it. There exists a great deal of satire (verse and prose) by women writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although we cannot quite speak of a 'tradition' of women's satire in the sense of an interconnected series of texts influencing one another (as in a male tradition), there is enough verse satire by women in this period to establish central concerns, recurrent motifs and

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[5] See Susan Gubar, "The Female Monster in Augustan Satire" Signs 3 (Winter 1977): 380-94; and Ellen Pollak, "Comment on Susan Gubar's 'The Female Monster in Augustan Satire" Signs 3 (Spring 1978): 328-33.

favourite sub-genres, as well as particular uses Augustan women put satire to.[6] And rather than being a self-defeating body of work, I argue that it is a vibrant, compelling, and revealing oeuvre. We just have not bothered to look very closely at this body of work. Instead, we have accepted, all too easily, both the belief that women's relationship to satire is a strictly passive one (woman as subject, rather than writer, of satire) and what I call the myth of satire as 'masculine genre'.

The Myth of the 'Masculine Genre'

Medon's pronouncement that women do not write satire implies another, deeper myth: that satire is an essentially 'masculine' genre. Women have not written satire, or so the argument goes, because they are not suited to the genre's inherent masculine 'genderedness'. Despite Rita Felski's warnings about the dangers of assuming that there can be such a thing as a "gendered aesthetic" (as in a 'masculine' or 'feminine' genre),[7] some recent feminist and postmodernist satire critics perpetuate this assumption. Jayne Lewis, for instance, dismisses any possibility of serious women's satire in the eighteenth century on the grounds that satire is "an essentially male tradition" (34). Similarly, in their recent overview of satire theory in the post-modern age, Brian Connery and Kirk Combe conclude that since feminist theorists have not investigated women's satire very deeply (focusing instead more on 'women's humour'), this amounts to a confession that "satire is indeed gendered" (12). However, I believe that the assumption that satire is a 'masculine' genre is a myth whose origin is worth investigating.

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[6] There may not be a 'tradition' of women's satire, but there is a certain coherence to the body of work that is Augustan women's satire just because all Augustan women had to deal with more or less the same cultural circumstances--namely patriarchy--which shifted over the period but never radically transformed.

[7] See Felski 1-3.

The myth of satire as a 'masculine' genre can be traced back through critical speculations on the genre's possible origins up to the eighteenth century. Theories of satire's beginnings almost always point to rituals associated with male sexuality or privileges reserved for men only. Aristotle believed that Greek comedy and satire originated in the singing of Phallic Songs, fertility rituals that invoked the "magic potency" of the phallus. These songs celebrated the phallus as both a "negative charm against evil spirits" and "positive agent of fertilization" (Cornford 49). In this same tradition, Robert Elliott argues that satire originated in ancient magical rituals and that ancient enchanters and shamans were the first satirists, who were feared for their ability to wound others with spoken words, to spout invective and to cast spells (3). Although Elliott admits that there were rare cases of women enchanter-satirists in ancient Arabia and medieval Ireland, he implies that the power of the word was a distinctly male prerogative (17, 25).[8] For just as Aristotle perceived a connection between satire and the phallus, Elliott too perpetuates this association of satire with male sexuality by frequently referring to the magical "potency" of the genre (9). Similarly, in his speculation on the origin of the genre, John Dryden points to another male-only ritual: Roman "Saturnian" verse singing performed by "certain young Men" (30).

This notion of satire as a male privilege also grew out of the perception that the ancient satirist-enchanter was a warrior of sorts. According to this theory, the spoken word, in the mouths of the best satirist-enchanters, was a feared weapon capable of physically wounding or even killing an opponent, as in the mythical stories of Archilochus and Hipponax (Elliott 4-15). The "power" of satire, Elliott and others argue, lies in the "destructive, supernatural power of words" (Hendrickson 38), and

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[8] For more on medieval women satirists, see Mary Claire Randolph, "Female Satirists of Ancient Ireland," Southern Folklore Quarterly 6 (1942): 75-87.

this "destructive" element associates satire with the male-dominated territory of warfare and battle.

Much later, in Elizabethan times, this myth of satire as masculine territory was reinforced by the etymological confusion over the origin of the word 'satire'. Although the now-accepted derivation of the word was eventually proven to be the Latin satura (meaning 'overflowing mixed platter'), many Elizabethans mistakenly believed that the word 'satire' was of Greek origin, after plays featuring mythical, crude, woodland creatures called 'satyrs'. Based on this false etymology, Elizabethan satirists, such as Marston, Hall, and the early Jonson, cultivated images of themselves as rude, lustful, shaggy, behorned, sylvan brutes, half man, half beast.[9] This mythological 'satyr'-figure, who donned the woodland moss, as the Elizabethan put it, has obvious masculine associations connecting it with both the sexuality and violence of the ancient myth of the satirist. Lurking in the shadows of the forest, "threatening to carry off women and children" (Nash 98), the 'satyr'-figure conjures images of the "primitive passions" of male sexuality (Connery and Combe 2). Further etymological investigation supports this view too. One derivative of the Roman word satura is satyricus meaning "aphrodisiacal," and in the eighteenth century, another derivative, satyriasis, meant "excessively great venereal desire *in the male*" (OED, emphasis added). The distinctly male derivation of this last term further reinforces the lascivious masculine associations of both satyr and satire.

While the Elizabethans created an image of the masculine satirist, perhaps the biggest single influence in perpetuating the mythical link between satire and masculinity is John Dryden's "Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (1693). Dryden helps straighten out the misunderstanding over the origin of the words satire and satyr (clarifying that the correct

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[9] For more on the Elizabethan 'satyr'-figure persona, see Alvin

etymology was 'platter,' not 'satyr'), but he also introduces his own gendered terms for discussing the genre. Dryden strongly implies a connection between 'good' satire and masculinity. Burlesque, for instance, he dismisses as not giving the kind of pleasure "proper for manley satire" (80). Masculine metaphors describe the satirist's skill: wit symbolizes potency, pleasure, and control (Rabb 133). He paints the satirist as a heroic warrior donning more than just the moss: his satire is a weapon in the phallic image of a sword or arrow to "gird his manly side" (80). In his comparison of the satire of Juvenal and Horace, Dryden declares a preference for the former because he is "of a more vigorous and Masculine Wit"; the reader of Horace is left "unsatisfied," while Juvenal "gives me as much pleasure as I can bear: He fully satisfies my Expectation" (63). There is more than a hint of comical homoeroticism in his fawning approval of Juvenal: "His [Juvenal's] Spleen is rais'd, and he raises mine" (63). As if the manliness of Juvenal's satire was not already clear, Dryden informs us that Juvenal was "a Man of Excellent Natural Endowments" (73). Although he is referring here to Juvenal's *poetic* endowments, the double-entendre also works for Dryden's point about the essential masculinity of the genre: the more of a man, he suggests, the better the satirist.

Alexander Pope did not always share Dryden's preference for the "manly" Juvenal, but in his own way he too perpetuated the myth of satire as a masculine genre. Most of Pope's satire is closer in spirit to Horace's, [10] but he still seems to have

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Kernan, The Cankered Muse (1959).

[10] This is the commonly held view regarding the respective influences of Horace and Juvenal on Pope. Most of his satires adhere to the Horatian model of ironic restraint, with the exception of the Epilogues which are closer to Juvenal's elevated, confronting tone (Erkine-Hill Pope: Horatian Satires 12; Weinbrot Alexander Pope xiii). Some critics disagree, however. See, for example, Peter Dixon, The World of Pope's Satires (London: Methuen, 1968), 101-103. Trickett argues that although Pope was of the "cult of Horace," he was influenced by

perceived satire as a potentially masculinizing force. Pope's size and sickly disposition made him physically dependent and passive, traits he and his contemporaries associated with femininity. Johnson, in his life of Pope, describes him in a manner suggestive "not just of a spoilt child, but of a spoilt *female* child" (Rumbold 5). Pope himself in his correspondence at one point describes himself as "sick as a breeding woman" (Corr. 3:299) and at another wishes, "Would to God I were like any other thing they call a Man" (4:292).

Satire, at least as Pope saw it, offered a means of masculinizing his image. Picking up Dryden's imagery of satire as a phallic weapon, Pope, in his later satires, frequently describes satire using the vocabulary of warfare. He refers to satire as "my weapon" (l.69 Imitation of Horace, II.i) that protects him and transforms him into a warrior "armed for Virtue" (l.106); with his sword/pen he "points," "brands," "dashes," or "bares" all (ll.106-8).

In addition, Pope perpetuates his own version of the opposition (begun by Dryden) between 'bad' satire as effeminate and 'good' satire as manly. The most vivid illustration of this dichotomy for Pope is his relationship with his enemy Lord Hervey. Hervey was notoriously effeminate and bisexual.[11] His sexual ambiguity was a favourite target of wits.[12] Even his friend Lady Mary Wortley Montagu remarked that the human race was divided into "Men, Women, and Herveys" (Essays and Poems 39). But while Pope and Hervey were fierce enemies in the 1730s, Pope may have seen more of himself in Hervey than he cared to admit. Like Pope, Hervey had a sickly constitution, an 'unmasculine'

Juvenal more than he let on (97-98).

[11] See Robert Halsband, Lord Hervey: Eighteenth-Century Courtier (1973).

[12] See Camille A. Paglia, "Lord Hervey and Pope," Eighteenth-Century Studies 6 (1973), 348-71; and Raymond Stephanson, "The Love Song of Alexander Pope: Allusion and Sexual Displacement in the Pastorals." English Studies in Canada 17.1 (1991): 21-35.

appearance that made him an object of ridicule, and a talent for satire.[13] But in his Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, Pope portrays himself and Hervey (represented by Sporus) as exact opposites; the silky, gilded-winged Sporus is the "vile Antithesis" (l.325) of Pope the manly satirist-warrior. Hervey's squeaking, effeminate satire annoys; Pope's satire--in language reminiscent of Dryden--"please[s] by manly ways" (l.337). Defining himself by negatives, Pope draws on the mythic associations of satire's virility to establish his male potency in contrast to Sporus's "florid impotence" (l.317).[14] Satire offered Pope a way to seem like more of a man.

The key to the myth of satire as 'masculine' genre perpetuated by all these theories (ancient, Elizabethan, Dryden, Pope) is an assumption that writing satire requires some kind of authority that women were simply not granted, at least up through the eighteenth century. Whether it is a phallic "potency," a killer instinct, a lusty crudeness, a "vigorous" wit, or a "manly" disposition, satire, according to the myth, calls for "endowments" apparently lacking in women.

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in particular, this myth of satire as masculine genre was reinforced by what Jane Spencer calls "the rising new ideology of femininity" (11)—emerging notions of proper 'feminine' behaviour which established writing satire as a most 'unfeminine' activity. The notion that women had specifically 'feminine' qualities or naturally 'feminine' characteristics had existed for centuries, but in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries these qualities begin to be defined, prescribed, expounded upon, and explained to men and, especially, women as never before.[15] Spencer

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[13] Hervey's best-known satire is his attack on Pope, An Epistle from a Nobleman to a Doctor of Divinity (1734).

[14] Incidentally, Hervey fathered eight children, Pope none.

[15] As Ellen Pollak has shown, conduct and courtesy books such as Halifax's A Lady's New Year's Gift, or Advice to a Daughter (1688) and Fordyce's Sermons To Young Women (1765) and periodical pieces

explains: "The increasing separation of home from workplace in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century laid the foundations for a new bourgeois ideology of femininity." According to this ideology, "women were very separate, special creatures confined to a special feminine sphere, as guardians of the home and of moral and emotional values" (15). The result was the emergence, in the eighteenth century, of what Ellen Pollak calls the "myth of passive womanhood" (3), an ideology which constructs 'woman' as a creature characterized by chastity, piety, modesty, and passivity. As Dr. James Fordyce explains in his Sermons to Young Women (1765), the ideal woman should be known by her "soft features, and a flowing voice, a form not robust, and a demeanour delicate and gentle" (2:225).[16]

This new ideology of femininity in the Augustan period brought with it lasting implications for women's writing in general, and, in particular, for prospective women satirists. Writing anything was, for Augustan women, problematic. Anne Finch's famous "Introduction" illustrates popular sentiment:

> Alas! A woman that attempts the pen,
> Such an intruder on the rights of men,
> Such a presumptuous Creature, is esteem'd,
> The fault, can by no vertue be redeem'd. (11.9-12)

Because of the male cultural tradition's low opinion of women's intellectual capacities in general, the very act of a woman writing seemed to challenge "received notions of womanhood" (Spencer x). Commentators scorned the existence of women writers and berated their abilities; one fictional critic's claim that "the Language won't bear such a thing as a She-Author" (Comparison Between the Two Stages [1702]) is typical of male reaction. In

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such as Steele's Tatler 172 explain to women what this 'feminine' behaviour is (39-53). As Spencer wryly observes, "It seems that eighteenth-century women needed a good deal of educating into their 'inborn', 'natural, feminine qualities" (15).

[16] For more on this Augustan ideology of femininity, see Spencer 11-22.

other cases, critics attacked the female writer's reputation rather than her writing. To some, the very act of a woman writing contravened the social expectation of "modesty," which as Angeline Goreau points out, actually meant "chastity" (10). For there existed for women writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a subtle association between textual and sexual promiscuity. What a woman wrote was perceived to be a reflection of her personality (a relationship that did not apply nearly so closely to male writers); a woman who wrote on anything other than a religious subject risked associating herself with loose morals.

Nevertheless, by the late seventeenth century, more and more women were taking up the pen and by the mid-eighteenth century Samuel Johnson could proclaim in the Adventurer that the "revolution of the years has produced a generation of Amazons of the pen" (Works 2:457-58). However, as Jane Spencer argues, the gradual acceptance of the woman writer that took place during the eighteenth century came at a cost. While writing became a more acceptable activity for women, the scope of that acceptable writing became narrower and narrower. The literary subject matter that women were deemed capable of, and suited to, writing about was limited to the new ideology of femininity: those topics reinforcing the "myth of passive womanhood"--domestic, sentimental, and moral subjects treated in a "soft" and "pleasing" feminine manner.

This trade-off of increased literary authority for women writers at the cost of a narrower sphere of what they could use that authority to write about may, as Spencer argues, have provided women with the authority to write novels, but it had obvious negative implications for female writers of satire. The novel was the ideal vehicle for women writers to write about 'approved' feminine subjects such as domestic life, love, and morality. However, both the subject matter and style of satire were squarely outside the sphere of 'femininity'. Satire treated vice, politics, sex, and general moral turpitude, and in style

could be rough and crude--all most 'unfeminine' subject matter and form.

In particular, satire required 'wit', as in the general Augustan sense of cleverness, sophistication, and learnedness--a quality supposedly prohibited in women by a kind of "Salic Law of Wit" (Harris 233). Views on the possibility and appropriateness of wit in women changed significantly over the course of the period I am considering. In the first half of the Augustan period, wit, like satire, was considered an anomaly in women. In general, women were thought incapable of wit; it was a distinctly 'masculine' trait. There were exceptions, however, but those rare women wits usually displayed a specifically 'feminine' kind of wit that complied with male notions of what 'femininity' should be (Spencer 27). For instance, Cowley's poem "Upon Mrs. K. Philips her Poems" (1688) praises the 'Matchless Orinda' for reigning so majestically over "Wit's Mild Empire" (qtd. in Spencer 24). Orinda's imperial wit is qualified as "Mild" such as befits a 'feminine' creature. Augustan women's writing, even women's witty writing, was expected to feature mildness and "softness," not the harshness of satire.[17]

In the second half of the Augustan period, however, wit in women began to be seen as not just rare but scandalous. In the 1720s it was still common to see wit praised as a respectable or even a respectably sexy quality in a woman. A poem to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, written by Thomas Burnet, Jr., in 1719, praises her "Beauty and Wit" (Halsband Life 99-100), and another piece by Mary Astell around the same time, also on Montagu (whose pen name was Clarinda), treats those same two qualities as an extraordinary--though clearly desirable--combination:

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[17] Delarivier Manley, herself a capable wit, recommends in the preface to the Royal Mischief (1696) that women practice "the softest" kind of writing, "which is easiest to our Sex." Mary Chudleigh mocks similar advice in her Ladies Defence by having the Parson encourage ladies to write in "soft Winning Language" 1.419).

> The Antients thought no single Godess fit
> To Reign at once, o'er Beauty and o'er Wit.
> Each was a sep'rate Claim till now we find
> Those diff'rent Talents in Clarinda joyn'd.
> (qtd. in Perry Celebrated 271)

Thirty years later, however, wit in a woman was beginning to acquire dubious sexual connotations. By mid-century, the sharp boldness and bravado associated with wit did not conform to the ideal 'feminine' traits of passivity and modesty. Elizabeth Montagu's famous pronouncement about the satirist Laetitia Pilkington has long served as evidence of this view: "I am sorry to say the generality of women who have excelled in wit have failed in chastity" (qtd. in Relke 118).

Perceptions of Female Satirists

The Augustan woman who dared to write satire ventured outside the accepted narrow sphere of women's literary authority, and there could be a price for that transgression. For example, Robert Gould's verse satire The Poetess (1688) shows the perception of a female satirist in the late seventeenth century. Part of the late seventeenth-century satiric debate about women (see chapter two), The Poetess is a satiric reply to Sylvia's Revenge (1688), a satire against men, which the speaker of The Poetess assumes to be written by a woman. In this reply, Gould's speaker affects a pose of outrage over a *woman* daring to defend her sex and satirize his. Typically, he attacks the female satirist's chastity rather than what she actually wrote: "In Thee the Sun of Vertue's Set, and lies / Eclips'd in loose Desires, no more to rise" (ll.34-35). The textual/sexual link is the most obvious line of response: "For *Punk* and *Poetess* agree so Pat, / You cannot well be *This*, and not be *That*" (ll.46-47). In addition, the speaker argues that a woman writer should not be spending her time on satire—that is men's work: "You on their Failings shou'd have drawn their Veils, / And not obscenely shewn

their Cloven Feet and Tails" (ll.66-67). A woman's job is to praise; she should leave the satirizing to men.

Gould's target may be fictional, but his reply shows the perception of a female satirist in the late seventeenth century. In the real world, the fate of the young seventeenth-century satirist Sarah Fyge illustrates similar consequences. She was banished from London by her father for the "indiscretion" of penning her satiric Female Advocate (1686), which was, ironically, a reply to one of Gould's earlier satires on women (qtd. in Lonsdale 26). Significantly, Fyge's choice of the word "indiscretion" carries with it connotations of sexual 'ruin' not unlike the accusations in Gould's Poetess. This was the supposed fate of a woman who dared to write satire.

There are other tales of women's problematic relationship to writing satire. For example, the Countess of Winchilsea, Anne Finch's attitude toward satire reveals much about the perception of a female satirist in her age. In addition to being a fine poet in general, Finch was an accomplished satirist in particular. Her best known verse satires include "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," "Adam Pos'd," "The Circuit of Appollo," and "To Mr. F, now Earl of W." However, she was uncomfortable with being thought of as a satirist, and in the preface to her Miscellany Poems (1713), she conflates satire with lampoon and declaims against the composite genre, saying that she detests "Lampoons" and "all sorts of abusive verses" for their "underhand dealing and uncharitableness" (11). This "mean sort of revenge" was not above her abilities; indeed, she suggests, the "facility" of such writing is available to anyone "who can but make two words rime" (10). Rather, she chose not to stoop to that level: "I never suffer'd my small talent, to be that way employ'd" (11). According to Finch, the only poem of hers that "tends toward" satire is "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," and that piece, she explains, was written early in her writing life, presumably before she knew better than to dabble

in that genre.[18] In fact, Finch goes out of her way to justify this poem, assuring the reader that its intention was not uncharitable; rather, she meant to "expose the Censorious humour, foppishness and coquetterie" of the age, so as to "mend us from the mistakes in our manners and conversation" (11). Here she reapplies the common Restoration distinction between lowly lampoons and useful "moral" satire. Nevertheless, she is reluctant to associate herself with even the 'good' kind of moral satire; in fact, this may have influenced her decision to omit "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia" from the Miscellany Poems altogether.[19]

However, despite Finch's protestations about satire, and contrary to her assertion that she only ever wrote one poem that could be called satire, a look at her Miscellany Poems reveals that she actually wrote a fair number of satires, though all of them fall into the category of "moral" or playful satire rather than lampoon. As her twentieth-century editor Myra Reynolds suggests, Finch "was much more of a satirist than she was willing to admit" (cxiv).[20] In recent years critics have even studied her use of satire.[21] So why did she abhor the title satirist? Most

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[18] This poem may have been written as early as 1680, when Finch would have been in her early twenties. As she explains in the preface, the poem makes reference to the Earl of Roscommon as "Piso," a name given him by Waller before Roscommon published his version of Horace's Art of Poetry (10).

[19] See Ann Messenger's "Publishing Without Perishing: Lady Winchilsea's Miscellany Poems of 1713," Restoration Studies in English Literary Culture 5.1 (Spring 1981), 27-37.

[20] Not all critics agree with Reynolds. Jean Mallinson, for instance, argues that Finch "was not a satirist," though she admits there is a "satirical edge to her fables, epistles, and occasional poems" (39). According to Mallinson, "satire is an aggressive mode, out for the kill or at least the expose, and Anne Finch's sense of irony, which often included herself, undercuts the fiction of authority which satire requires" (40). I disagree with Mallinson. Finch may not have *seen* herself as a satirist, but she did write a certain kind of satire, though not the "aggressive" brand that Mallinson assumes covers *all* satire.

[21] Ann Messenger calls "Adam Pos'd" a "brief, almost epigrammatic

likely the label "satirist" had unsavoury masculine connotations that she did not see as appropriate qualities in a woman, and especially in a devout, aristocratic woman like herself.

A slightly different kind of ambivalence about the title of satirist for a woman can be found in Elizabeth Tipper's short poem "A Satyr" (1698). This poem presents a female speaker taking up "Satyr's Lash" to "scourge the Vice of the Human Race," in service to God. Although she is hesitant to take up this role, the speaker trusts her faith: "And tho' my Sex is weak, my Heart's not so: / Lead on my Chief, I fear not where I go." In the end, however, she decides that she is in no position to cast the first stone and cannot accept the title of satirist at all: "And now I beg, since my Design has mist, / Make me true Christian, tho' no Satyrist." Like Finch, the speaker in Tipper's poem refuses the title of satirist. In this case, the role of satirist is somehow incongruent with the speaker's identity as a member of the weaker sex and a properly devout Christian. She will leave the lashing and scourging to the ungodly men. For women like Finch and Tipper, it was easier to *write* satire than to accept the *role* of satirist, with all its associations.

In addition, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, satire carried with it an at least proclaimed, if not always genuine, reformative impulse that was not considered appropriate for women. Women, according to Jayne Lewis, were thought to be the "gentle preservatives" of a "fabric of civilization" always in danger of unravelling. For women to attack or criticize "social institutions and ideologies," as much satire does, would be "to attack their own socially defined identities" (41). The satirist's stance of moral authority passing judgement on others

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Augustan satire dealing with moral implications, for all its brevity, nearly as wide-ranging as Donne's" ("'Adam Pos'd'" 10). Charles Hinnant has compared the satire in "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia" to that of Rochester. See "Feminism and Femininity: A Reconsideration of Anne Finch's 'Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia'" The Eighteenth Century 33.2 (Summer 1992): 119-32.

was, like wit, inappropriate in a woman as well as much too important a responsibility to be left in the hands of the female sex.

As well as it being thought scandalous for a woman to be so bold as to be judgemental, critical, or witty, the idea of a female satirist in this period also conjured associations with negative female stereotypes such as the scold, shrew, or nag. According to Jayne Lewis, the idea of a woman using her tongue to criticize others "risked ratifying misogynist caricatures" (43). A woman satirist, especially a vituperative, 'railling' one, could have been perceived as merely a version of that female stereotype of seventeenth-century character books, the scold. According to Poor Robins True Character of a Scold, or The Shrew's Looking Glass (1678), a

> rank Scold is a Devil of the feminine Gender; a Serpent perpetually hissing, and spitting Venom; a Composition of Ill-nature and Clamour. You may call her animated gun-powder, a walking Mount Etna that is always belching forth Flames of Sulphur. (1)

Countless seventeenth-century ballads tell similar tales of wives who excelled as scolds. These women's tongues were indefatigable; they had an almost supernatural power for nagging, berating, and abusing their poor husbands.[22] The Augustan female satirist who dared to speak out--mocking, attacking, criticizing--risked unintentionally reinforcing such stereotypical images. Some male satirists exploited this hazard. Joseph Swetnam, for example, prefaces his attack with the following caution to would-be female respondents:

> Whatever you think privately, I wish you to conceale it with silence, lest in starting up to find fault, you prove yourselves guilty of those monstrous accusations [of being scolds and shrews] which are here following

[22] See, for example, "The Scolding Wife" and "The Scolding Wife's

> against some women, [for] those which spurne if they feele themselves touched, prove themselves starke fooles in bewraying [sic] their galled backs to the world. (qtd. in Jones 46)

The more satiric the female respondents to Swetnam were, the more they risked appearing to fulfil his prophecy.

Argument

These are the factors that contribute to the myth of satire as a masculine genre and the reasons why, supposedly, there was no women's satire in the Augustan period. My argument, however, is that in spite of these complications, difficulties, and obstacles, women *did* write satire in the Augustan period: they *did* display wit in their writing, they *did* take a reformative stance, and they *did* write satire at the risk of confirming negative female stereotypes. The 'masculine' associations of the genre did not stop women from writing it. In fact, in some ways satire was the perfect vehicle for Augustan women who wanted to get back at or attack men, since the genre had been used so much for attacking women. For a woman to use satire against men was a lovely irony: the 'enemy's' own form (the so-called 'masculine' genre) turned against them.

In this thesis I examine part of the neglected body of work that makes up Augustan women's satire. Despite the general dearth of criticism on women's satire, in the last 15 years a handful of feminist critics has begun to consider what Nussbaum calls this "other endeavor" of listening to women's satiric voices in the Augustan period. However, most of this exciting new work focuses on women's satiric drama (works by Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, Susanna Centlivre) and satiric fiction (scandal narratives by Manley and Eliza Haywood, novels by Charlotte Lennox, Frances

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Vindication" (Roxboroughe Ballads 7:190-97).

Burney, and Elizabeth Hamilton).[23] In fact, there is an assumption on the part of literary scholars that what little satire Augustan women wrote was prose and not verse. John Snyder, for instance, argues that Augustan women preferred to write satiric plays and novels (215). Augustan women, he implies, were unable or unwilling to write satiric poetry. Similarly, Margaret Doody suggests that the poems Augustan women wrote "were rarely satirical" since satire is "critical and aggressive," and women were supposed to write "weak," "feminine" poetry (130). While there are grains of truth in what Snyder and Doody say, Augustan women *did* write verse satire, and my purpose is to examine part of this oeuvre.

I investigate the kinds of verse satire women wrote, some of the recurrent themes in it, and the reasons why they wrote it. In the first chapter, I set out my theoretical framework. In chapter two, I focus on a favourite sub-genre of Augustan women satirists, the satiric debate about women. In chapter three, I consider how the recurring issue of marriage is treated in satire by women. And in chapter four, I consider the broader issue of how Augustan women used satire for reform, revenge, and reward.

There is a small body of scholarly work on the verse satire of the two best-known women poets of the Augustan period: Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. I have already mentioned Finch's ambivalent relationship to satire and the critical attention her satire is beginning to receive. Montagu, however, was probably even more of a satirist than Finch. From early in her youth and through her years at court, she was often in the company of some of the greatest satirists and wits of

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[23] See the following essays in Gill: Lindy Riley, "Mary Davys's Satiric Novel Familiar Letters: Refusing Patriarchal Inscription of Women" 206-21; John Zomchik, "Satire and the Bourgeois Subject in Frances Burney's Evelina" 347-66; Janice Thaddeus, "Elizabeth Hamilton's Modern Philosophers and the Uncertainties of Satire" 395-418. Also see Ballaster and Rabb on the prose satire of Delarivier Manley.

the age--Addison, Congreve, Pope, and Gay--and she early on demonstrated her own skill in that genre. Her anonymous 1714 essay in Spectator 573 foreshadows her satiric talents. This essay is a letter from "Mrs. President," head of the "Widow-Club," who has been married six times--most times by her choice and never as a passive victim--and may or may not be in the market for number seven. This sparkling piece treats a conventional satiric subject in a most unconventional manner: it combines satire on suitors and husbands, a sketch of an unusually confidant female character, and dark social commentary on the predatory nature of the marriage market.

Her best-known satires, however, are probably her mock-pastoral eclogues and her attacks on Pope and Swift. The first of these, the town eclogues or simply "Eclogues," as she called them, were composed during her association with the court and her literary friends, Pope and Gay, in 1715-16. This anonymously published series of six poems satirizing various court figures and offering subtle social commentary on the predicaments of women established her reputation as a wit among literary figures.[24] Her celebrated (though anonymously published)[25] verse replies to Pope and Swift offer a very different kind of satire. Although she once asserted that revenge was a pleasure forbidden to women (Letters 3:219), Montagu nevertheless used satire to achieve a good measure of it on her former friend, Pope. In response to Pope's repeated shots at her, she and her co-conspirator, Lord Hervey, penned "Verses Address'd to the Imitator of Horace" (1733), a devastating satire that Guerinot describes as the only attack on Pope--and there were dozens--that captures something of

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[24] See Ann Messenger, "Town Eclogues: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and John Gay;" Robert Halsband, "Pope, Lady Mary, and the 'Court Poems,'" PMLA 68 (1953): 237-50; and Isobel Grundy, "Lady Mary Wortley and the Theatrical Eclogue," Lumen, forthcoming.

[25] All of Montagu's work was published anonymously, and some of it without her permission. The exact publication details of much of her work are difficult to determine.

Pope's "own satiric brilliance" (225). As for her reply to Swift, her poem "The Reasons that Induced Dr S— to write a Poem call'd the Lady's Dressing Room" (1734), is a clever instance of how satire could be the perfect vehicle for undermining authority. Her satire mocks the Dean's character while simultaneously imitating the metre, diction, tone, and imagery of his own poem (Halsband "'The Lady's Dressing Room' Explicated" 227).

Like Anne Finch, Montagu was an aristocrat who had a complex relationship to the role of satirist. She too criticized the preponderance of "stupid Libels" with which her age abounded (Essays 147). Unlike the countess, though, she did employ such libels anyway--with considerable skill--when it suited her. Robert Halsband describes her as "a fearsome lampoonist" ("Condemned" 46). In addition, all of her satire (and everything else of hers that was printed in her lifetime) was published anonymously; it would have been inappropriate for a woman of her class to write anything for print, especially satire. Yet she surreptitiously may have actually arranged for the publication of her verse attacks on Pope and Swift (Essays 172). In any event, her authorship of several satires was widely suspected, and in some circles known, and by the 1730s, if not sooner, she had a growing reputation as a satirist. An anonymous 1733 poem in The Gentleman's Magazine, "In Defence of Lady Mary Wortley," compares her to Sulpicia, an upper class Roman woman (niece of the patron Messala) known for her poetry and especially her satire. In fact, according to the poet, Sulpicia was such an accomplished satirist that she "shar'd the Bays" in that literary department with none other than Juvenal. The poet places Montagu in heady satiric company and praises the power of her pen in repelling her enemy, "Cacus" (probably Pope):

> Then in Defence of Innocence, of Laws,
> A noble Champion of a noble Cause,
> Ingenious Wortley draws her conqu'ring Pen,

And drives the foul-mouth'd Cacus to his Den.[26]

This image of Montagu as heroic warrior for virtue is a conventional one in the satirist's mythology, but as I have suggested, it carries with it decidedly 'masculine' connotations. However, such implications were nothing new to Montagu. If anything, the 'masculine' associations of satire fit with part of her personal style. She was often described as a "masculine" woman (Grundy "Ovid" 27) and her writing often "draws on ideas and language generally classified as 'masculine'" (Essays xiv). That she was described by the anonymous poet in terms of chivalrous battle, as a heroic warrior defending virtue, should not be surprising. Critics today still use 'masculine' battle imagery to convey her feisty satiric style. She is seen as a "fighter" (Essays xviii) who engaged in literary "combat" with her enemies.

Montagu was an excellent satirist and a fascinating example of how an Augustan woman exploited the 'masculine' myth of satire. The body of work that is her satire raises many of the key issues I explore in this dissertation. The kinds of satire she wrote, the satiric topics she treated, and the ways in which she used the genre are typical of much Augustan women's satire. She wrote diverse kinds of satire: polite satire of manners, polemical social critiques, political pieces, vicious personal attacks, and playful lampoons. Furthermore, she wrote in most of the conventional satiric verse forms of her day: imitations, epistles, ballads, epigrams, and a variety of mock forms from the eclogue to the mock-epic. In addition, the subjects she treated in her satire are seen again and again in women's satire of this period: conventional vices and folly but also gender-specific issues such as marriage and education for women. Finally, the way she used the genre for displaying her rhetorical skill and wit, defending her political allies, and for getting revenge on her enemies all reflect how many other Augustan women used satire too.

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[26] Gentleman's Magazine 28 (April 1733): 206.

However, I treat Montagu only peripherally here and focus instead on lesser-known female poets of this period. I focus on more obscure Augustan women writers because my purpose is partly recuperative. I want to contribute to the larger project of helping to recover some of the many Augustan women writers who have been forgotten. While Finch and Montagu's satire has begun to receive critical attention, there are many other Augustan female satiric poets who also deserve to be read and studied. This is my small contribution to that recuperative task. In adding my ear to the small crowd of feminist critics listening for the voices of seventeenth and eighteenth-century women's satirists, I hope to allow some of these voices to be heard and appreciated as more than just anomalous murmurings in a 'men's genre'.

The Female Satirist's Authority

Since I argue that, contrary to Medon's myth, women *did* write satire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, how and where did they acquire the literary authority to do so? I argue that they laid claim to that authority in two ways: in some cases, women acquired the literary authority for satire from sources unique to women's predicament; in others, they got it from the same sources as men.

First of all, the negative female stereotypes which Augustan women satirists risked fulfilling—the scold, the shrew—paradoxically also served as one source of authority for writing satire. One of the favourite conceits of seventeenth-century scold literature portrays women's tongues as dangerous weapons, associated with the supernatural and even the devil. Poor Robins True Character of a Scold calls a woman's tongue "the Clapper of the Devil's Saints-bell, that rings all in to Confusion" (1). A woman who rails "abuses Sacred Language . . . as Conjurers do in

their Charms" (7).[27] Joseph Swetnam, meanwhile, explains that a woman's "chief strength, is in her tongue." A woman's tongue strikes "terror, and utter confusion [in] . . . many a man" (72-73). Some women were even "double-tongued," according to Swetnam, able to flatter and condemn at the same time: "they can with the satire out of the mouth blow both hot and cold" (17). Such images may be well-worn misogynist jokes, but they nevertheless attribute a terrible power to women's tongues that is not necessarily all bad, depending on how one interprets it. As Jayne Lewis observes, in the seventeenth century a woman's tongue was regarded as "extraordinarily threatening" (40). Implicit in this belief too is an assumption that satiric talent or power was 'natural' in women and perhaps even superior to male satiric power (41).

This unique 'power' of women's tongues may have provided a foundation for certain kinds of women's satire. Lewis argues that women lost this inherent satiric power in the transfer from the spoken word (the tongue) to the printed page (the pen); a penchant for verbal raillery was one thing, but women, she argues, could not carry over this satiric talent into the 'masculine' realm of writing. (Incidentally, Jameson's Medon concurs. Although he suggests there have been no women satirists in literature, he admits there are a "number" of satirical women "in society" [9].) However, I am not so sure that women lost all of this authority in the transition to writing. As my discussion will show, there are resonances of the scold's authority and talent for powerful tongue-lashing in several instances of women's "railling" satire in the Augustan period (for example, Sarah Fyge Egerton, 'Ephelia', and Mehetabel Wright). In fact, Swetnam's description of the double-tongued woman sounds remarkably similar to certain definitions of satire itself: Addison, in Spectator 63, says

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[27] "Conjurers" recalls Elliott's theory on the magical origins of satire. Although Elliott says little about women enchanter/satirist figures, he does remark that ancient Arabic women "exerted power through their mastery of satiric verse" and "are

"Satire had Smiles in her Look, and a Dagger under her Garment" (1:274); Worcester describes the satirist as "simultaneously amiable and hostile" (73). Women's double-tongued powers would seem to make them 'natural' satirists.

Another source of satiric authority unique to some Augustan women in the early years of the eighteenth century may have come from living under a female monarch, Queen Anne, who reigned from 1702 to 1714. According to Carol Barash, the presence of Queen Anne on the throne provided an extra element of authority to women writers of that time, allowing some of these writers to venture into "emotional and intellectual domains previously considered men's" (57). Satire, I would argue, was one of these domains. Barash suggests there existed a parallel for women writers between political and literary authority. Queen Anne's legitimacy as monarch (a position of authority) in turn lent legitimacy to women writers (another position of authority). Anne's presence on the throne, according to Barash, seems to have encouraged women to produce "their most aggressive writings in the first few years after she was crowned" (58). Although Barash does not write specifically about women satirists, the three examples of bold women's writing under Queen Anne's reign she chooses—Mary Astell, Sarah Egerton, and Mary, Lady Chudleigh—were all satirists, among other things.[28] Perhaps in part because of the presence of Queen Anne, women in the first fifteen years of the eighteenth century produced a good deal of women's satire.[29]

Paradoxically, yet another source of satiric authority unique to Augustan women lay in the rise of the new ideology of femininity that seemed to restrict women's very sphere of

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said to have been feared by even the greatest rulers" (17).

[28] It should be pointed out, however, that all three women wrote satire *before* Queen Anne was on the throne too.

[29] Mary Chudleigh, Mary Astell, Sarah Egerton, Delarivier Manley, and Anne Finch all published books containing some satire during this period. Also writing satire during this period, but not published until later, were Elizabeth Thomas, Sarah Dixon,

authority. Jane Spencer argues that eighteenth-century women novelists derived some of their literary authority from the seventeenth-century tradition of perceiving women writers as "heroines" (23). She points out that a woman's voice, as expressed in earlier literature (by both male and female writers), was often the voice of the heroine of a love story such as in Ovid's Heroides or the narrators of the French histories of Madelene de Scudery. The result was the notion of the "heroine-writer", epitomized in real life by Katherine Philips, who was even known by the pseudonym of a romantic heroine, "the Matchless Orinda" (23).

At first, this phenomenon of the heroine-writer might seem to fit nicely with satire. The satirist (Pope, for example) often strikes the pose of the heroic warrior defending virtue with the sharp arrows of wit and truth. However, as Spencer explains, the heroine writer was expected to show a heroine's "sensibility" and to display a distinctly "feminine" brand of heroism that concerned only the issues of a "woman's sphere": romance and domestic matters. Satiric heroism—which seemed to require a sense of worldliness and knowledge of politics and social affairs--was clearly outside the narrow band of the heroine-writer's literary authority.

Nevertheless, Spencer's theory does spell out one possible justification for women's literary authority for satire in the Augustan period. While the heroine-writer's authority was over a very limited field, there was still one area in that realm that had a strong connection to satire: virtue. With the rise of the new ideology of femininity came the belief that women were "naturally inclined to virtue" and "could exert a salutary moral influence on man" (32). In other words, one of the side effects of this new ideology was the construction of 'woman' as morally superior creature. Although still regarded as vastly inferior in

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Susanna Centlivre, Mary Pix, and Montagu.

physical and intellectual stature, women were gradually acknowledged to exhibit the best Christian virtues of humankind, and this offered would-be women satirists a way around the old difficulty of justifying a woman aspiring to the role of moral reformer. A woman satirist could make a legitimate claim to the satirist's pose as agent of reform by taking the moral high-ground: a woman's ability to be obedient, submissive, tolerant, and loyal in the face of absolute patriarchal authority (a role forced on women by the new ideology of femininity) gives them "a somewhat masochistic spiritual superiority" over men (Perry "Radical" 475). In fact, Astell argued that women were somehow responsible for the protection of virtue. They had a "mission to perform"--nothing less than the "moral reformation" of society (Kinnaird 71):

> Having gain'd an entrance into Paradise themselves, they [women] would both shew the way, and invite others to partake of their felicity. (Serious Proposal I 34).

Moral reformation and satire go hand in hand in the Augustan age, so some Augustan women such as Mary Chudleigh were enabled to claim a kind of Christian moral authority to write satire in the name of moral reform.

All of these sources of satiric authority were unique to Augustan women, but some seventeenth and eighteenth-century female satirists also drew on that same source of satiric authority invoked by so many Augustan male satirists: reason. According to certain definitions, reason is a crucial element of satire. Rachel Trickett, for instance, sees reason along with observation and wit as the necessary qualities for satire (21). Another theory argues that satire "never fails to assume the colorations of the dominant rationalistic philosophy," and, therefore, much Augustan satire worked according to a Cartesian reason-based 'norm' model (Randolph 373). Satire's aim was "the correction of folly and vice by persuasion to rational behaviour," to "recall Man from the by-ways of Unreason to the base line of Reason, that

is, to present Rational Man as the norm or standard" (373, 374). In other words, the satirist satirized that which deviated from the 'norm' of Reason: "some irrational behaviour of Man, either foolish or vicious" (372).

In fact, this rational norm was often offered as the justification for so much satire against the female sex. In yet another Augustan myth, women were often regarded as fundamentally irrational creatures who were therefore open to corrective ridicule. As Genevieve Lloyd argues in The Man of Reason,

> rational knowledge has been construed as a transcending, transformation or control of natural forces; and the feminine has been associated with what rational knowledge transcends, dominates or simply leaves behind. (2)

According to this myth, women are not just excluded from the realm of rationality; femininity is, in fact, defined by that exclusion (Lloyd 106).[30] Paradoxically, then, while women are satirized for their lack of reason, they remain outside the bounds of satire's recuperative function. They are *beyond* reason and therefore *incapable* of being reformed; such change is not in their nature (Tooley 160). (This may partly explain why so much male satire on women is directed at a male audience rather than a female one; women cannot change, so why try to reform them?)

However, while women in the Augustan period were often thought to be wholly irrational, some women writers nevertheless employed reason as the basis for writing satire. Despite these widespread assumptions about women's irrational nature, some Augustan women thinkers were bold adherents of Cartesian reasoning. Cartesian theory offered the possibility of a very different view of the rationality of women. Descartes argued

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[30] There were, of course, exceptions to this myth. Some orthodox moralists and preachers, for example, insisted that women are rational creatures and, therefore, must strive to use these faculties to improve themselves.

that, contrary to received opinion, reason was by nature equal in all individuals (2). Given this premise, it was only a matter of time before another Cartesian theorist, François Poulain de la Barre, applied it to the question of the differences between men and women. Poulain de la Barre argued that since men and women had the same physiological equipment for receiving and registering sensations, both sexes had the same potential for perception, analysis, and discovery of the truth (Perry Celebrated 16). Men and women have the same intellectual potential, he argued, but while men are encouraged to develop it with study, reading, and education, women are not. Influenced by Descartes and Poulain de la Barre, Mary Astell picked up this line of argument in the 1690s and suggested that although circumstances determine the extent to which men and women may exercise their rational faculties, these faculties are present in all, at least as "sleeping powers" (Serious Proposal I:29). Echoing the orthodox moralists, Astell argued that if women only worked on developing their minds, there was no reason why they couldn't be as rational as any man.

This new Cartesian philosophy was a liberating and equalizing doctrine for Augustan women. This method of reasoning was a "mode of intellectual activity available to almost all literate middle-class and aristocratic women" (Perry "Radical" 479). Descartes asserted that formal scholastic education was not necessary for developing one's reason. Any serious person who could meditate and think about that meditation might contribute to knowledge (Perry "Radical" 475). The Cartesian method required no books or special equipment, just the quiet necessary for meditation and an insistence on the "thinking I" as the touchstone of all knowledge (Kinnaird 61). As Astell put it,

> All have not Leisure to Learn Languages and pore on Books, nor Opportunity to converse with the Learned; but all may think, may use their own Faculties rightly and consult the Master who is within them. (Serious Proposal II 98)

This radical epistemology put women on a theoretical par with men and removed the possibility of formal thought from the exclusively male domain of schools.

This brand of Cartesian 'feminist' rationalism espoused by Poulain de la Barre and especially Astell was a useful source of authority for women satirists, in particular during the age of Queen Anne. There seems to have existed a corollary to the assumption that women didn't write satire because it was a reason-based mode of writing and women were incapable of reason: if a woman *did* somehow use reason, then she *could* write satire. Queen Anne-age women satirists such as Chudleigh, Judith Drake, and Elizabeth Thomas used this Cartesian method as the foundation for satire that held up systems of patriarchal authority to rational scrutiny.

These last two sources of authority for Augustan women's satire—a sense of moral duty and reason--often worked in combination in what has been called "reformism." This term comes from Rae Blanchard, who uses it to describe a group of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century women and men, such as Mary Astell, John Dunton, and Daniel Defoe, who used reason to support arguments for social reform. These "reformists" wrote in a "spirit of rationalism" in an effort to "bring about social conditions rising above custom and conformable to reason" (Blanchard 325). "Reformists" were advocates of what Blanchard calls "rational feminism"; following Poulain de la Barre, they believed that reason was not given exclusively to the male sex, that women would show mental power equal to men's if given equal education and opportunity. Therefore, they believed in educating women, as well as in modifying old conceptions of women's subordinate position in marriage, and accepting women as individuals with rights and responsibilities (325). However, the aim of "reformers" was not only justice for women but the improvement of all humanity by allowing women to become more active, productive members of society.

This spirit of "reformism" was the basis of authority for much Augustan women's satire. It allowed women to combine a compliance with reason, a moral imperative, and a reformative impulse--all crucial elements in traditional Augustan notions of satire.

Shifting Attitudes, Reputations

These sources of literary authority account for how some women writers negotiated around Medon's myth of satire as a masculine genre in the Augustan age. However, one important qualification to any discussion of women's literary authority for writing satire in this period is an acknowledgement of the shifting nature and power of that authority over the course of the period. The nature of women's literary authority for writing satire changed as attitudes to both women's writing and satire changed.

In general it probably became easier for women to be writers as the eighteenth century progressed. What was in Anne Finch's time "an intrusion on the rights of men" gradually became a legitimate vocation for women. In fact, Jane Spencer argues that one of the remarkable literary events of the century was the "establishment of the professional woman writer" (viii). But while the number of women writers grew, the sphere of *what* they wrote about and *how* they wrote it became narrower and narrower due to the rising new ideology of femininity. As Spencer shows, women gained increased literary authority at the cost of greatly reducing the scope of that authority. This meant that while more women wrote (especially novels) as the century progressed, it became more and more difficult for women to write satire. In fact, it seems to have been easier for women to write satire in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries than in the mid-eighteenth century.

In fact, there is more women's satire from the first half of the Augustan period than from the second half. But there is

another factor behind this in addition to the rise of the new feminine ideology. Not only did the sphere of what women were permitted to write about get narrower (excluding satire more and more), but satire's reputation declined too, making it even less likely to ever fit into the sphere of 'appropriate' women's writing. Satire has always had a somewhat dubious reputation.[31] Despite its ubiquity in the Augustan age, it was almost constantly under attack by the Augustans themselves, from a variety of camps and for a variety of reasons (Elkin 44-70). As early as the first decade of the eighteenth century, critics and even some satirists complained about a growing mean-spiritedness and personal slant in certain kinds of satire. Addison, in Spectator 23, decried the "ungenerous spirit" of "secret stabs" and "arrows that fly in the dark" (1:97). Similarly, in his Dictionary (1710), Pierre Bayle likens the "Satyrist who assaults the Honour of his Enemies with Libels" to the coward who "would attempt upon their Life with Sword and Poyson" (1:xxvii). Efforts were made by some of these satirists and critics to steer satire away from this lowly course and toward a nobler, more genteel, polite, and impersonal direction. For instance, Susanna Centlivre claimed that her aim in her satiric play The Gamester (1705) was "to divert, without that Vicious Strain which usually attends the Comick Muse" (Dedication). Shaftesbury, in his Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour (1710), triumphantly exclaims, "we have seen in our time the Decline and Ruin of a false sort of genteel wit," referring to personal satire and libels. In its place he heralds a new "amiable" wit that keeps one's mind sharp but does not wound one's reputation (7-8).

However, by the 1730s and 40s these same accusations—that satire is vicious, too personal—begin to resurface in even more vigorous form. As before, it was the personal element of satire that came under the severest attack. In 1738 Lady Mary Wortley

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[31] See Connery and Combe 1-2.

Montagu, writing anonymously in the Nonsense of Common-Sense IX, complained about the preponderance of "stupid Libels" and decried scribblers who look on "Defamation as a Branch of Trade" and "who praise to drink, and satyrize to eat" (Essays 147). But by this time it was no longer just personal satire that came under fire. In a broader sense people were beginning to grow weary of satire. In 1739 one anonymous writer protested,

> Enough has Satire vicious Times bewail'd
> Error expos'd, and at Corruption rail'd;
> Satire herself, a public Grievance grown,
> Nor spares the Altar, nor reveres the Throne.
> (Candour, or an Occasional Essay on the Abuse of Wit and Eloquence 5)

As the century wore on, the consensus grew that satire was a "public Grievance" and a form overcome by ill nature and discontent, so much so that it presented a false view of human nature (Elkin 68).

As satire's reputation declined, the stigma attached to writing it increased. Conduct books and essays warned about the dangers of writing satire and associating with those who did. An Essay on Polite Behaviour (1740) advises its readers to "Have no Conversation with People delighting in Satyr and Raillery" (46). Not surprisingly, this made satire even more problematic for women writers. Arabella, in Charlotte Lennox's Female Quixote (1752), articulates the polite and sentimental attitude toward satire as dictated by the new ideology of femininity: she warns that it "is almost impossible to use [raillery] without being hated or feared; and whoever gets a Habit of it, is in Danger of wronging all the Laws of Friendship and Humanity" (2:143).

All of this made satire increasingly problematic for most women to write as the eighteenth century went on. The social prohibition against women writing satire actually *increased* from the late seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century and it became a more and more problematic genre for women to take part

in. However, that does not mean that women stayed away from satire altogether in the later part of the Augustan period. Rather, mid-century satirists such as Mary Barber, Mary Leapor, Mary Jones, and Laetitia Pilkington simply had to find more ingenious ways of negotiating around the issue of literary authority.[32]

[32] For a fascinating examination of literary authority in satire by Mary Barber, Mary Jones, and Laetitia Pilkington, see Margaret Doody, "Swift Among the Women" Yearbook of English Studies 18 (1988): 68-92. On Mary Leapor see Richard Greene, Mary Leapor: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Women's Poetry (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) and Donna Landry, The Muses of Resistance: Laboring Class Women's Poetry in Britain, 1739-1796 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990).

Chapter One
Theoretical Framework

My investigation of women's satire in the Augustan period involves the intersection of two theoretical realms: satire theory and feminist theory of women's humour and comedy. I want to establish my theoretical framework by briefly addressing the key debates in each field as they pertain to my project, outlining my position on these issues, and then investigating how and where these two fields intersect and overlap.

Satire Theory

> The works which, at one time or another, have been called satiric represent an enormous diversity in substance, structure, style and motive. (Rosenheim 2)

> Definition, by definition, is a restrictive and exclusive business. (Combe 73)

Satire sprawls, definition delimits. Such is the dilemma facing the critic who attempts to define satire: how to stuff the vast, messy, amorphous oeuvre of literature that has been called 'satire' (the word itself is derived from the Latin lanx satura, which means overflowing platter of mixed fruits) into the tidy, aseptic, clearly labelled vial of a definition? Satire covers such an "enormous diversity" of texts, from formal verse satires, mock-epics, beast fables, epigrams, Theophrastan characters, and ballads to Menippean narratives, dystopian fiction, essays, romances, satiric drama and novels, that any comprehensive definition has to be broad. For the would-be definer of satire is easy prey for the devil's advocate. No sooner does the critic muster a working definition than the fiend counters with a work widely acknowledged satiric that does not conform to the

definition. Yet the broader the definition, the greater the threat to its usefulness. With this balance between comprehensiveness and usefulness in mind, I shall aim not so much to define satire as outline my views on the theoretical issues that I see as key to satire criticism.[33]

Most theorists who attempt to define satire eventually settle for a definition that combines some version of what Patricia Meyer Spacks calls "purpose" and "technique" (13), working as either a mode or a genre. For instance, Dryden sees satire as "truth" (purpose) through "art" (technique). Centuries later, Northrop Frye defines it as an attack (purpose) using wit and humour (technique) (224). Alvin Kernan sees satire as aggression released through art ("Aggression" 118), Leonard Feinburg as a "critical distortion of the familiar" through "play" (Satirist 7).[34]

Often the "purpose" component of satire definitions is linked to some moral intent or proclaimed desire to reform. For instance, Richard Morton defines satire as "reformation [purpose] through perceptive ridicule [technique]" (1). Feinburg asserts that part of the intent of satire is "the delivery of a moral judgement" (Satirist 23), and Ellen Leyburn argues that "the purpose of satire can only be described as moral" (13). Restoration and eighteenth-century definitions and descriptions of satire, especially, emphasize this moral component of satire's purpose. Like all literature at that time, satire was meant to

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[33] Satire, not surprisingly, does not easily lend itself to sweeping theoretical generalizations. My theorizing, therefore, is almost always conditional, full of modifiers such as "sometimes," "often," and "usually"—clumsy but necessary qualifiers when describing the various, overflowing platter that is satire.

[34] Similarly, Elliott calls satire "a form of art and a spirit, a purpose and a tone" (viii); Highet, modifying Dryden, calls it "truth-telling" by special techniques of laughter (14-23); Nokes calls it a "rhetorical form with a remedial purpose" (2).

instruct as well as delight, and the satirist--so the reasoning goes--sought to improve us by exposing our vices and follies in order to goad us into making ourselves better. "The true end of Satyre," Dryden explains in the "To the Reader" of Absalom and Achitophel, "is the amendment of Vices by correction" (Works 1:216). The Augustans traced the moral "purpose" of the genre back to the ancients: Juvenal sought to reform vice through invective; Horace wanted to laugh men out of their follies. Likewise, in the seventeenth century, John Oldham saw himself as "Judge" of the wicked, sentencing the guilty with "Wit" (11.31-33). Pope saw himself as defending "Virtue," by "Brand[ing] the bold front of shameless guilty men" with his scalding wit (1.106, Imitation of Horace II.i).[35]

While the 'purpose' components of satire definitions stress attack and reform, the 'technique' elements of such definitions emphasize art, rhetoric, wit, and humour. Critics offer theories explaining just how satire does what it does. For instance, Hodgart asserts that the "essence" of satire's technique is "wit" and "reduction"(111); Frye claims satire works by "humour founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd" (223). For others, the technique component of satire can be more varied. Worcester presents "a simple rhetoric of satire" (9) and Highet offers an "anatomy" of "satiric techniques," both of which amount to lists of rhetorical devices found in satire, the most common being irony (verbal and dramatic), hyperbole, understatement, distortion, incongruity, parody, caricature, reductio ad absurdum, indirection, and allegory.[36]

As to whether satire is a genre or mode, opinions differ with the times. Dryden believed satire was a separate genre that needed to be distinguished from, and was as unique and independent

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[35] Branding was at one time used as a legal penalty, for marking the bodies of criminals (OED).

[36] See, for example, the lists of satiric techniques in Worcester, Highet, Feinburg.

as, other genres such as the epic and tragedy (Frost 405). More recently, modern critical descriptions of satire suggest the possibility that satire is not a genre but a mode or what Spacks calls "a literary procedure, not a kind of writing but a way of writing" (15). As a "procedure," Spacks continues, satire can be used in combination with other "procedures" (15). Similarly, Connery and Combe remark on the "formlessness" of satire and its "parasitic" nature, by which it tends to "inhabit the forms of other genres," such as the satiric novel, rather than stand on its own as an autonomous genre.

In general, I agree with satire definitions that combine some variation of "purpose" and "technique," but I see both components and the issue of genre/mode in more open-ended terms than any of these conventional definitions allow. Although often focused on an issue and frequently accompanied by didactic rhetoric, the purpose of satire is not always an "attack" or a "critique" nor is its aim necessarily "truth" or anything "moral" or "reformative" at all.

The reformative purpose of satire, in particular, has come under serious scrutiny in the twentieth century. One of the obvious paradoxes of much satire (though not all) is that while it *claims* to be engaged in high-minded, socially-oriented moral reform, it actually seems to be *used* for personal punishment and revenge. Some Augustans were up-front about this use: they proposed a judicial model of satire in which the satirist took on the role of "judge" (Oldham) or "magistrate" (Steele, Tatler 2:74), whose duty it was to punish the wicked. More commonly, however, writers claimed their satire engaged in moral reform, but they really used it for revenge. (Samuel Johnson, for instance, was "not convinced" of Pope's claim that the "design" of The Dunciad was "moral" ["Prefaces" 747]. He suspected--and was almost certainly correct--that revenge was the driving force.) But as P.K. Elkin has shown, the moral justification for satire (the insistence that it was out to improve society) was the core of the

Augustan defence of a genre constantly under attack for its mean-spiritedness (71-89).[37]

The so-called reformative impulse of satire is, then, as Felicity Nussbaum suggests, part of the myth of satire (17). The belief that the sole purpose of satire is reform is, in Griffin's words, a "quaint" view that suggests a profound naïvete in both satirist and reader (Satire 36). True, some satire does really have a moral intent, but overall the "purpose" of satire can be varied. Sometimes it is reformative; other times it seeks only revenge sans reform (for instance, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Verses to the Imitator of Horace [1733]). Another aspect of the purpose component often overstated in satire definitions is the assumption that satire is always an 'attack' (Griffin Satire 39). Sometimes satire seeks only to inquire into a subject rather than attack it. In the eighteenth century, the word 'satire' was often used in the same sense as the word 'essay', as in 'an attempt' at a subject, a probing inquiry, a partial dissection (Griffin Satire 41). (Pope and his editors used the title "Essay" for a type of satiric investigation.)[38] Satire, Griffin argues, is often "open-ended inquiry" into a subject, rather than a steady progress toward a conclusion. (Similarly, in the twentieth century, Bakhtin defines Menippean satire as "provoking and testing" an idea [Griffin Satire 41].)

Still other satire seeks to "provoke" the reader, to challenge received opinion, to hold up to scrutiny idealized images of ourselves, or to taunt us with rhetorical paradox. Trickett calls provocation the "prevailing inspiration as well as the prevailing tone of [Augustan] satire" (86). Satire may even

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[37] However, as Dustin Griffin points out, virtually all of these defences were penned by writers with a vested interest in elevating the image of satire: satirists themselves (Satire 6).

[38] Pope used this title himself for his partly satiric Essay on Man and Essay on Criticism. Warburton gave the title Moral Essays to what Pope called his Epistles to Several Persons (Poems 3:ix).

demand that the reader make intellectual or ethical decisions (Griffin Satire 52; Spacks 15). In this sense, satire is not so much an arm of the law or an instrument of correction: rather, it is a promoter of critique, "a catalytic agent" designed to "taunt and provoke" the reader into thought (Elkin 201). The reader of satire is encouraged to be active and critical, to query and not blindly accept. With its dependence on irony and paradox, satire, more than most genres, depends on the reader's ability and freedom to decide how to interpret passages and when to assume the author is being ironic or sincere.[39] Therefore, satire fosters critical thinking and ultimately makes better readers--skills which may be useful to those whose social predicament calls for analysis.

Still other satire is thoroughly self-indulgent and primarily concerned with what Griffin calls "display" and/or "play"--showing off the satirist's wit and rhetorical skill. Griffin reminds us that although we tend to focus on the "persuasive" aspect of rhetoric in satire, we sometimes forget that rhetoric also has an "ornamental" component (Satire 73). While the satirist usually claims that his purpose is to persuade us to reform, we should remember that she or he seeks to win the audience's praise as much for his or her rhetorical skill as for her or his argument. Satirists implicitly and sometimes explicitly ask that we recognize and appreciate their skill. As Edward Burnaby Greene says in the preface to his 1765 version of Juvenal, satire is designed rather "to shew the wit of the satirist, than the means of the delinquent's reformation" (v). While some satire is concerned with what Griffin calls "display" and "showing off," yet other satire is characterized by what he calls "play". Even the

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[39] This also makes satire a risky genre. There can be no guarantee that readers will detect irony. There are notorious instances of satirists overstepping some of their audiences' "irony threshold," as Grundy puts it (Essays x). For example, some readers failed to detect the irony in Defoe's Shortest Way with the Dissenters, Swift's Modest Proposal, and Montagu's eclogue "Monday."

etymology of the word satire suggests festivity (satura, after the festival of Saturn), and there is a hedonistic element to some satire that implies more self-indulgent playfulness than any deep desire to reform or punish. After his exhaustive study of satire, Leonard Feinburg concludes that the "chief effect of satire" is not the satisfaction of revenge or social or moral reform, but in fact, "pleasure" (Satire 261).

Therefore, satire's purpose may be reform, revenge, punishment, inquiry, provocation, display, play or a mixture of any of these. As for the 'technique' component, I accept the theory that satire uses a wide range of rhetorical devices and that satire theory needs to think of the technique component in open-ended terms which include a broad scope of potential strategies. But while I have no qualms about the kinds of rhetorical devices generally considered satiric techniques (humour, wit, irony, parody, hyperbole, etc.), I do have some concerns about the narrowness certain schools of satire theory bring to discussions of satiric 'technique'. In general, the trend in satire criticism in the last 50 years has been away from focusing on the 'purpose' component (especially the moral reformative purpose) so popular in satire discussion up to this century, and toward examining the various rhetorical 'techniques' of satire. However, this fundamental shift in satire theory from ethics to aesthetics has raised other issues about the way satire theory treats the 'technique' component of satire definitions.

History vs. Art

One of the key issues in satire theory concerning this 'technique' component is the tension between history and art. Satire is, in the words of Craig Howes, the literary genre "most contaminated by the historically specific" (216). Satire is especially referential; it grows out of, and often makes numerous references to, specific historical events and situations, as well

as actual people in history.[40] As Henry Higdon explains in the "Preface to the Reader" of his Modern Essay on the Tenth Satire of Juvenal (1687), "All Satyrs have a strong taste of the Humour and particular Hints of the Times wherein they were writ, which is indeed the Life and Beauty of Satyr" (n.p.). In many cases, knowledge of the historical context in which a satire was written is beneficial, if not essential, to understanding and appreciating the work. While it is still possible to appreciate Pope's Epistle to Arbuthnot without knowing that Sporus represents Lord Hervey (or even who Lord Hervey was), some familiarity with the relationship between Pope and Hervey adds a level of appreciation to the satire. In fact, some critics see history as so crucial to understanding satire that they make it part of their definition of the genre. For instance, Edward Rosenheim defines satire as "an attack [purpose] by means of a manifest fiction [technique] upon *discernible historical particulars* [my emphasis]" (31). Rosenheim even goes so far as to suggest that the study of satire blurs the boundary between historical scholarship and literary criticism (32-34).

Other satire critics, however, are troubled by what Sitter calls the "conspicuous topicality of satire" (159) and see 'history' as an element to be downplayed in satire definitions in favour of 'art'. The suggestion, by critics like Rosenheim, that satire and history are so closely linked has been seen by some as a threat to satire's autonomy as art. According to Kernan, satire is "often denied the independence of artistic status and made into a biographical and historical document" (Cankered 2). Kernan's view is representative of a New Critical school of satire criticism that flourished in the 1950s and 60s in the United States—what Griffin calls the "Yale school of satire criticism," named after the university where most of the prominent figures of

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[40] I realize that the term "history" is a problematic one; however, without recounting the debates over this term I use it with the knowledge that it is problematic.

this theory resided (Kernan, Robert Elliott, Ronald Paulson, and Maynard Mack). The Yale school argued that critics of satire were spending too much time on historical context and not enough time appreciating satire as art. Beginning with the publication of Maynard Mack's influential essay "The Muse of Satire" (1951), these Yale critics turned satire criticism away from historical referentiality and instead began to focus on its aesthetic universality. The key words in this criticism became "art," "rhetoric," and "fiction".[41] As Mack puts it, he seeks to produce criticism that deals not with satire's "origins" or "effects" but its "artifice": rhetorical display, internal unity, artful use of personae (192). In accordance with New Critical fashion, the historical particulars of satire became incidental to grander universal themes. For instance, while "Sh--" in Macflecknoe may refer to a historical person named Shadwell, it also refers to the universal idea of the "Bad Poet."

One of the long-term effects of the work of the Yale critics on satire studies is that even today theorizing about satire tends to "suppress the constituent of most satire that first strikes most readers, historical specificity" (Sitter 162). In fact, we seem to have come to value the 'universal' qualities (whatever that means) of a given satire (art) over its context (history). As Griffin observes, satires that "transcend their immediate occasion and circumstances" are judged by most readers to be of greater literary value than those that remain topical and occasional (Satire 118). The material in any satire that "cries out for footnotes" becomes secondary to 'universal' and aesthetic qualities (Howes 216). Or, as Sitter puts it, "anyone teaching Absalom and Achitophel in the twentieth century is likelier to feel the need to emphasize that it has form than that it needs

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[41] Even the titles of books of satire criticism in the 1950s and 60s reflects this shift: Martin Price's Swift's Rhetorical Art (1953), Ronald Paulson's Fictions of Satire (1967), and even history advocate Rosenheim's Swift and the Satirist's Art (1963).

notes" (161). In satire criticism there remains a tendency to view footnotes as "subliterary" (Connery and Combe 4), an embarrassment to be transcended by the satirist's art. Even Rosenheim's theory--from that champion of historical particulars in satire--operates at crucial points to demote history in search of 'universals.'[42]

The Yale critics saw themselves as rescuing the 'art' of satire from the lesser realm of 'history'. And while it is true that they are largely responsible for the long-overdue recognition of the rhetorical complexity and literary sophistication of much satire (especially eighteenth-century satire), their view of the limited role of history has since become unfashionable, to say the least. Today, literary theory in general stresses the importance of history in literary studies. Literature, as the new historicists remind us, consists of localized strategies in particular historical encounters, and these strategies can only be fully understood within the contexts in which they are produced. In addition, academia's current interest in popular culture (both at present and historically) should raise the literary perception of historical particulars and make scholars more willing to deal with footnotes explaining cultural and historical context. Still, despite the demise of New Criticism and the rise of various brands of 'historicism' and studies of popular culture, the study of satire is still troubled by the tension between history and art.

In my approach to women's verse satire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I want to strike a flexible balance between these two concerns: history is crucial to the study of satire, but so is an appreciation of art, and each individual satire enacts a unique dynamic between the two. Satiric texts vary in their degree and kind of referentiality far more than existing theories

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[42] Rosenheim establishes an unofficial hierarchy of types of satire on what he calls a "satiric spectrum." However, within this ordering, he implies a higher literary value for satire that approaches "comic" universals (25-31).

of satire allow. Sometimes it seems essential to know the historical particulars of a satire; other times they are almost irrelevant. Some satires are densely topical, others not at all. Some satires lose referential power over time, and this may be more or less of a handicap. In any event, readers are capable of devising a range of reading strategies, and I do not see history and art as mutually exclusive issues in the discussion of satire. I want to straddle both the axis of history and that of art, to establish historical context *and* evaluate satire as art.

In addition to balancing the specific concerns of art and history, I want my critical practice to balance the considerations of the broader components of purpose and technique, and to remain open to the variety of intents and means which Augustan women satirists advanced and employed. This means taking into account what women satirists claimed their satire was doing, the context in which such claims were made, and what the satires actually seem to have done. At the same time, however, I want to emphasize the rhetorical element of Augustan women's satire: its artfulness, its awareness of rhetorical and satiric tradition, and the innovations some women satirists brought to satiric technique. My point is not just that women wrote satire in the Augustan period, but that they wrote skilful, imaginative, complex, provocative, and funny satire.

As to the final question about satire--whether it is a genre or a mode--this too is an issue which evades any imposition of a clear-cut either/or. While I agree that in the twentieth century satire seems to work as more of a mode or "procedure" in combination with other "procedures" than as a genre (in Orlando Virginia Woolf announced that in the twentieth century, "Nothing is any longer one thing" [290]), my guide to this issue will be historical context, and in the Augustan period satire could and did refer to *both* a specific genre and a style or mode of writing. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the specific meaning and generic implications of the term 'satire' were not issues of

debate the way they are today. For the Augustans, as Elkin explains, satire was "too familiar" and "too useful" to become the subject of theoretical speculation and generic hair-splitting (Elkin 5). The term could refer to a specific form of verse or, more generally, *anything* written or spoken that was sharp or severe: "It could indeed be used to refer to almost anything that smacked of censure and was delivered in a mocking, ironical, derisive, censorious, abusive, or jesting manner" (11). In fact, the Augustans often applied the terms 'satire', 'comedy', 'raillery', and 'ridicule' interchangeably: the only widely accepted distinction was the separation of all of these from the lower and more personal strains of 'libel', 'slander', and 'lampoon' (12-24). Therefore, in keeping with the period's own open-ended views of satire, I will treat it as *both* genre and/or mode or "procedure" as each individual case of women's satire permits.

Feminist Theories of Women's Humour and Comedy

Satire theory is crucial to my critical practice, but since I am concerned with *women's* satire specifically, so is relevant feminist theory. There is no established body of feminist theory on women's satire (at least not yet), but there is a fast-emerging collection of theoretical analysis on the broader issue of women's comedy and humour. While satire is, admittedly, not always comic or humorous, these fields are close enough to satire to warrant examination for useful approaches. Though it cannot boast of such an ancient (or confusing) tradition as satire theory, feminist theory on women's comedy and humour has flourished in the past ten years. A handful of feminist scholars such as Emily Toth, Judith Wilt, Judy Little, Regina Barreca, Nancy Walker, and June Sochen has produced an emerging body of theory that seeks to provide a critical practice for approaching women's comic or humorous

writing.[43] I see three main features of this emerging theory that are relevant to my approach to women's satire: 1. The recognition that women's comic writing has been around for a long time but has been ignored or dismissed by the male tradition; 2. The assertion that there is a fundamental difference between men's and women's humour; and 3. The belief that women's comedy and humour provides an effective tool for feminist 'resistance'.

'Traditional' criticism on humour and comedy, these feminist critics assert, tends to take the view of Medon, either denying the existence of women's comic writing altogether (occasionally making exception for a Jane Austen or a Dorothy Parker) or asserting, in the tradition of Schopenhauer, Freud, and Bergson, that women are incapable of possessing a sense of humour (Sochen 9). According to Regina Barreca, the study of comedy has been the study of male comedy (New Perspectives 2). In the rare instances when it is recognized, women's humour is perceived as "trivial, silly and unworthy of serious attention" (Barreca Untamed 19). Therefore, the study of women's comedy remains a "new domain" for feminist scholars (Sochen 16).

One reason the critical tradition may have been unwilling or unable to deal with women's comedy (in addition to general sexist prejudices), these feminist critics suggest, is that women's humour is fundamentally different from men's in form, subject matter, formal features, and intent. Nancy Walker argues that women humorists favour "domestic saga" and "skit" narratives and tend to focus on "domestic" subject matter more than male humorists do (Walker 45-52). She also suggests that women's humour is more likely to employ a self-deprecating narrator and adapt existing stereotypes for ironic purposes (106, 124). Emily

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[43] I use these terms interchangeably, though not all these theorists would agree. Whitlock, for instance, defines 'comedy' as light amusement or ridicule while 'humour' is a deeper, more affirming force (128). For Barreca and Little, 'comedy' applies to narrative structure while 'humour' refers to "specific textual strategies" (Barreca New Perspectives 4).

Toth insists that women's humour is "not simply men's humour reversed," not just an inversion of male stereotypes for female ones ("Female Wits" 783). Rather, she argues that women's humour is morally superior to men's, involving "an attack on types, and a criticism of individuals according to a different code" (783; see also Kauffman 14). Whereas male humour is mean and personal, women's is "humane" and socially constructive: it attacks traditional social 'norms' instead of individuals (784). Similarly, Judy Little argues that women's humour can be revolutionary in the way it challenges social 'norms'. While 'traditional' male comedy is ultimately conservative in its reification of the status quo, some women's comedy refuses to endorse that return to the way things are. As Little puts it, in some women's writing the "deeply rooted 'norms' themselves become the object of attack" (3). In some cases, these critics boldly pronounce, women's humour can "create new norms, a new culture" ("Laughter" Toth 212).

As the language of these critics' descriptions of the differences between men's and women's humour illustrates, feminist theory on women's comedy and humour overflows with the rhetoric of resistance and revolution. Women's humour, according to these critics, embodies the power to effect real social change. Women's humour can be "disruptive, subversive" (Whitlock 124), a form of "protest" (Walker x), "subversive and gleefully threatening to the dominant order," and have the power to "transform" (Barreca Untamed 15, 17); laughter and satire can serve as "a weapon" for an "angry woman" (Whitlock 124); and comedy can "effectively channel anger and rebellion" and invert the world not only in the short term but permanently (Barreca New Perspectives 6). Women's comedy implies and advocates a "radical reordering of social structures, a real rather than a temporary and merely playful redefinition of sex identity" (Little 2). As Nancy Walker puts it, for "a woman to be a humorist is to confront and subvert the very power that keeps women powerless" (9).

Although not specifically concerned with satire, this body of theory provides a useful basis for my investigation of women's satiric writing in the Augustan period. For I too have been struck by the dearth of criticism on women's satiric writing, am intrigued by the apparent differences between men's and women's satire, and am hopeful about the power women's satire might have to enact social change. But while I find these critical strategies encouraging, I see some limitations and problems with such theoretical approaches when applied to an investigation of seventeenth and eighteenth-century women's satire.

First of all, this body of theory lacks historical depth and scope. The generalizations about the differences between women's and men's comic writing are based on examples from only the last 150 years, and in particular the last 50 years.[44] Even the recent Penguin Anthology of Women's Humour includes only a handful of entries from before 1800. As well, the range of comic writing this theory is based on is narrow too. Critics assume women wrote only domestic humour and comedy, but as early as the seventeenth century women wrote political and philosophical satire too.[45] In addition, this theory does not pay enough attention to the contexts in which women's writing was and is produced—the traditions, milieus, and reception. Susan Suleiman, for instance, has shown the benefits of considering one woman's parodic writing within its historical context: Leona Carrington's surrealistic fiction of the 1930s (144-80). I agree with June Sochen's argument for a contextual approach: scholars of women's humour need to retrieve examples of women's humour in earlier centuries

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[44] Nancy Walker traces women's comedy in the United States back to the 1830s, but that is the earliest reference by any of these theorists.

[45] For instance, Delarivier Manley and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote political satire; women's contributions to the satiric debate about women constitute another kind of sexual-political satire (see chapter two).

and assess how these women humorists were received in their own day (10).

Secondly, some of the more sophisticated analyses of women's comic writing focus exclusively on narrative structure, a feature that does not always apply to rhetoric-driven satire. For instance, Judy Little's excellent Comedy and the Woman Writer (1983) looks at the mythic narrative patterns of some women's novels, set against the traditional 'male' comic plot, noting the differences in structure. However, much satire—especially verse satire—is not driven by narrative at all, but is, rather, primarily rhetorical in nature. (As Feinburg puts it, "Plot is rarely the most important component of a satire." In fact, "in most satires it does not particularly matter in what order the events take place" [Satire 226].) Therefore, theories of women's comedy based on plot analysis may not be helpful for an investigation of women's verse satire.

Thirdly, pronouncements about the 'fundamental' or 'essential' differences between women's and men's comic writing tread on suspect theoretical grounds. Rita Felski warns about the hazards of positing a gendered aesthetic. To say there exists a 'feminine' form of comedy or satire or that women's humour or satire has certain essentially 'feminine' characteristics brings us back to Medon's realm of myth making. Felski points out that it is impossible to speak of 'masculine' or 'feminine' in any meaningful sense in the formal analysis of texts (2). The political value of texts (and gender is political) can only be defined by an investigation of the social function of that text in a particular historical context (2). Therefore, while there may be certain tendencies or patterns in some women's or men's satire, I am hesitant to make sweeping generalizations about the ways in which women's satire might be fundamentally different from men's satire. Instead, I prefer to make historically qualified statements about *tendencies* in women's (and men's) satire in certain periods.

Furthermore, I don't accept any *essential* differences between men's and women's satire. While women's satire in certain contexts will share tendencies related to those contexts, I would argue that it is unhelpful to view these tendencies as defining. Jayne Lewis dismisses much eighteenth-century women's satire on the basis that it employs the same strategies as men's satire, and therefore is "complicit" with men's satire (44). She even goes so far as to say that since satire is a common vehicle for misogyny, women's satire is, in fact, "inevitably misogynist" (44). The genre itself, she argues, is what Richard Terdiman would call "infected" with the very discourse it seeks to combat (14). (This is reminiscent of arguments that Pope, in writing about dunces, inevitably transforms himself into one.)[46]

However, I do not buy this "complicity" theory. There are subtler theories and more radical arguments for ways of dealing with this notion of "infection" than to simply write off entire genres as unusable. Terdiman, for instance, points out that "counter-discourses [such as women's satire] are always interlocked with the domination they contest [such as men's satire against women]" (16). These "counter-discourses inhabit and struggle with the dominant which inhabits them" (18). Such co-habitation is inevitable, but this does not mean counter-discourses are always "complicit" or compromised by such co-habitation. As Ross Chambers argues, there is always room to manoeuvre within this interlocking relationship; there are more options than just "repression" and "co-option" (3). In other words, women satirists can use the same strategies as male satirists without compromising their integrity or the genre's efficacy. There exists a vast range of means by which women writers can adapt and work within the genre of satire.

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[46] Hodgart uses similar medical terminology to describe the satirist's risk: she or he "is always in danger of catching an infection from his enemies" (129).

Finally, despite the revolutionary rhetoric of theorists of feminist humour, these critics are vague on exactly how the subversive nature of women's comic writing actually works. Sceptics can wonder how such revolutionary claims are enacted in the real world. Does feminist humour work by rationally persuading people to change the status quo? By humiliating the enemy? By stealing his power? By one or more of these? This perplexing issue of how certain types of literature work to enact social change brings us to the intersection of feminist theories of women's humour and traditional satire theory.

Feminism, Satire, and Resistance Theory

Though they are not often considered complementary fields, there is an obvious link between certain kinds of satire and feminism: both are founded on a belief in the possibility of social change and a desire for reform. The Augustan claim that the purpose of satire is social reform overlaps with feminist arguments that women's comedy and humour have the power to transform the world. Both theories are founded on an assumption that discourse can influence agency, that the written word can help produce social change. Claims of feminist theorists are not that different from arguments by Augustans defending satire: the intent of both is change and the improvement of society. In this sense, in fact, both conventional satire theory and feminist theory suffer from some of the same theoretical problems.

While both satire theory and feminist theory are all about social change and reform, both tend to be vague on the mechanisms through which this change comes about. Like these theories of women's comedy and humour, satire theory is also pervaded by implicit and explicit assumptions about the genre's efficacy: its "power to do something, to effect change in the world, to be a significant social force" (Feinberg Satire 253). On the one hand, legendary incidents in the history of the genre and extravagant pronouncements by satirists and critics have created a mythical

'power' of satire. Tales of ancient Greeks, Romans, and Celts wounding enemies with their curses, ancient Roman laws prohibiting satire, and the 1599 edict in England banning the publication of satire all have been seen as evidence of the dangerous 'power' of satire. Satirists happily cultivate this image of the power of their genre. Pope, for instance, depicts himself "proud to see / Men not afraid of God, afraid of me." His trembling enemies may be "Safe from the Bar, the Pulpit, and the Throne, / Yet touched and shamed by Ridicule alone" (ll.208-11 Epilogue, Dialogue II). It is hard to know if Pope really believed his satire had such power, but some twentieth-century critics seem to think it has. For example, Gilbert Cannan argues, "No tyrant, no tyrannous idea ever came crashing to earth but it was first wounded with the shafts of satire" (13). Following this belief, women's satire just might be able to do the kind of 'revolutionary' work some feminist critics claim it can.

On the other hand, however, some critics argue that satire has very little practical power to change anything. Feinberg, for instance, concludes that the view that satire is "dangerous" or responsible for reforming society is a "delusion" and that satire "has had no more influence on society than other forms of literature" (Satire 235). Similarly, Edward and Lillian Bloom observe that there has always been a tendency in satire theory to overstate the "functionalism" of the genre, to exaggerate its efficacy (31). As Elkin shows, such statements about satire's power to change the world have long served as the core of the defence of the genre from its many attackers (73). Most of the theorists who make such pronouncements about the power of satire, however, have a vested interest in elevating the status of the genre—they are either satirists themselves or satire critics. In addition, historians who have conducted research into measuring the actual effects of political satire in the eighteenth century conclude that, at least in any measurable terms (such as election results), the impact of satire on the real world has been

negligible.[47] Even some satirists themselves, despite their rhetoric, seem not to have believed that satire could do much of anything. For example, Swift's "Letter from Captain Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson," printed seven months after Gulliver's Travels, mocks the naïve satirist who is disappointed to learn that the world did not reform according to his pronouncements: "I cannot learn that my Book hath produced one single Effect according to my Intentions" (qtd. in Elliott 217). Swift pokes fun at his gullible captain's belief that his "book" would change the world. Taking this more pessimistic Swiftian view, one might conclude that women's satire doesn't really have the power to effect *any* social change at all.

Between these two opposing views of the efficacy of satire and by extension, women's satire, there must be some middle ground. The problem with assessing satire's power, and thus navigating this middle ground, lies in the difficulty of measuring the kind of work satire does. The way satire works, if it works at all, is more complex than results of elections indicate. I want to suggest that contemporary resistance theory offers a helpful framework for discussing how satire does what it does, a framework that also lends itself to feminist theorizing about the potential of what women's satire can do.

Ross Chambers offers a useful distinction between what he calls "resistance" and "oppositional behaviour" in literature. Resistance involves a call for direct force against an oppressor, an open, revolutionary call to arms. Oppositional behaviour, meanwhile, does not overtly challenge the status quo; it merely makes a situation more bearable by blowing off steam. A classic example of this kind of oppositional behaviour is the inevitable political satire that is produced under repressive political

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[47] See J.A. Downie, Robert Harley and the Press Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979); and Bertrand Goldgar, Walpole and the Wits: The Relation of Politics to Literature (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P,

regimes. If anything, Chambers argues, such oppositional behaviour seems to work as a conservative force; in functioning as a kind of safety valve, such behaviour avoids a dangerous build up of discontent that might lead to a larger explosion or revolution. Resistance involves action and force to bring about change; oppositional behaviour, however, does not appear to do anything but vent frustration. Yet, according to Chambers, oppositional behaviour works sneakily, in the long run, to gradually, imperceptibly change people's mentality. It works indirectly, subtly, to wear down and infiltrate "the gaps, cracks, and slippages" in structures of power (de Certeau 6). Invisibility or disguise is the key to oppositional behaviour; it does not openly seek change, but may, in the long run, produce it (2).

Therefore, the work satire does may be located anywhere along this spectrum of resistance and oppositional behaviour. But even if it doesn't effect social change at all, in the short or long run, satire can have other value as an end in itself, through the features that Griffin calls "inquiry" and "provocation." By its very nature satire fosters a sceptical liveliness of mind, a questioning disposition, and a healthy non-acceptance of the status quo, all of which spur on a search for conceptual alternatives to the status quo. In other words, satire can make us better critical thinkers and contribute to a kind of consciousness-raising that has intrinsic value regardless of whether it achieves anything immediate or concrete in the public world.[48] Unlike naïve Gulliver, Swift knew that Gulliver's Travels wouldn't influence elections or alter political policy towards Ireland in the least. What Swift knew it *could* do, however, was raise people's consciousness, provoke discussion and thought, and maybe, just maybe, influence people's attitudes in the long run.

1976).

[48] This may explain satire's potency under repressive political regimes: although satire may not start a revolution, it can foster critical thinking that can be dangerous to the status quo.

Given these distinctions and options, the power of satire can be seen in a variety of contexts. Some satire presents itself as resistance, other satire as oppositional behaviour, and yet other satire as neither of these. Some satire openly mocks a target, challenges directly, calling for an open attack on the target or demanding change. Other satire dons the mask of irony or hyperbole and disavows any intent to change anything. At times, the form of satire serves as a kind of Trojan Horse: an attack disguised as a harmless, foolish, beast (satyr-like?). This form of satire allows a certain license that enables one to get away with saying things that in other contexts would be impossible.

Instead of seeing satire as a single, clearly defined, carefully delineated strategy of resistance, I view the genre as a diverse and malleable locus of possible strategies spread across a spectrum of repression, resistance, and oppositional behaviour. I see the sprawling, amorphous nature of the genre not as an encumbrance to its usefulness but as an asset that gives the genre a wider range of options. Satire is a flexible genre, full of possibilities, capable of being used in myriad ways for diverse purposes, with considerable room to manoeuvre *within* the genre.

Women's satire, in particular, I see as a genre of possibilities. In contrast to the conventional view that satire is a negative discourse, a destructive genre, and that "satirists specialize in demolition projects" (Connery and Combe 1), I agree with Emily Toth's view that women's satire is often a positive discourse, a *con*structive genre, and that many women satirists specialize in fostering social change for the *improvement* of all humankind. Women's satire may not be as "revolutionary" or as powerful a force of "resistance" as some theorists would have us believe, but, like Gulliver's Travels, it has provoked discussion and contemplation, raised people's consciousness, and in its own sneaky way, may have helped nudge along revolutionary change.

Chapter Two

Sharper Answers: Women's Contributions to the Late Seventeenth-Century Satiric Debate about Women

i) the genre

The idea of debate figures largely in Augustan poetry in general, and Augustan satiric poetry in particular. In the verse of Rochester and Dryden, for example, issues of aesthetics, politics, and theology are subject to open-ended debate in which "opposing sides are all given a voice" (Doody 64). The Augustans loved to debate and one of their favorite—and most controversial—subjects for debate in satiric poetry is also one of the oldest: the topic of "woman." Satiric attacks upon and defences of women were especially prevalent in England in the early part of the Augustan period, the late seventeenth century. At that time, the subject "woman" was both an irresistible target for male wits and an obvious rallying point for chivalrous defenders (male and female) of the sex. In The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660-1750, Felicity Nussbaum devotes a long chapter to analyzing some of the little-known attacks and defences that make up the Restoration debate about women. She contextualizes these works within the social history of the late seventeenth century, speculating on the social conditions that gave rise to the popularity of this sub-genre. In addition, she relates these works to the long literary tradition of antifeminist satire, cataloguing the conventions and rhetorical devices of that well-worn legacy. However, while Nussbaum's valuable study situates these satiric works within the obvious context of antifeminist satire, I would like to suggest that many of the satiric attacks and defences of women in the late seventeenth century can be seen in a slightly different generic context, as instances of a more specific genre I call the satiric debate about women.

The satiric debate about women is more than just satire; it is a hybrid genre, the result of a merging of two distinct,

although at times overlapping, literary forms--satire and formal rhetorical debate--at the common theme of women. Both satire and formal rhetorical debate had had long associations with that topic: satire, as Nussbaum explains, has a well-documented antifeminist tradition which originated in classical times, was revived in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and flourished in the Restoration.[1] Similarly, formal rhetorical debate about women has a rich, though not as well known, literary legacy. This tradition originates in the late Medieval and Early Renaissance formal controversy about women (later known as the querelle des femmes), in which learned male writers (women began to participate in the late sixteenth century) presented rhetorically elaborate arguments addressed to hypothetical opponents defending women's virtues and cataloguing their faults.[2] The works that I consider as part of the satiric debate possess features that are the combined legacy of these two sets of literary conventions.

The formal controversy about women, a favorite literary genre of Renaissance scholars, consisted of learned debate over the inherent defects and merits of the female sex. Some of the best known examples of the genre are Sir Thomas Elyot's The Defence of Good Women (1540), Agrippa's De Nobilitate et praecellentia Foemenei sexus (translated as A Treatise of the Nobilitie and excellencye of womankynde in 1542), Castiglione's The Courtier (translated 1561), and Joseph Swetnam's The Araignment of Lewde, idle, froward and unconstant women (1615).[3] As a literary genre,

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[1] For the history of antifeminist satire up to the Restoration, see Francis Utley, The Crooked Rib: An Analytical Index to the Argument about Women in English and Scots Literature to the End of the Year 1568 (1940), Katharine Rogers, The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature (1966), and Nussbaum (1984).

[2] I take the term "formal controversy" from Linda Woodbridge, Women and the English Renaissance (1984). See also Shepherd (9-23); Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes" Signs 8 (Autumn 1982): 2-28; Jones (1990), and Utley.

[3] Of these examples, Swetnam's conforms the least to the conventions of the formal controversy. Woodbridge, for example, argues that Swetnam "neither respects nor understands the genre"

the formal controversy was a highly conventional set piece with a more or less fixed structure and a limited stable of rhetorical techniques. The controversy consisted of arguments in prose or verse, either attacking or defending 'woman'. The speaker posits an opponent (usually hypothetical, at least in works prior to the seventeenth century) whose arguments the speaker anticipates and rebuts. Sometimes the hypothetical opponent appears as a voice in a dialogue. The speaker uses logic and rhetoric to argue a thesis about the nature of *woman* in general, not individual women or even categories of women (such as wives or prostitutes). Arguments are made by extensive catalogues of faults and virtues backed up by exempla: lists of virtuous or scandalous women in history, literature, classical mythology, or the Bible. The arguments are presented in set rhetorical structures, most commonly based on the classical judicial oration as described by Quintilian in De Institutione Oratoria (Woodbridge 14-16).

It is important to note that the formal controversy was not a 'popular' literary genre; it was the exclusive domain of highly educated scholars and courtiers. Perhaps this accounts for the most curious feature of the formal controversy to modern eyes and ears--its extreme artificiality. Scholars today agree that the formal controversy does not consist of sincere attacks and vindications of 'woman'; rather, the works in this genre were thought of at the time as "exercises in a literary game" (Woodbridge 24). The formal controversy was simply a rhetorical exercise, a "sophisticated game for international literati. The sport came in demonstrating the infinite permutations which a fixed canon of argument and exempla might yield" (Woodbridge 59). In fact, the formal controversy was seen as a game to such an extent that participants sometimes wrote on both sides of the

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(87). Nevertheless, Woodbridge and others do treat it as part--admittedly not a very artful part--of the controversy.

issue: first attacking women and then defending them or vice versa.[4]

While the formal controversy remained prevalent in certain circles well into the seventeenth century, some of the participants and conventions changed. First, the genre was taken up by a wider range of writers. In the late sixteenth century, the formal controversy began to shift away from being solely the domain of male courtiers and scholars. Men still dominated the genre,[5] but some women ceased being the passive subjects of the controversy. Women such as Jane Anger, the Swetnam respondents (Rachel Speght, "Esther Sowernam," and "Constandia Munda"), and Mary More actually entered the debate.[6] Although some of these women were self-educated, they were neither scholars nor courtiers. However, this did not stop them from participating in the genre. The debate was becoming a genre open to self-educated women and men from any class.

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[4] For example, Gosynhyll wrote an attack, The Schole House of women (c. 1542) and then followed it up with a defence and counterattack on male detractors of womankind, Mulierum Pean. Similarly, C. Pyrrye combined both sides of the debate in a single volume, The praise and Dispraise of Women (1569). Some critics have been unable to accept that the same person could write on both sides of the debate, but these critics make the mistake of assuming that works in the formal controversy are genuine outpourings of the author's feelings.

[5] Some seventeenth-century examples of the formal controversy include Abraham Darcie's The Honour of Ladies: Or, A True Description of their Noble Perfections (1622); William Austin's Haec Homo, Wherein the Excellency of the Creation of Woman is Described (1637); Charles Gerbier's Elogium Heroinum: Or, The Praise of Worthy Women (1651); and the anonymous Discourse of Women, Shewing their Imperfections Alphabetically (1673); The Women's Fegaries, showing the great endeavours they have used for the obtaining of the breeches (1675).

[6] See Anger's Jane Anger, her Protection for Women (1589); Speght's A Mouzell for Melastomus: The Cynicall Bayter of, and Foule Mouthed Barker against Evahs Sex (1617); Sowernam's Esther Hath Hang'd Haman 91617); Munda's The worming of a mad Dogge, or A Soppe for Cerberus the Jaylor of Hell (1617); More's "The Womans Right or Her Power in a Greater Equality to her Husband proved than is allowed or practised in England" (written c. 1663,

Second, perhaps as a result of women taking part in the genre, the formal controversy became increasingly realistic as the seventeenth century progressed. By 'realistic' I mean that the genre that had been strictly a literary exercise, a sophisticated game, was beginning to be treated by some, at least in part, as serious social commentary. One sign of this change is the way the formerly hypothetical opponent was now sometimes a real opponent, as in the Swetnam controversy of 1615-17, when three different women responded to Joseph Swetnam's attack on the sex.[7] The formal controversy maintained an element of artificiality (you still find men arguing both sides of the debate as late as the 1690s), but the genre loses some of its aura of playfulness. The debate begins to broach actual social issues such as education and marriage and the genre becomes more of a genuine debate about women's place in the real world. No single work in the formal controversy reflects this shift more than François Poulain de la Barre's De l'egalite des deux sexes (1673), translated into English by "A.L." as The Woman as Good as the Man Or, the Equality of Both Sexes (1677). This prose essay maintains the game-debate element of the genre (Poulain de la Barre argues both sides of the issue), but introduces unprecedented Cartesian rationalism as a means of argument in place of conventional exempla and catalogues.

Not surprisingly, there is considerable overlap between the formal controversy about women and the long tradition of verse satire against women. Antifeminist verse satires employ many of the same structures (dialogue, debate, personae), jests, and rhetorical techniques found in the attack components of the formal controversy. However, in spite of this obvious overlap between

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but unpublished).

[7] We don't know for sure that the responses by "Sowernam" and "Munda" were actually written by women, since these names were pseudonyms. The Feminist Companion to Literature in English suggests that "Sowernam" "may really be a woman" (Blain, Clements, and Grundy 1011) and "Munda" "very likely" is female (775). I follow the lead of scholars such as Jones and Woodbridge who

the formal controversy and antifeminist verse satire, there are some significant differences between the genres, at least prior to what I see as their merging in the late seventeenth century. First, verse satire on women had a broader audience and range of participants than the formal controversy. Before the seventeenth century, works in the formal controversy were penned by scholars and courtiers for the delight of other scholars and courtiers. Antifeminist satire, on the other hand, had long been a popular genre written and enjoyed by all classes; satire on women was a staple of the ballad, perhaps the most popular poetic form, and poems mocking the fair sex were as common in the ale-house as at court.

Second, given the different class associations of the two genres, it is not surprising that most verse satire against women was derived from a separate rhetorical tradition from the formal controversy. Elyot, Agrippa, and Swetnam stuck closely to the structure of the classical judicial oration. Verse satirists, however, found their models in Juvenal, Persius, and Horace rather than Quintilian. While satirists did employ many of the same conventional arguments as did the formal controversy debaters, the satirist also drew on a body of rhetorical techniques absent in the formal controversy. From Juvenal and Persius, in particular, Elizabethan verse satirists inherited rhetorical techniques such as obscenity, graphic sexual and scatological imagery, boudoir scenes, and name-calling. In addition, from the mistaken 'satyr'/satire etymology verse satirists introduced 'satyr'-like rhetorical strategies such as deliberately obscure or rough diction and syntax, and aggressive speaker/personae.

Third, verse satire on women articulated a very different attitude toward 'woman' than did the formal controversy. Ostensibly, the attack element in both the formal controversy and verse satire against women seems to reflect identical negative

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assume that these works are by women writers.

views of the female sex. However, that is not the case at all. Strictly speaking, the formal controversy's attacks on women were not antifeminist, but rather male supremacist. According to the attackers, women were inferior to men by virtue of their creation and their long list of faults, but women were not loathed or feared or detested. Verse satire against women, however, is often antifeminist or misogynist. Women, these poems suggest, are not just inferior (in fact, some critics today argue that antifeminist satire is based on male fears that women are actually superior to men),[8] but disgusting and, in some cases, even evil. Furthermore, while the formal controversy attacks treated 'woman' as an abstract idea, verse satires tend to fall back on the categorization of women as stereotypes: scolds, shrews, or whores. While the formal controversy's attacks on women are condescending, verse satire on women tends to be nastier and more reductive.

Finally, perhaps the most significant difference between these two genres is the issue of purpose. The formal controversy was understood to be a literary exercise, an end in itself with no direct bearing on the real world. Satire, however, *does* claim to affect the real world; it purports to effect moral reform. As I suggested earlier, such claims for satire should be seen as part of the genre's mythical self-justification, rather than as arguments to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, this makes for an important difference in the perception of the purpose of two genres: the formal controversy claimed to be a game; verse satire on women claimed to be an instrument of moral reform. When these genres begin to overlap in the seventeenth century in what I call the satiric debate, this issue of purpose, not surprisingly, becomes even more blurred and confusing.

The late seventeenth-century satiric debate about women, then, is a hybrid of these two similar but distinctive literary forms. Works in the satiric debate, which consist of attacks on

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[8] See Nussbaum Brink 20.

women (by men) and defences of women and counterattacks on men (by men and women), were mostly in verse (though some were in prose).[9] They take the form of either a dialogue or a speaker/persona addressing an opponent (real or hypothetical). Employing elements of both the classical judicial oration and stock rhetorical techniques of antifeminist verse satire, these works address the nature of 'woman' and 'man', in general, using exempla and stereotypes; also they sometimes attack categories of men or women, or individuals. The resulting mixed form is a curious combination of rant and rational critique; elaborate rhetorical argument and name-calling; scholarship and dirty jokes. The satiric debate is part literary game and part genuine attempt at social reform.

Between 1678 and 1701 there appeared over two dozen poems and essays which conform, more or less, to the conventions of the hybrid satiric debate about women.[10] Most of these were written by

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[9] Prose contributions include William Walsh's, Dialogue concerning Women (1691); Judith Drake's, An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex (1696); "Eugenia's" The Female Preacher (ca. 1699); and the anonymous A Farther Essay relating to the female-sex. Containing Six Characters, and Six Perfections. With the Description of Self-Love. To which is added a Character of a Compleat Beau (1696).

[10] In addition to the prose works listed above, verse contributions include: John Oldham, "A Satyr Upon a Woman" (1678); "Ephelia," "To One that Affronted the Excellent *Eugenia*" and "To a Gentleman that had left a Vertuous Lady for a Miss" (1679); Female Excellence (1679); Misogynus; or, A Satyr Upon Women (1682); Robert Gould, Love Given O're (1682/83); Triumphs of Female Wit (1683); The Great Birth of Man (1686); Sarah Fyge, The Female Advocate (1686); Sylvia's Revenge, Or a Satyr Against Man [possibly by Aphra Behn] (1688); Robert Gould, The Poetess (1688), A Consolatory Epistle to a Friend Made Unhappy by Marriage (A Scourge for Ill Wives) (1689), and A Satyrical Epistle to the Female Author of a Poem Called Sylvia's Revenge &c. (1691); Richard Ames, The Folly of Love (1691), Female Fireships (1691), and A Satire Against Whoring (1691); The Lost Maidenhead, or Sylvia's Farewell to Love (1691); The Restored Maidenhead (1691); Measures of Love (1691); Sylvia's Complaint, a second part of Sylvia's Revenge (1692); Mary, Lady Chudleigh, The Ladies Defence (1701); Elizabeth Thomas, "Satyr against Man, written at the

minor male wits, but a handful of the satires (mostly defences and replies) were actually penned by women writers. Not since the Swetnam controversy of 1615-17 had a significant number of women written and published (albeit mostly anonymously) in a set satiric form in such a concentrated period of time. In this chapter, I consider women's contributions to two separate controversies that are part of the late seventeenth-century satiric debate about women: one in the 1680s, primarily between Robert Gould and Sarah Fyge and the other at the turn of the century, primarily between John Sprint and Mary, Lady Chudleigh.

I focus on how women participated in the debate and how they used this sub-genre of satire. I argue that women not only took part in this genre, they contributed significantly to its evolution. In participating in the satiric debate, women writers demonstrated their rhetorical skill, literary knowledge, and humour, proving that they could stand their ground in a battle of wits. However, I argue that women writers did more than that. Women satirists actually altered the genre by introducing into the debate unprecedented elements of genuine social critique, in the form of a rational reformist ideology, that shifted the very terms of the debate forever.

Desire of a Friend," "On a Certain Tea-Table," and "Hold! Hold Diogenes" (published 1722 but probably written c. 1700).

ii) Sarah Fyge's Female Advocate

One of the first women's contributions to the satiric debate of the 1680s and 90s was The Female Advocate: or, An Answer to a Late Satyr Against the Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy of Woman, first published in 1686 and signed only by "a Lady in Vindication of her Sex." A clue to the author's identity is given in a revised second edition published a year later, in which the initials "S.F." follow the prefatory remarks to the reader. In 1976, Felicity Nussbaum identified the author of The Female Advocate as Sarah Fyge, a teenager. Fyge was the "evidently well-educated" daughter of Mary Beacham and the physician Thomas Fyge (Blain, Clements and Grundy 405). She was banished from London by her father following the appearance of this poem. Later, she married Edward Field, an attorney near London. After Field died, some of her poems appeared in The Nine Muses (1700), an anthology on Dryden's death, and in John Froud's The Grove: or, The Rival Muses (1707). In 1700 she married her much older cousin, the Reverend Thomas Egerton, though in 1703 she petitioned (unsuccessfully) for divorce on the grounds of cruelty. Also in 1703 she published a collection of Poems on Several Occasions together with a Pastoral. In 1982, Jeslyn Medoff uncovered evidence that suggests Sarah Fyge was born in 1669 (and not in 1672 as had been presumed), probably in London, making her seventeen years old when The Female Advocate was first published. Elsewhere Fyge claims that she was "scarce fourteen years" when she actually wrote the poem;[11] the three-year difference between this date and the actual publication suggests that she may have worked on the poem for three years before publishing it.

Like many women's satires at this time, Fyge's is responsive; it is an "Answer" to another poem, Robert Gould's

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[11] Qtd. in Medoff "New Light" 156.

wildly popular (but long forgotten) Love Given O're: Against the Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy, &c. of Woman (first published in 1682 or 1683 and reprinted five more times by 1710), a contemporary satire against women. Fyge's poem is her reply to Gould's antifeminist attack; it is both a defence of women and a counter-attack on men by an advocate of "the Sex." As an instance of one kind of late seventeenth-century women's satiric writing, The Female Advocate is a revealing document: it illustrates many of the strategies late seventeenth-century women satirists attempted, it exposes some of the problems women satirists faced in entering the satiric debate, and it foreshadows the ways in which women satirists altered the terms of the debate.

Before considering The Female Advocate, Gould's Love Given O're is worth examining as a conventional specimen of the attack component. Although critics have roasted this poem as being "violently misogynist" (Blain, Clements, and Grundy 405) and "a cynical, libertine denunciation of woman's inferior mentality and her depravity" (Blanchard 327), it is a thoroughly conventional example of the attack component of the late seventeenth-century satiric debate about women. Gould's poem exhibits the standard rhetorical features of the hybrid genre: a combination of structural elements from classical judicial oration (courtesy the formal debate tradition) together with stock manoeuvres from the antifeminist satiric tradition. It begins with a short exordium or introduction in which the speaker identifies himself as a rebellious, angry ex-lover--a man recently freed from the bondage of "Love's vile Slav'ry" (1). With the aid of his Muse (here Gould draws on yet another genre for his hybrid--the epic invocation), he is now out to "proclaim an endless War" on the "lewd Sex" (1). In a propositio or statement of intent, the sour speaker announces his goal: to expose woman's faults and vices so that "all Mankind" will abhor women as much as he does.

From this concise introduction and thesis statement the revenge-seeking ex-lover shifts into his narratio and confirmatio (assertion of facts and presentation of evidence) or his arguments against women, denouncing (in three carefully delineated sections) their lust, pride, and inconstancy. The speaker begins his attack where most rhetorical satires on women begin--with Eve: her formation "usher'd in / Plagues, Woes, and Death, and a new World of Sin" (2). Then from original sin, Gould's speaker proceeds forward in time to offer the usual exempla of wicked women in history--Biblical (the women of Sodom and Gomorrah), Classical ("Rome's Emperial Whore" (3), Messalina and "the Ephesian Matron" (9)), and modern (the "late illustrious Bewley" (4), a Restoration actress). All manner of conventional satiric devices follow: a brief boudoir scene exposing women's artifice; a vision of hell populated (and threatened) by women; metaphors of inconstancy (wind, ships on the sea, flitting swallows); a brief interruption by a foppish female advocate followed by a refutatio or refutation; and the utopian fantasy of an all-male land (complete with unspecified alternate means of propagation). The speaker then ends with a two-pronged conclusion that draws on medieval antifeminist satire: a curse on woman ("May all the Plagues that Woman can Invent, / Pursue 'em with eternal punishment" (12)), and a warning to would-be male lovers: when it comes to women--"Avoid 'em, as you wou'd the pains of Hell,/ For in them, as in that, Damnation dwells" (12).[12]

Ostensibly, Gould presents his poem as belonging to the moral-reformative tradition of satire. In his prefatory "To the Reader," he insists, "I have no design but the Amendment of Vice." He seeks only to help correct the "Errors of a vitious Age." Thus he invokes the satirist's most commonly touted raison d'etre: the times cry out for a scourging. Pointing to the "Errors" of the "vitious Age" around him, Gould appeals to his

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[12] See Utley for instances of these standard motifs in medieval

readers' moral standards for justification of his lashing wit to follow: "Judge then, if Satyr ever had more need of a sharper sting than now". However, Gould's insistence that the target of his satire is general--vice--rather than gender specific--women's vice, or just women, period--is disingenuous, although conventional. That women were presumed to embody many of the worst vices of a "vitious Age" was a given for the Restoration satirist. Again appealing to his readership's common knowledge, Gould reminds the reader that everyone knows how women are "inspir'd as 'twere with a natural averseness to Vertue"; therefore, a strong lash is required to correct their vices.

Such moral-reformative justifications for Restoration satire against women need to be taken with a considerable chunk of salt. Gould's insistence on his ethical mission is a conventional disclaimer found prefacing the most vicious misogynist satire in the Restoration. More likely, Gould's motivation for writing Love Given O're was a desire to show off his rhetorical skill and poetic wit within a highly conventional and extremely popular literary form. Satire against women was a fashionable genre in the Restoration, practised by court wits like Rochester and professional writers such as Oldham and even Dryden.[13] In particular, satire was the perfect mode in which a young writer might make a minor literary name for himself, as Robert Gould did in the 1680s and 90s. Although he had only a "smattering" of formal education (Sloane 11), Gould could have absorbed the set rules and conventions of Juvenalian satire through the work of Oldham, Rochester, and Dryden. A young writer might have found satire a manageable, low-risk vehicle for displaying his (or her) wit and rhetorical flair. Gould was almost certainly of this ilk, and he seems to have approached

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anitfeminist satire.

[13] See John Harold Wilson, The Court Wits of the Restoration, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1948) and Nussbaum (1984).

satire as a literary exercise more than an ethical duty, despite his prefatory rhetoric.

The "Prologue" to the collection of Gould's work published after his death in 1709 confirms his highly conventional approach to satire. Here, even more than in Love Given O're, he displays his conscious imitation of Elizabethan satiric convention. Like his literary mentor Oldham (Sloane 52), he affects a literary persona reminiscent of the Elizabethan "satyr" figure: a rough, outraged, morally upright observer of society who can no longer hold his tongue. Gould plays up the misanthropic coarseness of his speaker. He professes, "That Way my Nature leans, compos'd of Gall; / I must write sharply, or not write at all" (Works 2). A mossy throwback to the days of Marston and Hall, Gould's satyr-speaker delights in his own crabby disposition. In the name of "Truth" he vows to "lash the Knaves and Fools" all around him, and especially those of that rotten "other Sex." But despite this virulent rhetoric, Gould did not allow professed moral convictions to stand in the way of self-promotion. In fact, he wrote several enthusiastic responses to his own satires, sometimes even using female personae, in which he discredits his original proclamations of "Truth." Gould's speaker claims truth is his aim, but Gould himself knew that self-engineered publicity was his best bet. Despite his prefatory rhetoric of "Vice," "Error," and judgement, he seems to have been more interested in literary convention and fame than in moral correction.

The Restoration satiric convention most striking to twentieth-century readers of Love Given O're is its unabashed obscenity. There is a Rochesterian (and in turn, Juvenalian) graphicness about Gould's descriptions of lustful women, especially his images of women's genitalia, disease, death, and bestiality. His imagery, like that of much Restoration court satire, is all dildoes and lapdogs, gaping orifices and oozing putrid sores. Dashes fail to conceal the harshness of his diction: "Yet all could not content th' insatiate Whore, / Her C-

--like the dull Grave, still gap't for more" (4). Not surprisingly, he has a fondness for rhyming "Womb" with "gaping Tomb" (5). And in particular, the story of the "Ephesian Matron" captures the speaker's fascination/horror with what he sees as an intrinsic connection between women's lust, inconstancy, and death: the mourning wife faithfully visited the tomb of her dead husband every day, but the truth was eventually revealed--that

> she herself, ev'n in that sacred Room,
> With one brisk, vig'rous on-set was o'recome,
> And made a Brothel of her Husband's Tomb. (10)

But the scandalous Matron didn't stop there; she even made her husband's horrified ghost--("in Death, a slave!)"--her "necessary Pimp" to boot! Such vulgar jokes, graphic language, and unsavoury images would become Robert Gould's trademark. As Eugene Hulse Sloane, Gould's biographer, remarks, Gould's satire was popular "in spite of, or because of, its coarseness" (121).

Sarah Fyge's The Female Advocate: or, An Answer to a Late Satyr Against the Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy of Woman (1686) is not obscene like Gould's attack, though it is somewhat raw in other ways. The poetic metre is sometimes rough, the grammar is occasionally careless (for example, some pronouns lack antecedents), and the organization of ideas is sometimes haphazard (Fyge has a tendency to repeat herself: three separate times she points out the blasphemous implications of Gould's arguments [Love 1, 2, 10]). Some of the facts are not quite right,[14] and the poem is longwinded (24 pages to Gould's 12, even though she only deals with a handful of his arguments). Of course, Fyge was just a teenager, perhaps as young as 14, when she wrote The Female Advocate, so many of its structural weaknesses can be chalked up to the writer's inexperience.

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[14] For example, Fyge suggests that Tarquin killed Lucretia (in fact, she committed suicide) and that Ptolemy commanded Pompey's death (he merely approved it and left the murderer unpunished) (Medoff "New Light" 160).

Jeslyn Medoff has shown how several of these faults were corrected for the 1687 edition (which is the edition that was subsequently reprinted and the one I quote from): Fyge attempted to clarify some of her points, smooth over some awkward passages, correct some factual errors, and delete some of the more private sections (Medoff "New Light" 160-62). Still, despite the poem's structural defects and technical errors, The Female Advocate is an impressive rhetorical feat. Gould puts himself through his workmanlike paces in smart fashion, but Fyge surprises with her enthusiasm and ingenuity.

Fyge explains in her preface to the second edition of The Female Advocate that she felt compelled to respond to "so rude a Book" against her sex with a "sharper Answer, and severer Contradictions" (A2). But her method of answering and contradicting departs sharply from the model of attack employed by Gould. Indeed, while Gould trots briskly down the standard rhetorical path set out by Renaissance debaters, Fyge appears to be all over the road. The openings are a case in point. Gould begins his satire with the conventional rhetorical flourishes of the oration/epic (setting the scene, explaining the speaker's situation, invoking the Muse, presenting his plan of attack). The opening of The Female Advocate, however, startles. Fyge eschews the usual exordium in her answer proper, opting instead for an abrupt opening curse followed immediately by an incredulous paraphrase of Gould's first argument:

> Blasphemous Wretch! How canst thou think or say
> Some Curst or Banisht fiend Usurpt the Sway
> When Eve was Form'd? (1)

No rhetorical warm up for Fyge; she goes right for the throat, calling names from the get-go and chomping to get at Gould's blasphemous arguments. Fyge does not bother setting the scene or outlining her argument or even projecting a fictional speaker-persona. Her only rhetorical stance is that of mimicking a face-

to-face response, with apparently sincere indignation at Gould's irreverent and sacrilegious attack.

This surprising opening might be seen as evidence that Fyge is unfamiliar with the conventions of the satiric debate (that she does not know how a reply should begin) and is answering Gould's conventional attack with the rage of a sincere emotional outburst. (This was a common charge against female participants in the formal controversy. For instance, scholars have suggested that the women respondents in the Swetnam controversy failed to "get" his jokes and didn't know how to respond in kind [Jones 45-46; Woodbridge 89-98].) However, there is another possibility. A precedent does exist in the satiric tradition for this kind of startling opening, namely in John Donne's satires. Donne's "Satyre I" begins with a similar brand of mock-angry name-calling ("Away thou fondling motley humourist..." [l.1]) and "Satyre III" opens with angry questioning).[15] A similar precedent can be found in the work of a female poet and near contemporary, "Ephelia." Several of the satires in Female Poems on Several Occasions (1679) begin in a similar fashion.[16] The pose of moral indignation is as conventional a stance in the satiric tradition as detached amusement. We must be careful not to assume that male writers can play gracefully with convention while female writers are necessarily always "sincere" and/or emotional. Fyge may simply be countering with a different rhetorical stance. Instead of seeing her opening as a genuinely urgent, emotional

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[15] Donne made such startling openings famous not just in his satires. His lyrics "The Sun Rising" and "The Canonization" feature even more abrupt beginnings.

[16] For instance, "To a Proud Beauty" begins "Imperious Fool! think not because you're Fair, / That you so much above my Converse are" (54); "To a Gentleman that had left a Vertuous Lady for a Miss" begins "Dull Animal miscall'd a Man, for shame / Give o're your foolish tales of Fire and Flame" (177); and "To Coridon, on shutting his Door against some Ladies" begins "Conceited Coxcomb! tho' I was so kind / To wish to see you, think not I design'd / To force my self to your unwilling Arms, / Your Conversation has no such Charms" (195).

outburst, perhaps we should consider it the product of "indignation recollected in tranquillity," to borrow John Harold Wilson's description of most good satire (xi).

This matter of the "genuineness" of The Female Advocate--whether Fyge is writing out of unaffected anger or whether her poem is a deliberate exercise in imitation of various satiric styles, including Donne's and "Ephelia's"--is a perplexing point. Jeslyn Medoff suggests that Fyge's contribution to the satiric debates of the 1680s and 90s is extraordinary in its sincerity. Medoff argues that while Robert Gould's (and other male satirists') primary objective in writing antifeminist satire was to establish a literary name for himself with his wit and poetic talents, Sarah Fyge "speaks from the heart" (157). Rae Blanchard concurs, calling satires such as Gould's "merely exercises in wit" while Fyge's The Female Advocate is deemed "a spirited defense of women" (328, 329).

The question of sincerity has bedevilled critical discussions of the formal controversy and satire on women for years.[17] How can we tell if a satire, attack, or defence is a genuine, "from-the-heart" articulation of beliefs, or merely a conventional exercise for displaying rhetorical panache? The question is unanswerable, but intriguing, since it touches on the slippery connection between literature and life. We simply cannot know how much these literary works reflect real beliefs and attitudes of the time and how much they are literary games and rhetorical exercises. Nevertheless, my theory is that these works do both: they are both part of a literary game and part of a genuine social debate.

In addition, this question of sincerity raises the issue of the difference between a man writing about women and women writing about women in this time period. There has been a tendency among some critics to assume that when men satirize (and

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[17] See Woodbridge, chapter four, for a summary of the various

defend) women, it is all show; but when women defend themselves or attack men, then they must be sincere. For example, Helen Andrews Kahin sees Jane Anger's 1589 contribution to the formal controversy, Jane Anger, her Protection for Women, as "sincere" while the debate was merely a game to the men of her time (qtd. in Woodbridge 65). The assumption is that women were incapable of playing with convention the way men did, or perhaps, that men have the luxury of distance in these matters; women do not. The topic cuts too close to home for women to be concerned with wit and rhetorical ingenuity. Rather, impulsive emotion wins out over careful plotting, or so the argument goes.

In the case of The Female Advocate, I would argue that Fyge's answer, although spirited and heartfelt, is nevertheless also full of rhetorical flair. She knew what she was doing; her use of standard refutations from the formal controversy and the satiric tradition together with her sardonic reversals of Gould's images and words bespeak a familiarity with the satiric debate tradition and a careful, keen wit. If Fyge looked into her heart and wrote, then she, like Sidney's Astrophil, was well aware of the artificially conceived source of such a gesture, and she gazed with one eye firmly trained on Gould's attack, so she could turn his own rhetoric back against him.

The contrast in opening techniques between Gould's and Fyge's poems underlines the generic distinction between the two works. The Female Advocate is, as the subtitle tells us, an "Answer" or a refutation and as such does not fall under the same rhetorical category as Gould's attack. While attacks on women have a clearly defined rhetorical structure (as seen in Gould's poem), the structure of defences is less set. Attacks tend to consist largely of narratio and confirmatio (statement of facts and proof), but defences, by their responsive nature, focus more on refutatio (refuting opposing arguments). Even in the

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critical opinions on this matter.

Renaissance, rhetoricians were unsure as to the proper use of narratio in a defence; it varies from one defence to the next (Woodbridge 33). Simply contradicting the a the

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validity of the proof adduced in its support. This is the method Fyge chooses for her response. Her Donnean/"Ephelian" opening, with its immediate, angry questioning, commences a spirited cross-examination of Gould's narratio.

The Advocate's response to Gould's conventional Eve/original sin argument makes for a rousing start. Gould's speaker wishes that woman had never been created: "How happy had we been, had heav'n design'd / Some other way to propagate our kind?" (2). In response, Fyge argues that woman's significance in the creation story has to do with much more than just ensuring the propagation of the species. Woman was created by God to help "supply the want" felt by "Man alone, / A barren Sex, and insignificant" (2). Following Agrippa's famous defence of women,[18] Fyge reasons that this makes woman the consummation of divine creation, as if the conception of Man was a mere preliminary, imperfect run in preparation for the real McCoy--Woman. In support of this point, Fyge again echoes Agrippa and others[19] by arguing that while Man was formed out of "dull senseless Earth," Woman had "a much more Noble Birth"--she was formed out of Adam's rib, surely a superior place of origin

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[18] De Nobilitate et praecellentia Foemenei sexus, called in David Clapham's 1542 translation A Treatise of the Nobilitie and excellencye of woman kynde, and translated again in 1670 by Henry Care, under the title Female Pre-eminience; or, The Dignity and Excellency of that Sex, above the Male). Agrippa, like Fyge, argues that Eve was God's last and hence highest creation. Fyge may have known Henry Care's 1670 version of Agrippa's work.

[19] This refutation was employed by Edward Gosynhyll in The prayse of all women, called Mulierum pean (ca. 1542) and Jane Anger in her Protection for Women (1589)--"[Adam] being formed In principio of drosse and filthy clay...GOD making woman of mans flesh, that she might bee purer then he" (Sig. C).

(though perhaps only slightly) than dull dirt! Echoing Milton and anticipating Pope's famous description of women as the creator's "last best work,"[20] Fyge turns a conventional view of the order and manner of the creation of Man and Woman on its head.

The Advocate employs a similar brand of subtle logic to refute Gould's original-sin indictment. Perhaps borrowing from an earlier female advocate, Aemilia Lanyer (in the "Eve's Apology in Defense of Women" section of her Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum [1611]),[21] Fyge points out that Adam received God's command to forsake the forbidden fruit, whereas "Woman had it [the warning] at the second hand" (3). Conversely though, it took the "Devil's Strength" to deceive Woman,

> But Adam only tempted was by Eve:
> She had the strongest Tempter, and the least Charge;
> Man's knowing most, doth make his Sin more large. (3)

These counter-arguments based on subtle degrees of blame and guilt (proximity to warnings and strength of tempters) are clever attempts to pick apart logical cracks in Gould's arguments.

Such an effort to expose logical weaknesses in a male attacker's arguments, however subtle, is a shrewd strategy for a woman to take. It was a longstanding antifeminist jibe that women were incapable of logic. One of Fyge's most intriguing applications of logic is her response to Gould's conventional Eve

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[20] Epistle 2. To a Lady, l.272. This line also recalls Adam's address to the sleeping Eve in Book 5 of Paradise Lost, "Awake, / My fairest, my espoused, my latest found, / Heaven's last best gift" (ll.17-19).

[21] In Lanyer's poem the speaker defends Eve by suggesting that Adam is more to blame: "But surely Adam cannot be excused; / Her [Eve's] fault though great, yet he was most to blame; / What weakness offered, strength might have refused, / Being lord of all, the greater was his shame" (ll.33-36).
Likewise the speaker implies that Eve knew only second-hand of the dangers of the fruit while Adam "from God's mouth received that strait command" (l.43) not to partake of the tree. Adam also had a weaker tempter than did Eve--"No subtle serpent's falsehood did

argument. Gould offers the theory that perhaps "some banish'd Fiend usurp't the sway / When Eve was form'd; and with her, usher'd in / Plagues, Woes, and Death, and a new World of Sin" (2). Fyge replies that such a suggestion is sacrilegious--"vile Blasphemy" (1). For Gould to argue that the devil created Eve is tantamount to denying "God's Omnipresence and Omniscience" (not to mention his omnipotence), "Without which Attributes he could not be / The greatest and supreamest Deity" (1). She counters his well-worn conceit (that it is impossible for a benevolent God to have created such a creature as woman; therefore she must have been created by a usurping devil) with an unbemused rational critique emphasizing the blasphemous implications of such a remark.

In other words, Fyge counters Gould's theological joke with theological logic. Some may see this as her failing to "get" his joke--her failure to recognize and go along with an old jest. But in fact there is a precedent in the formal controversy for meeting joke with logical critique. One of the speakers in Robert Vaughan's A Dyalogue defensyue for women, agaynst malycyous detractours (1542) argues in a similar fashion that to slander woman is, logically speaking, to slander the creator. In the Swetnam controversy, the female respondents countered Swetnam's misogynous jests with careful, straight critiques: they pointed out his misuse of the Bible, explained the process through which the misogynist projects his own sins onto women, and decried the opportunism of a writer who manipulates the woman question for his own gain (Jones 46). Likewise, perhaps Fyge is not so much missing as refusing Gould's joke. Countering a religious jest with a solemn, logical, religious critique is an effective way to expose the inappropriateness of such a jest. Gould and other male satirists counted on each other to play along with the conventional rhetoric of the debate, answering

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betray him" (l.55).

jests with counter-jests. But Fyge not only refuses to play along with Gould on this point, she makes his joke seem disgraceful and illogical.

Several times Fyge takes up a similar strategy of critiquing the logic of Gould's reasoning and method. She attacks his rhetorical habit of arguing by supposition (Love Given O're is dotted with "if" statements followed by lengthy descriptions), pointing out that "if by supposition I may go, / Then I'll suppose all Men are wicked too, / Since I am sure there are so many so" (11). She points out that if woman were truly as mischievous as Gould claims, there would be no need for him to declare such an obvious fact: "all the World might see / With each approaching Morn a Prodigy" (4). In the preface, she mocks his "rational" abilities, describing his suggestion that men are superior to women as the most preposterous argument "of any that ever was maintain'd by any rational Man" (A3). The implication is cutting: Gould is not just an antifeminist; he is an *irrational* antifeminist.

While Fyge is not afraid to question the logic of Gould's arguments, in certain places she is willing to play along with his images--however illogical--working within them to come up with ingenious refutations. For instance, in one of Gould's more clever images he claims that Woman is responsible for the "Throngs" in hell. He accuses her of propagating so much sin that without females, Lucifer's "Regions had been thin" (2). Gould's ever-courteous speaker even offers a witty warning to Lucifer to beware of female hoards, "For shou'd they once get power to rebel, / They'd surely raise a Civil-War in Hell" (2). Fyge, however, counters on a more personal note. First, she wonders if, given Gould's detailed descriptions of hell, perhaps he has some experience there, possibly even courtesy of visits to his mistress Bewley, the poxed actress he condemned there in Love Given O're. Then she wonders if Gould only *hopes* the "Abyss below" is full of females so that "there may be / No room for

Souls as big with Vice as thee [Gould]" (9). Regardless, Fyge assumes that no matter how full hell might be, a place will be ensured for the poet by the sheer weight of his sin, which surely "Would crush the Damn'd,...so thou'dst enter in" (9). But no, Fyge continues the thought even further, if Gould *had* tried to drop into to hell for a romantic visit, hell's minions would never have let him escape. Or then again, may be they would. His "red-hot entrance might encrease the flame" (12) to unbearable heights and the fiends would be glad to see him go. Or, perhaps the devils' pride might make them

> loth to let you stay,
> For fear that you might their black deeds excel
> Usurp their Seat, and be the Prince of Hell. (12)

However, such ambition is unlikely, Fyge reminds herself. Gould is too obsessed with womankind to ever think about usurping the Prince's job.

Fyge does an ingenious job of teasing out the witty and absurd possibilities of turning Gould's own hell image back against him. But she does not restrict this reversal strategy to images alone. At times she also works within Gould's own terms on a more literal level, using Gould's own language against him. Key words, phrases, and whole lines from Love Given O're reappear in The Female Advocate with subtle modifications that completely alter the meaning. For example, near the beginning of Love Given O're, the speaker begins a rant by cursing, "Woman! by Heav'ns the very Name's a Crime, / Enough to blast, and to debauch my Rhime" (3). In The Female Advocate, Fyge echoes the first line, altering only a couple of letters, but completely changing the meaning: "Woman! by Heaven, the very Name's a Charm, / And will my verse against all Criticks arm" (3). Such careful echoing of Gould's own words with an ironic twist--a set exercise of satiric

repartee[22]--reveals Fyge's ingenious ability to reverse the attacker's own words in refutatio.

This brilliant reversal marks the starting point of some of Fyge's most provocative rejoinders and counter-arguments. She holds up her protective "Charm" of "Woman!" against Gould's invocation to the Muse to help him damn the sex, in the process observing that the Muse "doth inspire / Heroick Poets" (3) only, and Gould--despite his borrowing an epic poetry convention--is no heroic poet; rather, inspiration for his nasty verses comes not from Apollo above but from Pluto and Incubus below. She finds the very prospect of a man cursing a bad woman a ridiculous instance of the pot calling the kettle black: "I would here as well / The black infernal Devils Curse their Hell" (4). Again and again she turns his own arguments back against him. Gould had argued for male excellence; Fyge replies that men excel only in lust. He accuses women of inconstancy; she adduces exempla of "vertuous Dames / Which chose cold death before their Lovers flames" (5), and then makes the bold claim that women are actually superior to men in this regard: "In Constancy they [women] often Men excel, / That steady Vertue in their Souls do dwell" (5); "In faithful Love our Sex do them out-shine, / And is more constant than the Masculine" (6). She backs up her surprising argument for female superiority with more exempla, including the obscure story of the German women of besieged Wensburg who persuaded their captors to allow them to flee the

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[22] This kind of echoing reply using the attacker's own words with subtle but significant changes is a set exercise of satiric responses. There is a precedent in women's satire in Lady Mary Wroth's "Railing Rimes Returned upon the Author," a response to Lord Denny's attack "To Pamphilia from the father-in-law of Seralius," regarding Lady Wroth's scandalous allegorical depiction of his family in her Countesse of Montgomeries Urania (1621). See the introduction to The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth, ed. Josephine A. Roberts, (Baton Rouge: LSU P, 1983), 32-35. Lady Wroth's reply matches Lord Denny's charges line by line, maintaining all the rhyming words.

city with "no bigger Packs / Than each of them could carry on their Backs" (6).

> The wond'ring world expected they'd have gone
> Laded with Treasures from their Native home;
> But crossing expectation, each did take
> Her Husband, as her burden, on her back;
> So sav'd him from intended Death, and she
> At once gave him both Life and Liberty. (6)

This striking image of women toting terrified men (women's "burden") on their backs captures wonderfully Fyge's outrageous counter-argument that morally superior women spend their lives "carrying" morally inferior men.

This extraordinary suggestion is a clever rhetorical ploy on Fyge's part. Instead of just denying the old argument that woman are inferior to men, she turns it around and argues the opposite.[23] However, she is careful to make her argument more logically sound than Gould's. Echoing the reformist position of François Poulain de la Barre, she argues that God created man and woman equal ("for both one Maker had, / Which made all good" [Fyge 2]); their differences in moral behavior (constancy, lust, etc.) are the result of nurture, not nature. Therefore, Fyge can quite logically argue women are superior to men, since men are guiltier of neglecting their innate potential for piety and goodness. (This was for women a curious benefit of the otherwise restricting sexual double standard. Men could get away with impious behaviour, but the price was an admission of moral inferiority.)

Fyge's arguments here may be more than just clever manoeuvring within Gould's own rhetoric. In a surprise move, she

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[23] There are precendents for this argument in the formal controversy. Agrippa, for example, argues for the superiority of women in every area except the equality of divine substance. See also Edward Fleetwood's The Colony of Women: Or, A Treatise Declaring the Excellency and Preheminence of Women Above Men (1651).

goes on to criticize her own sex too, in a brief moment of apparently serious rational reformism that stretches the boundary of the rhetorical debate. She cautions her sex against endangering this moral superiority by succumbing to woman's nemesis, "Cupid, that childish God, that trifling Toy" (7). The little blind boy is woman's particular enemy since she is "bred up in Venus-School" (7) to believe her destiny lies with his darts. Fyge critiques the custom by which woman is raised "a kind of ill-bred Fool" to believe in, and depend upon, the myths of romantic love. She encourages members of her sex to forgo foolish Cupid in favour of the pursuit of justice and wisdom. If only for a moment, Fyge leaves the rhetorical conventions of the genre behind and broaches genuine social reform, something we will see more of in later women's contributions to the satiric debate.

Fyge's refutations are the wittiest parts of The Female Advocate. She is at her satiric best responding to Gould's attacks with clever counter-arguments and rhetorical strategies from the defence tradition to make Gould's own material backfire. In the final section of the poem, however, Fyge shifts from answering Gould's points to presenting her own satiric assault on the male sex. But while satiric attacks on, and defences of, women are one thing, satiric attacks on men are quite another. Rhetorical strategies abound for the prospective antifeminist satirist, but there were few precedents for satire on men as a sex. In the first two-thirds of The Female Advocate Fyge proves she can trade blows with Gould, but in the final third she is on her own. While counter-punching is her forte, she finds it much harder to launch an offensive with no weapons ready at hand and few obvious battle strategies at her disposal. She has to invent it as she goes along. Not surprisingly, Fyge's wit is not as consistently successful in this final third of the poem; at times she relies perhaps too much on mere reversals of antifeminist

charges. Yet some of her efforts at antimasculinist satire are strikingly original and effective.

Fyge indicts men for an array of vices: impiety, lust, inconstancy--a familiar string of charges, ones found in most antifeminist satires. This strategy of accusing men of the same faults they bring to bear on women was a standard rhetorical ploy (known as tu quoque or "you too," it is reminiscent of the schoolyard "I-know-you-are-but-what-am-I?" rejoinder)[24] and an obvious place to start. In places, she injects some freshness into this old tactic with her characteristic witty reversals. Describing men's lust, she connects "these inhumane Beasts that do not die" with "Bewley's Pox [which] turns Leprosie, / And Men do catch it by meer phantasie" (19). In Love Given O're, Gould revels in graphic descriptions of the actress's putrid sores, ulcers, and pox; Fyge sarcastically suggests that perhaps Gould's and other men's obsession with Bewley and her ilk is responsible for their own "Plague" (venereal disease) which men insist must have been contracted via "infected breath" (19)--a perfect Gouldian image. Fyge mimics Gould's imagery and retrieves his old nemesis Bewley in the service of reversing that readymade charge of the antifeminist satiric arsenal, lust.

Not all the vices Fyge levies against men are borrowed from the antifeminist tradition, however. Ambition and pride, her first and most intriguing charges against the male sex, may be common targets of satire in general, but not in the ways she employs them. While the other vices are pinched from the antifeminist tradition and theoretically could apply to either sex equally (lust, impiety, inconstancy, etc.), these two--ambition and pride--have specific resonances for the male sex that they do not hold for women, owing to the inherent gender-bias of certain English social systems. Fyge points to

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[24] Jane Anger uses a similar strategy of "if I'm one, you're another" in the refutatio of Jane Anger, her Protection for Women (1589) (Woodbridge 64).

inheritance power struggles between heirs and usurpers, jealousy among brothers, bloody coups and revenge plots--all predominantly male predicaments, given the system of primogeniture. She even offers a few exempla of these peculiarly male vices, such as the case of Brutus and Caesar. Evil Brutus

> tho' he ought to have been Caesar's friend,
> By being declar'd his Heir, yet it was he
> Was the first actor in his tragedy. (22)

Presenting counter-exempla of bad men in history was a received rhetorical strategy of the formal controversy.[25] But Fyge does more than just reverse the charges of pride and ambition that have just as often been applied to women. Her counter-charges hint at a reformist social critique. Ambition and greed are faults that men are more prone to exhibit, she argues, not because of masculine *nature* so much as masculine *nurture*--the social customs by which men are raised to value glory and power at any cost. Fyge does not elaborate on the implications of her provocative critique (as later reformists such as Mary Astell did) but she at least introduces these ideas into the debate.

Fyge breathes life into these old standby charges of the satiric tradition by focusing on male gender-specific applications of these vices. The result is original satire targeted specifically at the male sex. However, some of Fyge's charges are not nearly as inventive. At times she seems all too aware that she is falling back on old antifeminist reversals. Several times she abandons her lists of men's vices, claiming it is "too great a Task for me alone" (18), or "A thousand instances there might be brought" (22), or "should I strive their falshood to relate,/ I should have but Sisyphus's fate" (21). While these false starts are themselves a kind of rhetorical ploy, the number

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[25] This strategy can be seen in both men's and women's responses in defence of the sex. See Of Women cometh this Worldes Weal (ca. 1585), described in Utley 169 and also Jane Anger Her Protection for Women (1589).

of exempla she actually offers is tiny. These statements may actually mean: lists are nothing new, but I don't know how to make any of this sound original; let me try another strategy. That Fyge comes up against this roadblock three times in four pages suggests that with the exception of a few clever manoeuvres, she is just not sure how to go about writing an original satire against the male sex.

Unsure of what to try next, Fyge chooses simply to end her attack mid-swing, claiming, of all things, concerns about brevity:

> But I designed to be short, so must
> Be sure to keep confin'd to what I first
> Resolved on . . . . (22)

This excuse for halting her attack sounds ironic now; Fyge's sprawling satire is anything but "short" and "confin'd." Her explanation is merely a conventional escape mechanism. The short conclusion that follows, however, is curiously unconventional for satire. While Gould opens his satire with a calm exordium and ends with an angry curse and a warning, Fyge counters with an irate opening and a serene ending: an assurance to women and men that when judgement day comes, justice will prevail. She tells men that on that day

> thou must lie in vast eternity,
> With prospect of thy endless misery,
> When Woman, your imagin'd Fiend, shall live
> Bless'd with the Joys that Heaven can always give.
> (24)

This is the woman satirist's answer to the male satirist's imagined utopia of a womanless land. In the end, women will be rewarded for their suffering and male satirists of women will get the "endless misery" they deserve. Fyge's conclusion, like much of The Female Advocate, turns the tables of convention on Gould: in opposition to the conventional satiric vision of a male

utopia, she offers her own vision of a female utopia built not on airy fantasy but on the firm ground of theological doctrine.

In her study of Restoration satires against women Felicity Nussbaum calls The Female Advocate "a prototype of defenses of the sex" (31). As we have seen, this is not exactly true. Defences of women (mostly by men, but a few by women) had been a popular genre for 150 years before Fyge put pen to paper, and in fact, rather than inventing the genre, she demonstrates her familiarity with its tradition by borrowing and adapting numerous rhetorical strategies from earlier defences of women. She displays not just an awareness of the genre but considerable skill in it. The Female Advocate signals that a woman writer--even a very young woman writer--**could** play the game of the late seventeenth-century satiric debate about women.

But while The Female Advocate is not a "prototype" of the satiric defence of women, it does nevertheless introduce features that are significant late seventeenth-century innovations in the genre. Foremost is Fyge's reliance on logical critique. Of course logic was not a Restoration invention, nor was it a new strategy in the satiric debate. However, the degree of emphasis on logic in Fyge's poem is striking. Whereas previously logic had been just another rhetorical technique of the debate about women, in the late seventeenth century it begins to become a means to an end higher than mere debate: a questioning of the actual issues of the debate which previously were treated as incidental, merely pretexts for a rhetorical exercise. Fyge's use of logic is linked to another innovation, her reformism. Her rational critiques reflect the late-century turn toward beginning to examine "custom," and in particular, the differences between the way men and women are educated.

In turn, the introduction of reformism touches on the third major change in the satiric debate about women: the introduction of a new level of constructed sincerity. Instead of being *just* a

literary game for witty writers, the satiric debate *also* becomes a forum for discussing real social issues--the differences between men and women and the causes of these differences, especially the debate about nature versus nurture. Wit and rhetorical display remain crucial to the genre; however, the satiric debate about women begins to become more than just a game.

Finally, if any part of The Female Advocate is prototypical, it is the counter-attacking satire on the male sex in the final third of Fyge's poem. The introduction of anti-masculinist satire is a major addition to the satiric debate about women, one that later Augustan women satirists would push further and further.

ii) "A Satyr upon your Sex": The Sprint Controversy

The subtle reformist impulse of Sarah Fyge's reply to Robert Gould suggests that The Female Advocate was more than just a skilful exercise in the established genre of the satiric debate about women. To some degree, Fyge's poem is also an instance of what Moira Ferguson calls "feminist polemic" (27). By the term "polemic" (from "pertaining to war" [OED]), Ferguson means controversial writing that presents an argument on, and often a refutation of, or an attack upon, a specified doctrine. The term "feminist" she uses in a general sense to mean showing "an awareness about women as a group" (10). A "feminist polemicist," then, according to Ferguson, is one who "writes to urge or to defend a pro-woman point of view" (27). She includes Fyge's poem as part of an unofficial "tradition" of women's polemical writing that begins with Christine de Pisan, extends through Margaret Tyler and Jane Anger in the late sixteenth century, Bathsua Makin and Mary Astell in the seventeenth century, and Mary Hays and Mary Wollstonecraft in the eighteenth century. In fact, Ferguson refers to The Female Advocate as "the only major [feminist] polemic of the 1680s" (14).

Ferguson's generic view of The Female Advocate differs from mine: she is interested in the argument of the poem within this polemical tradition, while I argue that Fyge's argument should be read within a very different context. "Polemic" I take to refer to a straight argument intended to have an effect on the real world: an attempt to change actual social conditions. The satiric debate, however, I see as an at least partly rhetorical genre: an attempt to show off rhetorical skill and display wit within set rules. While I do see elements of "feminist polemic" in Fyge's poem, I see The Female Advocate first and foremost as a careful rhetorical exercise in the satiric debate. The second late seventeenth-century satiric debate controversy I consider, however, *is* more closely linked to this tradition of women's polemical writing. The minor controversy that sprang up around

nonconformist minister John Sprint's wedding sermon, The Bride Womans Counseller (1699), around the turn of the century, features women's contributions to the satiric debate that maintain many conventions of the hybrid genre but also begin to blend into this tradition of women's polemical writing.

Sprint's sermon prompted two replies by women. The first answer, The Female Preacher (ca. 1699),[26] later reprinted as The Female Advocate: A Plea for the just Liberty of the Tender Sex, and particularly Married Women (1700), is attributed to "'Eugenia'," a "Lady of Quality," yet to be identified. The second, better-known response, The Ladies Defence (1701), although first published anonymously, is the work of Mary, Lady Chudleigh, poet and essayist.[27] After The Ladies Defence, Chudleigh published Poems on Several Occasions (1703), and Essays upon Several Subjects (1710). She began writing possibly as early as 1677, but it was not until after she became peripherally associated with John Dryden and his literary circle in the late 1690s that she ventured into public print. Little is known of her private life, although attempts have been made to read her poems autobiographically. For instance, since some of her works portray brutish husbands, critics sometimes assume that her marriage was unhappy. However, there is no other evidence to support this claim (Poems xxii-xxv; Perry Celebrated 5.) Her family's original home was at Wynford Eagle in Dorset, not far from Sherborne where Sprint's sermon was preached, so it is possible they or their families may have been acquainted. In "The Preface to the Reader," Chudleigh explains that the sermon was "presented to me by its Author" (11), suggesting some personal contact between the two. The unidentified "'Eugenia'"

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[26] The Female Preacher is undated, but Margaret Ezell suggests it was published in 1699 (Introduction xxix).

[27] Her proper title is Mary, Lady Chudleigh. However, I refer to her as simply Chudleigh.

may have been an acquaintance of Chudleigh, whose poem "To "Eugenia"" praises her "ingenious pen."

These satiric replies to Sprint, like Fyge's poem, demonstrate a remarkable combination of satiric wit and rational critique in their dismantling of conventional antifeminist and male-supremacist arguments. The Ladies Defence, in particular, is a witty, sophisticated, and artful contribution to the satiric defence of women tradition. Chudleigh builds on several of the strategies of late seventeenth-century women's satire employed by Fyge, and combines them in a refined, dramatic format that signals a subtle shift from the feisty repartee of late seventeenth-century satire to a more restrained but also more polemical, reformist, formal, Queen Anne-style, polite wit.

To fully appreciate the satire of The Female Preacher and The Ladies Defence it helps to know the gist of the "attack" that prompted these replies. The Bride-Womans Counseller is a marriage sermon, the eighteenth of the many types of homilies from which all parsons were ordered by the Crown to read in church every Sunday from 1652 onwards (Stone 198). Sprint's sermon is offered, as the title suggests, as a brief (16-page) "counsel" for wives explaining "the Duty of married Women to their Husbands" (3). The minister presents a religious lesson complete with scripture text ("But she that is Married, careth for the things of the World, how she may please her Husband," I Corinthians 7:34), explication, and even responses to anticipated "Female objections" (3) to his method and interpretation. The thesis of Sprint's sermon is that wives owe their husbands absolute obedience and subservience. Women are by their very nature inferior to men, and a wife's sole reason for existing is to serve her husband: "*A good Wife...should be like a Mirrour which hath no Image of its own, but receives its Stamp and Image from the Face that looks into it*" (7). The justification for this decidedly unequal arrangement is, according to Sprint, found in the biblical creation story where in Genesis 3.16, following

the Fall, God decreed to Eve that "thy desire shall be to thy Husband, and He shall rule over thee" (7).

Sprint's sermon is representative of a conservative strain of seventeenth-century social theory that Margaret Ezell terms "domestic patriarchalism" (16). Founded on the belief that the authority of patriarchs (that is, kings, fathers, and husbands) is sanctioned by scriptural authority and the natural laws of hierarchy, patriarchalism posited the absolute, arbitrary authority of patriarchs over subjects (citizens, children, and wives). The best known articulation of this theory of social obligation is Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha: A Defence of the National Power of Kings against the Unnatural Liberty of the People (written between 1635 and 1642, though not published until 1680), the notorious target of Locke's critique in his first Treatise of Government (1690). Using the Bible, especially St. Paul, as his source of authority, Filmer argues that Adam was the origin of human society and all other beings were subordinated to him; therefore, through male succession of power, "not only Adam, but the suceeding Patriarchs had, by right of fatherhood, royal authority over their children" (57).

Filmer's theory of patriarchalism was primarily political; as the subtitle of his treatise suggests, he was concerned with the relationship between a king and his people. However, the patriarchalist model was often applied by others to domestic situations. Wifely submission was thought to be subsumed in general obedience to Adam; since Adam was also lord and sovereign of his wife, Eve, she owed him the same kind of obedience as did their children. Such patriarchalist views of wifely obligations surface in assorted conduct books and sociological treatises of the second half of the seventeenth century, and were even written into the law of treason. Richard Brathwait remarks of the ideal wife in the English Gentlewoman (1652), "Her Husband shee acknowledgeth her head; whom to oppose were to mutinie against

her Leader" (398). The Gentlewomans Companion of 1673[28] explains that "there are two Essentials in Marriage, Superiority and Inferiority. Undoubtedly the Husband hath power over the Wife, and the Wife ought to be subject to the Husband in all thing [sic]" (104). Dr. W. Nicholls' Duties of Inferior toward their Superiors (ca. 1700) includes chapters on the duty of subjects to princes, children to parents, and wives to husbands (Blanchard 344). Richard Allestree's The Ladies Calling counsels wives to practice a "patient Submission" to their husbands (qtd. in Blanchard 343). Perhaps the most famous literary application of seventeenth-century patriarchalism is Milton's interpretation of Eve's inferiority in Paradise Lost.[29]

But while patriarchalism was one theory of domestic governance in circulation in the seventeenth century, it was by no means the unquestioned model of family organization, especially by the 1690s. As Margaret Ezell has shown, domestic patriarchalism was often critiqued by both men and women writers throughout the seventeenth century.[30] In fact, according to Lawrence Stone, patriarchalism in husband-wife relations was on the decline after the early seventeenth century.[31] Perhaps the

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[28] This work is often incorrectly attributed to Hannah Wolley. For a discussion of the authorship of this much-quoted manual see Elaine Hobby's "A woman's best setting out is silence: the writings of Hannah Wolley," in Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration: Literature, Drama, History, ed. Gerald MacLean, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 179-200.

[29] Like Filmer, Milton follows I Corinthians 11.3: "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man." See Paradise Lost, Book IV, where Adam and Eve are described as "Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed" (l.296). Adam was created "for God only, she for God in him" (l.299).

[30] See chapter one, "Domestic Patriarchalism: The Defining Characteristics" in The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1987).

[31] By the late seventeenth century the "companionate marriage" (a more equal partnership between spouses, founded more on friendship and love) was gradually emerging as the trend that would flourish in the eighteenth century. See Stone, chapters five and eight.

strongest indicator of how far patriarchalism had fallen in favour is the popularity of Locke's critique of Filmerism, which is so mocking in tone as to suggest that such a theory could not possibly be taken seriously by any rational person. If anything, the brand of domestic patriarchalism represented by Sprint's sermon was probably not so much a reflection of received contemporary opinion as a backlash against it. If such patriarchalism was widely accepted, the parson would have had no need to assert it quite so vigorously.[32]

Sprint's sermon, in fact, is a throwback to earlier patriarchalist rhetoric such as the sixteenth-century sermon on the text of St. Paul's decree that "the wives be in subjection to obey your husbands...for the husband is the head of the woman, as Christ is the head of the Church." Male supremacy is a given, since, as one clergyman put it,

> the woman is a weak creature not endued with like strength and constancy of mind; therefore they be the sooner disquieted, and they be the more prone to all weak affections and dispositions of mind, more than men be; and lighter they be, and more vain in their fantasies and opinions. (Certain Sermons or Homilies 446)

Sprint similarly claims women "are of weaker Capacities to learn than Men"; they require much time and assistance to learn the basics of obedience and submission. "'[T]is very rare to find Women that learn so fast to Submit and obey, which as wives they ought to do: Women have a need of *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, here a Little and there a Little*" (4).

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[32] This reasoning follows Nussbaum's suggestion that the ferocity of Restoration satires against women actually reflects men's insecurity about women's changing (and expanding) social roles, rather than general antifeminist sentiment (20). Melinda Alliker Rabb makes a similar argument about Filmer's treatise, suggesting "its vehemence is more likely an indicator of actual uncertainty about hierarchical stability" (131).

But Sprint's tone is not just condescending; it is also mean. In the preface he refers to "ill-natur'd Females," "waspish Accusers," and "imperious Wives." When explaining womens' duties he adds insult to inferiority by advocating excessively literal manifestations of the marriage hierarchy as he sees it. For instance, he favours the alleged archaic Persian custom by which "Ladies have a resemblance of a Foot worn on the top of their Coronets, in token that the height of their Glory, Top-Knot and all, does stoop to their Husbands Feet" (11). And since women should be rightly stooping at the their husbands' feet, he argues (as did the Puritan moral theologian William Gouge 77 years earlier)[33] that they have no business calling their husbands by their Christian names. Rather, wives should address their masters in a manner befitting an inferior addressing a superior--with titles such as "Lord and Master" (13).

Sprint claims that he wrote The Bride-Womans Counseller for the benefit of wives--presumably to help them understand their duties in his patriarchalist vision of marital relations. But in addition to expounding his own brand of domestic Filmerism, he may have had an ulterior motive. In the late seventeenth century, the avowed intent of men who write about women usually only tells part of the story.[34] Sprint's sermon is ostensibly for wives, but to some extent he may also have been writing *about* women *for other men*, in the tradition of rhetorical display via writing about the female sex. In his preface he insists that his "Discourse" was "designed only for the Pulpit, not for the Press," but that the "Doctrine therein contained is so unhappily

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[33] Of Domesticall Duties (1622). Stone, however, does suggest that this was still a widely debated issue by 1700 (139).

[34] In her Essay in Defence of the Female Sex (1696), Judith Drake accuses William Walsh, author of A Dialogue Concerning Women, Being a Defence of the Sex. Written to "Eugenia" (1691), of writing disingenuously in defence of women. She claims he seeks "only to shew his own good Breeding and Parts" (4). She chastizes him for taking more care to "give an edge to his Satyr, than force to his Apology" (4).

represented to the World by some ill-natur'd Females," that he felt "necessitated to offer it to Publick View." Perhaps the minister doth protest too much. There exists a long tradition of ecclesiastical satire against women, from John Knox back to St. Jerome. The marriage sermon or matrimonial treatise in particular is a set genre with strong connections to both the antifeminist satiric tradition[35] and the formal controversy. (Renaissance precedents include Robert Crowley's Of Nice Wyues and The Woman's lesson (ca. 1540), scripture-quoting, Juvenalian satires on women. In the specific genre of counsel to wives, Edmund Tilney's brief and pleasant discourse of duties in Marriage, called the Flower of Friendship (1567-68) is an instance of a satiric courtly discussion of the duties of a good wife and a good husband.)

In addition to being a conventional (though extremely conservative) wedding sermon, The Bride-Womans Counseller also draws on the rhetorical traditions of religious and secular antifeminist satire. Sprint hauls out standby biblical arguments: Eve gets the obligatory mention as the original cause of women's inferiority (6-7); he rants against scolds, a stock seventeenth-century stereotype ("the impetuous, clamorous and turbulent Wife, that at every word spits Passion and Poison,. . . a Torment and Vexation to her self, and pernicious Plague to her Husband" [9]). He even draws on the old false-advertising warning that demure, obedient women are "no sooner married, but they grow remiss and careless in their Endeavours to please their Husbands, as before they were zealous in arting [sic] their Charms" (11). This use of antifeminist satiric rhetoric suggests that Sprint is at least partially aligning his sermon with the querelle tradition. Perhaps Chudleigh is not far off when she wonders in her preface to The Ladies Defence if the minister's

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[35] Marriage satire, in particular warning young men to beware marriage, goes back to Juvenal and was a common topic of ecclesiastical satire. See Utley and Rogers.

motive was not to instruct wives so much as "to let us see his Wit" (11).[36] This is not to suggest that Sprint is insincere; he may well have been as zealous a male-supremacist as his sermon suggests, but his brief 'counsel' allows him to do two of the things Augustan male writers seemed to love to do: write about women and show off their rhetorical talents.

Given the male-supremacist sentiments of Sprint's sermon it is little wonder that some women felt compelled to respond in print. Elizabeth Thomas's later poem "To the Lady Chudleigh, The Anonymous Author of the Lady's Defence"--published in 1722 and not itself a reply to Sprint so much as praise for Chudleigh's response--dramatizes one fictional woman's reaction to the sermon: the speaker explains that she was intrigued by the title page's promise to "expand the Sacred Law; / Inform our Minds, mysterious Precepts clear, / And by good Rules our future Conduct steer" (Miscellany Poems 145). However, she was disappointed to find only "Malignant Humour" and a lack of "Charity and Sense" merely "varnish'd over with dull Pretence" (146). She was left "with just Disdain and Anger fir'd," and with mock-chivalrous tongue in cheek, she calls her female comrades to arms: "Rise! Rise ye Heroins, secure the Field, / Truth be your Guide, and Innocence your Shield" (146). In similar language both "Eugenia" and Chudleigh remark upon how they were driven to take up their pens in defence of their sex when they realized that no brave knights were willing to step forward and defend women's honour. (Indeed, as Chudleigh explains, "some Men were so far from finding fault with his [Sprint's] Sermon, that they rather defended it, and express'd an ill-natur'd sort of Joy to see you [ladies] ridicul'd" [Chudleigh 3]. Some men, "Eugenia" observes, were "so charm'd with it [the sermon] that they thought it worth

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[36] Chudleigh's remark recalls the speaker's description of an ostentatious clergyman in Rochester's "Satyr Against Reason and Mankind" (ll.48-57).

their while to teize every poor Woman they met with it" [Female Preacher 2].)

The first response, The Female Preacher (1699), is an angry, line-by-line prose rebuttal to The Bride-Womans Counseller, heavy on biting sarcasm and invective. The aggressive tone of the reply is evident in the subtitle: Being an Answer to a late Rude and Scandalous Wedding-Sermon, Preached by Mr. John Sprint, May the 11th, at Sherbourn, in Dorsetshire; Wherein that *Levite* is Expos'd as he deserves. The sub-subtitle reads: *Reflections on a late Rude and Disingenuous Discourse.* Like Elizabeth Thomas, the author presents herself and her "Answer" within the context of chivalric battle imagery: Sprint's sermon sparked her to "some Design of taking Arms" into "Battel" against "the Enemy" in order to defend her sex's honour (3). Although this kind of combat imagery is conventional, in this case it is especially appropriate to the feisty, brawling style of the female preacher. She presents herself as a scrappy female underdog entering into "single Combat with this great Goliah" (2). Such sarcastic descriptions of the reverend Mr. Sprint are a favourite satiric technique of the female preacher: she mockingly refers to the minister as "so celebrated an Author" and "this Man of Mighty Fame" (2). She sarcastically explains that she "began to tremble" when she came within sight of the enemy, "so great and honourable a Champion" (2). Elsewhere, the female preacher resorts to simple name-calling--"Levite," "Insolent Man" (6), "obliging Spark" (11), and "Buffoon" (23)--and insults: she calls his sermon a printed "Harangue" (5) that deserves to end up "at the bottom of minc'd Pies" (3). She even bad-mouths his genre, clumping wedding-sermons together with common "Mountebank Bills" and "Ballads" (3).

But the charm of The Female Preacher and its effectiveness as a response lies in its biting sarcasm combined with a reformist critique. The author sprinkles paraphrases of Sprint's sermon with sarcastic comments: when summarizing Sprint's

patronizing definitions of the simplest terms (presumably so that simple-minded females will comprehend), she adds mocking parenthetical asides--"(take notice Ladies)" (5). And after paraphrasing one of Sprint's more Draconian proposals for wifely protocol, the author tauntingly addresses the minister, "Dear, Tender, Charming Sir!" (14).

"Eugenia"'s sarcasm enlivens her painstaking rebuttal. She runs through Sprint's arguments in The Bride-Womans Counseller, carefully picking apart his logic and poking holes in his rhetoric. For instance, in reference to Sprint's story of the Persian ladies with model feet on their heads, the female preacher responds:

> Now this you know is a most clear and *Oriental* Argument, and proves just as much as the strongest *Hieroglyphicks* of *Egypt*. Is it impos'd upon them, or do they wear it willingly? If the former, where's the Virtue? If the latter, I can hardly think it proves what he would persuade us, unless the Gentlemen of *Persia* are very obliging indeed. Here again we see very clearly what this Gentleman would be at: A Woman, when once she is enter'd within the Grates, and the Parson has turn'd the Key upon her, is no longer to look on her self as a Companion, but the highest place she can expect is to be troden [sic] under foot. (17)

This sharp critique displays the author's keen eye for rational rejoinders and cutting wit. (The image of the Parson locking a woman up behind "Grates" is especially good since it suggests a convent--an affront to his Protestantism.) She touches on the key issue of consent--whether such Oriental customs are products of nature or social conditioning--and serves up a personal counter-attack on "the Parson" for being a shameless male-supremacist.

Here and elsewhere in The Female Preacher, "Eugenia"'s rational reformism shows the influence of Mary Astell's polemical

writings. Astell's Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part I (1694) was a widely read and influential work (it went through five editions by 1701) that examined the detrimental effects of "Tyrant Custom" on woman and proposed a method of remedying such influences. Like François Poulain de la Barre, she argues that women are not by nature inferior to men; any "Incapacity" in women "is acquired not natural" (23), the result of poor education. According to Astell, women are "from their very Infancy debarred those Advantages, with the want of which they are afterwards reproached, and nursed up in those Vices which will hereafter be upbraided in them" (26). With characteristic wit she suggests that "instead of inquiring why all Women are not wise and good, we have reason to wonder that there are any so" (20). She concludes that education is the key to improving women's conditions, and she proposes a kind of "Religious Retirement" (61) where "Ladies of Quality" might escape the dangers of customary women's education (dancing, singing, and sewing) and instead endeavour to "magnify God" (71) and adorn their minds with "useful Knowledge" (71).

"Eugenia" demonstrates familiarity with, and support for, Astell's proposal, especially her emphasis on the importance of women's education. For instance, "Eugenia" explains:

> In a word, Ladies, I would recommend to your Thoughts something that is great and noble, viz. to furnish your Minds with true Knowledg [sic], that (as an Ingenious Lady tells us) you may know something more than a well-chosen Petticoat, or a fashionable Commode. Learning becomes us as well as the Men. (qtd. in Perry Celebrated 492)

The "Ingenious Lady" is certainly Astell, and "Eugenia" shows a reformist tendency similar to that espoused in Astell's Serious

Proposal, Parts I and II and Some Reflections Upon Marriage (1700).[37]

But while "Eugenia"'s wit, critical faculties, and reformism are impressive, and the response is an effective rebuttal, rhetorically speaking, The Female Preacher is limited by its structure. It is, at times, frustratingly one-dimensional; although the refutations are clever and insightful, the entire reply consists of sarcastic refutatio. After a while the meticulous line by line treatment becomes tedious (she takes five pages to rebut Sprint's one-page preface) and, but for its brilliant flashes of sarcasm, the reply threatens to become almost as monotonous as the sermon that prompted it.

Chudleigh's satiric response to Sprint's sermon opts for a different strategy. In her preface to The Ladies Defence, Chudleigh distances herself from the method of The Female Preacher when she explains that in considering various formats for her reply, she concluded, "Should I give a particular Answer to each Paragraph [of Sprint's sermon], I should not only tire the Reader's Patience, but my own" (13). (This remark seems to be an indirect—not to mention accurate--critique of the female preacher's method of line-by-line refutation.) Chudleigh, in contrast, chooses to write what she calls a "defence" of "the ladies", rather than a straight rebuttal.[38] (She may have been familiar with, and influenced by, a contemporary "defence" almost certainly written by a woman writer, the anonymously published

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[37] From Some Reflections "Eugenia" borrows Astell's comparison between passive obedience in marriage and in state (Perry "Radical" 492).

[38] Late seventeenth-century instances of "defences" of the female sex, by men and women, abound. See, for example, John Shirley's The Illustrious History of Woman, Or a Compendium of the Many Virtues that Adorn the Female Sex (1686); William Walsh's Dialogue Concerning Women, Being a Defence of the Sex. Written to Eugenia (1691); Nahum Tate's A Present for the Ladies: Being a Historical Vindication of the Female Sex (1692). The prose tracts of Poulain de la Barre and Astell are also part of this tradition.

Essay in Defence of the Female Sex [1696, reprinted 1697 and ca. 1750], probably by the medical practitioner Judith Drake.[39])

Chudleigh replies to Sprint not by adapting the minister's own form--a pedantic, prose monologue--against him, but rather by countering with an opposite strategy: a satiric, verse dialogue. The dialogue format of The Ladies Defence sets the structure of Chudleigh's satiric defence apart from those of Sarah Fyge and "Eugenia." However, dialogue *was* one of the characteristic literary modes of both the formal controversy and satire[40] (in addition to being one of the favourite poetic modes of Chudleigh and other seventeenth-century women writers).[41] Like Fyge, Chudleigh too was familiar with literary convention; The Ladies Defence indicates acquaintance with the formal controversy, as well as "Lucianic models [of satire] and current satire" (Upham 275). But in contrast to most defence-of-women dialogues, which

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[39] The Essay is a long (148 pages plus prefatory remarks), prose contribution to the satiric debate, featuring a curious mixture of straight polemic and witty antimasculinist "character" satire. It has been ascribed to Mary Astell, Jane Barker and even Chudleigh herself, but the work of these three tends to be more Christian and less sharp in tone than the Essay. We know little about Judith Drake other than her profession. In 1723 she was summoned before the Royal College of Physicians by an aggrieved patient. Her brother James was a doctor and Tory pamphleteer. She completed the preface to his anatomical work Anthropologia Nova after his death in 1707. See Blain, Clements, and Grundy 308. For more on the Essay see Tooley.

[40] William Walsh's defence is a dialogue and two early seventeenth-century instances of defence dialogues are William Goddard's A Satyricall Dialogue Or a Sharplye invective conference, betweene Allexander the great, and that truelye woman-hater Diogynes (1616) and Arthur Newman's Pleasures Vision...A Short Dialogue of a Womans Properties, between an Old Man and a Young (1619). As for satires, several of Horace's satires are in the form of dialogues. Perhaps the best known satiric dialogues are Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead.

[41] Chudleigh penned a variety of dialogues, mostly pastorals, elegies, and songs. She did write one other satiric dialogue, "The Inquiry," and a paraphrase of one of Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead. Other seventeenth-century women writers fond of the same form include the Lady Jane and Lady Elizabeth Cavendish and the Duchess of Newcastle, Margaret Cavendish.

feature two voices, one defending women and one attacking,[42] Chudleigh's defence dialogue is closer to the multiple-speaker model in Book III of Castiglione's The Courtier. This presents a prose debate about women in the framework of a courtly conversation between a handful of mostly male detractors and defenders of the female sex (with detractors outnumbering defenders, but with the defenders coming out victorious). Like Castiglione, Chudleigh presents a dialogue between three male detractors and one female defender (she chooses an underdog strategy similar to that of the female preacher). However, the setting is not courtly but rather recalls the Restoration comic stage.

Chudleigh explains in her preface that she did not want to route all of Sprint's male-supremacist rhetoric through the single voice of a Parson for reasons of decorum: it might be considered "indecent" to have "a Reverend divine" (her fictional Parson) utter certain "Expressions" (11). (This tells us what she thinks of Sprint's own sense of decorum). Instead she disperses Sprint's rhetoric through the mouths of three stock male character-types--a condescending Parson, a brutish husband, and a foppish ladies' man--and squares them off against a single female spokeswoman. Chudleigh follows the Rochesterian poetic model (as in the Earl of Mulgrave poems and "A Letter from Artemisia in the Town to Chloe in the Country") of presenting Restoration comedy-like characters in a dramatic context speaking for themselves.[43] This is a favourite technique of Restoration

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[42] See for example Walsh's Dialogue between the woman-hating Misogynes and the woman-loving Philogynes.

[43] Rochester wrote two poems, "A Very Heroical Epistle in Answer to Ephelia" and "An Epistolary Essay from M.G. to O.B. upon Their Mutual Poems," satirizing John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave by depicting him as a speaker who makes himself ridiculous. On the similarities between characters in Rochester's poetry and Restoration comedy, see David Vieth's "Etherege's 'Man of Mode' and Rochester's 'Artemisia to Chloe," Notes and Queries, 203 (1958), 473-74.

and Augustan poetry. So many Augustan poems depend on this kind of "self-exposition," or what Margaret Doody calls "ventriloquism" (53). The author presents his or her enemy as a "pseudo-speaker" or "dummy" who "damns himself and his style simultaneously, as from his own mouth" (45). In The Ladies Defence, this technique allows the male characters to unwittingly satirize themselves.

The first voice in the dialogue is that of Sir John Brute, who, as his name suggests, speaks as a brutish country "gentleman."[44] He is, as the author explains in the preface, an "accomplish'd Husband" with "the Religion of a Wit" (that is, very little) and the "good Humour of a Critick" (11) (that is, not much). The inspiration for this character, Chudleigh explains in the preface to her Essays, is his namesake in Sir John Vanbrugh's play The Provok'd Wife (1697). Vanbrugh's Sir John Brute is a crude, wife-weary, railing husband whose favourite pastimes include drinking, carousing with his male friends (whose company he greatly prefers to women's) and cursing wives and parsons (for they help create wives). Chudleigh's Sir John exhibits similar tendencies. Like Vanbrugh's brute, her Sir John is also a nasty, woman-loathing beast with little regard for parsons. In his opening 14 lines he manages to insult the Parson in a remarkable number of ways, accusing all clergymen of being dull, illiterate, mean, grating, whining, insincere bores. But Sir John's strongest slanders are for women; misogynist rhetoric flows from his oft-open mouth. He favours such time-honoured techniques as name-calling (wives are "Terrours" [1.15], "Plagues," and "Furies" [l. 16]; "noisie Monsters" [1.32]; "the common Nusance of the State" [1.228]) and cursing ("Grant Providence... / They may never from Hoarseness be free. / May on their Tongues as many Blisters grow / As they have Teeth"

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[44] This stock Overburian character of seventeenth-century satire is reminiscent of Judith Drake's "country squire" in An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex (30-32).

[ll.360-63]). Himself a bitter veteran of marriage, Sir John admonishes not only wives but the nuptial state itself, and he idealizes the rustic bachelor life of simple "Rural Cares" (l.25)--drinking, cavorting with like-minded brutes, and romping about the countryside.

To balance off the brutish Sir John, Chudleigh introduces the voice of Sir William Loveall. Again, the name is a clue to character, and Sir William is a foppish lover of all of the fair sex, a pretentious, self-absorbed, sometimes-advocate for women. (This character is a stock type of the satiric debate; for example, Robert Gould's Love Given O're includes a brief interruption by a foppish male advocate of the sex.) This genteel, boastful young bachelor who can't wait to enter the "happy Bondage" (l.47) of marriage serves as the perfect foil to the marriage-loathing Sir John Brute. And not only does Sir William differ from Sir John in his opinion of marriage, he also frowns on the "Spightful Invectives" (l.52) against women of which Sir John is so fond. However, Sir William is more threatening than his role as vain fop-advocate might at first suggest. Although his intent may be to defend the fair sex and the institution of marriage, his conception of both is extremely conservative. He seeks to protect and marry only his ideal woman: a "beauteous" (l.38), "Good" (l.44), uneducated, "lovely She" with "bewitching Eyes" (l.74). His tone towards women is not as harsh as Sir John's, but he does not give women any more credit.

Sir William is not given enough dialogue to counter-balance the voice of Sir John. The fop is a comical, though still dangerous, diversion, while the brute is a "complicated Character" (Preface to Essays 249) designed as "a Representative not only of all ill Husbands, but of all vicious Men in general" (249). Nevertheless, these two voices function as a garnish to the central conflict of the defence: the dispute between the voices of the Parson and Melissa. The Parson's voice, of course,

stands in for John Sprint's, and his rhetoric is condescending, narrow-minded, and male-supremacist. Like his inspiration, the Parson drones on about a wife's "Duty," demanding from all wives absolute obedience, submission, and "a studious Care to please" (l.101) their husbands. Also like Sprint, the Parson betrays no inkling that his instruction might offend. He condescendingly insists that his advice is "kindly meant" (l.63) for woman's own good: "by Zeal inspir'd, /" he explains, "I've told the Women what's of them requir'd" (ll.54-55).

Together these three male voices represent a sampling of stereotypical male attitudes toward women: hostile antifeminism, self-interested gallantry, and radical male-supremacism. However, as characters, the three voices in The Ladies Defence are little more than ciphers, examples of what Doody calls "dummies," through which Chudleigh ironically conveys three brands of conventional rhetoric about women. In contrast to these flat male voices, however, the lone female voice in The Ladies Defence, Melissa's, suggests a more substantial, rounded speaker who espouses three-dimensional rhetoric. Melissa displays sharp wit and an inquisitive and critical mind. The last speaker to join in the dialogue, it is as if she has been sitting back listening to the male voices babble on, all the while noting the holes in their arguments and the openings for witty retorts. When her turn comes, Melissa calmly proceeds to demolish the arguments of the male speakers with reason and sarcasm. Her critical demeanour is apparent from her opening words which, significantly, come in the form of a question to the Parson about his male-supremacist doctrine:

> Must Men command, and we alone obey,
> As if design'd for Arbitrary Sway:
> Born petty Monarchs, and, like Homer's Gods,
> See all subjected to their haughty Nods? (ll.64-67).

Melissa's question penetrates to the crux of the issue: the male-female double standard by which men do what they wish, while

women conform to whims of "haughty" male pseudo-gods. Like Fyge's speaker, Chudleigh's Melissa relies on keen wit combined with logical critique.

Melissa's penchant for reason is a feature shared by her creator. The swain in Elizabeth Thomas's poem about Chudleigh's reply praises her heroine's critical faculties: "Marissa Hail! hail Eloquence divine! / What solid Judgement sparkles in each Line! / What strenuous Proofs in ev'ry Period shine!" (146). Chudleigh was an advocate of the new rationalism proposed by Descartes and adapted to feminist purposes by Poulain de la Barre and Astell, and her writings are sprinkled with references to contemporary theories of science and "right Reason" (Preface to Essays 249). Several of her poems contain images of dancing atoms, an allusion to the recently translated theories of Lucretius;[45] in the preface to her Song of the Three Children Paraphras'd, she refers with approval to the "Cartesian Hypothesis" of a reason-governed (versus authority-governed) universe (171); and in her essay "Of Knowledge" she sets out her belief in an empirical, Cartesian approach to understanding the world around her. She also quotes Locke, and in fact, at times Melissa's sarcastic critique of the Parson's rhetoric is reminiscent of Locke's dissection of Filmer's patriarchalist logic.[46]

Perhaps the greatest influence on the development of Chudleigh's rationalist view was Astell's polemical writings. Chudleigh acknowledges Astell as an inspiration in her poem "To Almystrea" [Chudleigh 66-67]--the title is an anagram of "Mary Astell"--in which she praises her rational reformist philosophy,

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[45] See "The Resolution" (ll.348-80), "The Inquiry" (l.19), and "The Offering" (l.14). Dryden translated parts of Lucretius's De Rerum Natura in 1685.

[46] For instance, Locke's sarcastic examination of Filmer's method, asking if the author has "given any other Proofs of *Adam's Royal Authority*, other than by repeating it, which, among some Men, goes for Argument" (184), recalls Melissa's mocking critique of the

which shows the way to freedom from "Tyrannick Custom" (l.38). In much of her writing, Chudleigh echoes Astell's "celebration of the mind and rejection of the world of merely material manifestation" (Perry Celebrated 107). In The Ladies Defence, especially, she follows Astell's lead and urges women to challenge "Custom" and devote their lives to learning how to reason and think rigorously and independently.

The opening lines of The Ladies Defence reflect Astell's influence not only in rational content but also in style. Ruth Perry stresses the "sarcastic, satiric vein" of much of Astell's polemical writing. Although serious and rational, her writing is often "tart" and "lively" with a "clear-headed, humourous" tone (Celebrated 21; 101). Similarly, Chudleigh's Melissa is constantly asking pointed questions and exposing assumptions and double standards with vigorous sarcasm. For instance, at one point she exposes a double standard by revealing crucial information that the male voices neglect to mention. After Sir John Brute announces his disgust at male "Fools" (l.109) who disgrace the "Manly Roughness of their Sex" (l.112) and willingly relinquish their God-given "Pow'r" (l.110) by doting over a pretty "Female Face" (l.111)--imagine a glance here in Sir William's direction--Melissa promptly steps up to remind Sir John that

> Not thus you talk'd when you Lenera lov'd,
> By softer Passion, sure, your Soul was mov'd,
> Then at her Feet, false Man, you flattering lay,
> And prayd, and vow'd, and sigh'd your Hours away;
> Admir'd her Face, her Shape, her Mien, her Air,
> And swore that none was so divinely fair. (ll.113-18)

Melissa takes advantage of dramatic irony--she knows more than the reader and she reveals that knowledge in order to expose Sir John. It turns out that he is guilty of precisely that which he

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Parson's method (ll.474-80).

finds so disgusting: transforming himself into a gasping, grovelling, love-sick, doting "Fool."

While Melissa shines by deflating Sir John and the others with her piercing wit and logic, her role is not restricted to just responding to what the male characters say. Her independent thinking stands out against the clichéd rhetoric of the male characters. In contrast to the conventional jibes and jests of Sir John, Sir William, and the Parson, Melissa has something original and provocative to say. Mixed in with her witty critique of stereotypical male rhetoric is a more serious analysis of certain social customs involving women: in particular, arranged marriages--in which women are "like Victims to the Altar led, / Born for Destruction, and for Ruine Bred" (ll.161-62)--and the lack of educational opportunities for women--they are "Debarr'd from Knowledge, banish'd from the Schools, / And with the utmost Industry bred Fools" (ll.513-14).

Here is where Astell's influence really shines through. In her published polemical writings, especially A Serious Proposal, Parts I and II (1694, 1697) and Some Reflections on Marriage (1700), she holds up to scrutiny the idea of "custom" as justification for preserving the status quo in relation to these very issues: education and marriage. In The Ladies Defence, Chudleigh uses the voice of Melissa to articulate her version of many of Astell's arguments and thus 'translate' them from one genre (the polemical treatise) into another (the satiric debate about women).

With this serious, rational, reformist side, in addition to her penchant for sarcasm and wit, Melissa's is by far the most complex and enigmatic voice in The Ladies Defence. In effect, she serves as Chudleigh's mouthpiece--the name Melissa recalls her pastoral pen-name "Marissa"--for articulating a calm but cutting critique of the patriarchalist sentiments of Sprint's sermon (as expressed through the Sir John Brute, Sir William Loveall, and the Parson), and for indirectly expounding her

reformist position. But while Melissa is crucial to the satiric strategy in The Ladies Defence, the lone female character is not responsible for all the satire in The Ladies Defence. Much of the humour in Chudleigh's poem comes from Chudleigh's use of male ventriloquism--the way she manipulates the male voices to make themselves and each other appear ridiculous, often with no help at all from Melissa.

Sir John Brute illustrates wonderfully this ironic self-collapsing. For instance, during the Parson's explanation of the difficulties inherent in trying to instruct intellectually unabsorbent women, Sir John spies an opportunity to launch into a complaint against the category of "women" in general. He hauls out his well-worn antifeminist rhetoric and, borrowing a manoeuvre from the likes of Robert Gould, proceeds to curse the sex: "Wou'd they, like Lucifer, were doom'd to Hell, / That we might here without disturbance dwell" (ll.231-32). With women banished to the fiery abyss, Sir John then fantasizes about an all-male utopia in which he and his friends would

> uncontroul'd our Wealth imploy,
> Drink high, and take a full Repast of Joy:
> Damn Care, and bravely roar away our Time,
> And still be busied in some noble Crime.
> Like to the happier Brutes, live unconfin'd,
> And freely chuse among the Female kind. (ll.233-38)

Sir John imagines a bizarre men's-only fantasy world reminiscent of the ideal pastoral-bachelor life he projects on Sir William (drinking and roaring among the "Brutes") but with the added attraction of a smorgasbord of females from which to sample. This momentarily raises an apparent logical flaw in Sir John's scenario: with all of the sex banished from his utopia, where would he locate such a pool of women? The solution is obvious to Sir John: like that "mighty Thunderer of old" (l.239), Zeus, Sir John and his god-like philandering friends would simply swoop

down below, pluck one of "the Female kind" and love them as they please, revelling in "the Sweets of dear Variety" (1.244).

Sir John's image of a 'men's club' utopia is hilariously overdone. His self-identification with Zeus is especially ironic: it reveals his overblown view of himself and all males as pseudo-gods, and on a subtler level reveals how deceptive that self-view is. His portrayal of Zeus's carefree love-life belies that god's reputation as the prototypical hen-pecked husband fending off the jealous Hera's complaints about her husband's mortal trysts. Although Sir John Brute is merely reworking old antifeminist jests, the joke is clearly on him, not on the women he chastises. In this act of ventriloquism, Chudleigh "moves into the dummy's [Sir John's] voice and makes that voice dissolve its own views by expressing them" (Doody 53). Again and again his antifeminist rhetoric collapses on itself, leaving himself the unwitting victim of his own misguided attack. (At one point, he interrupts the Parson's monologue in order to launch into a diatribe cursing and railing against nattering women "Scolds" (1.357). That is, he interrupts to complain about women's interruptions and rants tirelessly about women's tireless ranting.)

Similarly, the Parson is also made, as if inadvertently, to sound absurd. Just as Sir John's antifeminist rhetoric is made self-defeatingly extreme, so is the Parson's condescending male-supremacist rhetoric. The elaborate description of the intellectual chasm separating male and female captures the spirit of Sprint's sermon. Men, according to the Parson, are soaring, all-seeing, all-comprehending, transforming, giant rulers of the sky who, "beyond the Bounds of Nature see, / And dare to fathom vast Infinity" (11.196-97). Women, meanwhile, are "poor worthless Insects" (1.222), "Born Fools" (1.212) "with nauseous Dulness curst" (1.211), resigned by the gravity of gender to low, earthly tasks such as dancing and singing. (Another male utopian image reminiscent of Sir John's Zeus scenario: omnipotent god-

like giants soaring above scurrying insect-females below.) The Parson pedantically paraphrases Sprint's sermon: "Your shallow Minds can nothing else contain; / You were not made for Labours of the Brain" (ll.17-18). Men, however, the Parson explains, "like the Ancient Giants" (l.220), look down on poor women and moved "by Compassion for your Frailties" (l.224) strive to aid the lowly sex by at least making them "fit to be belov'd" (l.225). It is a testament to the zeal of The Bride-Womans Counseller that such rhetoric is almost as much paraphrase as exaggeration of Sprint's sermon. Yet couched in Chudleigh's ironic context, the Parson's male-supremacist rhetoric explodes under the sheer pressure of its over-inflation. Again the attacker rather than the object of attack ends up looking ridiculous.

Chudleigh satirizes the content of Sprint's sermon by exaggerating, and thus undermining, his male-supremacist and antifeminist ideas as filtered through the mouths of the male characters of The Ladies Defence. However, she also satirizes the style of Sprint's sermon--his heavy-handed attempts at rhetorical flashiness and wit--in the mock-centrepiece of The Ladies Defence, a 182-line homily which condenses The Bride-Womans Counseller. This sermonette repeats, in an ironic context, the arguments of Sprint's actual sermon, from his Eve argument to the example of the "Persian Ladies" (l.396) with model feet on their foreheads, all as justification for the Parson's oft-repeated insistence that wives owe husbands unconditional subservience. However, in her version of Sprint's doctrine, Chudleigh embellishes the minister's arguments and especially his style. For instance, in the introduction to this sermon, her Parson makes a great production of his heavenly-appointed role as conveyor of "the Law Divine" (l.277). Claiming to be a conduit of "Celestial Truth," he boasts that "from my Mouth unerring Precepts [will] flow" (l.276). But he does not just make bold predictions about what he has to say; he also

brags about how he is going to say it, promising "Truth drest in all the Gaieties of Art, / In all that Wit can give, or Eloquence impart" (ll.279-80). He beckons all to attend carefuily his words: "The sacred Oracles for deference call, / When from my Oily Tongue they smoothly fall" (ll.285-86). In addition to drawing attention to the artfulness of his rhetoric, the Parson also emphasizes the supposedly rational, orderly design of his sermon--the "Reason" (l.287) he will employ to prove his point. The rhetoric of rationalism had been fashionable in sermons since Edward Stillingfleet's of the 1660s, but what passes for "reason" is a different matter.[47] Chudleigh's Parson invokes the word "Reason" but does not apply it. She plays off her suspicion that Sprint was as concerned with presenting himself as a smooth-talking (if not oily tongued), Cartesian wit, as he was with imparting religious instruction to wives.

At the conclusion of the Parson's attempted display of "wond'rous Rhetorick" (l.473), Melissa steps forward to offer her concise, critical assessment of the Parson's sermon:

> A Mouse the labouring Mountain does disclose,
> What rais'd my Wonder, my Derision grows.
> With mighty Pomp you your Harangue begun,
> And with big Words my fixt Attention won.
> Each studied Period was with Labour wrought,
> But destitute of Reason and of Thought.
> What you meant Praise upon your selves reflects,
> Each Sentence is a Satyr on your Sex. (ll.474-81)

In a mere twelve lines Melissa effectively undermines the content and style of the Parson's mini-sermon. His response, not surprisingly, is outrage: "How dare you treat me with so much neglect? / My sacred Function calls for more Respect" (ll.486-87). Melissa, however, challenges this ideological point. She contests the suggestion that his "sacred Function" deserves

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[47] See Sisson 2:145.

respect in and of itself, regardless of the merits of the holder. Her radical ideological point is that respect is *not* self-evident; rather, it must be earned. Melissa asserts that the Parson will be shown the regard due his "sacred Function" only when he begins to practice what he preaches. In an echo of Rochester's speaker in his "Satyr Against Reason and Mankind,"[48] Melissa asserts that only when the Parson demonstrates "solid Learning, and substantial Sense" (l.490) joined with "unaffected Eloquence" (l.491); only when his "holy Truths with humble Zeal [are] with convey'd; / When free from Passion, Bigottry and Pride" (l.494); then and only then, Melissa promises, "I shall with the highest Deference pay, / And heedfully attend to all you say" (ll.500-01). In a reflection of the new Lockean notion of a contractual attitude toward authority, she suggests that when he treats women with respect, then he will be accorded respect in turn. But those men who insist on defaming the sex for sport (antifeminist satirists), those "[w]ho think us Creatures for Derision made, / And the Creator with his work upbraid" (ll.508-9), will from Melissa "challenge no Respect" (l.504).

Respect is the chief concession demanded of the Parson (and in turn, Sprint) in The Ladies Defence. Melissa teases, pokes fun at, and generally refuses to take seriously the rhetoric of the Parson, Sir John, and Sir William as a way of getting back at these male types for demonstrating a similar unwillingness to treat women seriously. (As Melissa explains, women are "Laugh'd out of Reason, jested out of Sense" [l.516]). Chudleigh's complaint against Sprint seems to be not so much what he has to say to women but *how* he says it. In the preface to the Defence, she explains that

> [h]ad he treated us with a little more Respect, and instead of the surly Sourness of a Cynick, express'd himself with the good Humour of an English Man, and

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[48] Cf. ll.191-219.

> the soft and indearing Mildness of a Christian, I should have thought myself oblig'd to have return'd him Thanks for his Instructions. (Poems and Prose 12)

Interestingly, Chudleigh does not demand or even advocate recognition of absolute equality of the sexes--"That we are generally less Knowing, and less Rational than the Men, I cannot but acknowledge" [Poems and Prose 12)--but she does hint at the reformist position implied by Sarah Fyge and forcefully articulated by Mary Astell: that most of the differences between the sexes are socially constructed--"but I think 'tis oftener owing to the illness of our Education, than the weakness of our Capacities" (12). Equality, she suggests, is like respect: it is not innate but must be achieved.

Respect, Melissa suggests, is closely tied to the issue of education. At the same time she chastises men for failing to treat women with due regard, she also offers a critique of her own sex for sometimes failing to earn it. She urges women to forsake the diversions of dancing and dressing and instead work to improve themselves.

> O that my Sex would all such Toys despise;
> And only Study to be good and Wise:
> Inspect themselves, and every Blemish find,
> Search all the close Recesses of the Mind,
> And leave no Vice, no Ruling Passion there,
> Nothing to raise a Blush, or cause a Fear:
> Their Memories with solid Notions fill,
> And let their Reason dictate to their Will. (ll.549-56)

And like Mary Astell,[49] Melissa offers suggestions as to where women might start:

> Instead of Novels, Histories peruse,
> And for their Guides the wiser Ancients chuse,

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[49] Cf. Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part I, 146,155.

> Thro' all the Labyrinths of Learning go,
> And grow more humble, as they do more know.
> By doing this, they will Respect procure,
> Silence the Men, and lasting Fame secure;
> And to themselves the best Companions prove,
> And neither fear their Malice, nor desire their Love. (ll.557-64)

The key to women gaining respect from men, Melissa suggests, is women first respecting themselves. They need not look to men for validation, but rather to themselves and each other. In this respect, her argument echoes Astell's earlier insistence to the ladies that "We value them [men] too much, and our selves too little" (141). Melissa hints at a similar remedy to that proposed by Astell: educational communities of strictly women--a type of "Monastery" for ladies--in which women can prove "best Companions" to each other.

This talk of learning sets Melissa off on part two of her plea for allowing women greater education. This time she presents her case in the form of an oration that runs the rhetorical gamut, drawing on strategies from the formal controversy, the satiric tradition, and polemic. She assures men that women will not abuse their knowledge by trying to acquire more authority; she points out the potential benefits of women's education to men (improved conversation and less cause for censure, making women "good Friends, good Neighbours, and good Wives" [l.670]); she offers exempla of great learned women (Lucretia, Portia, Cornelia, Zenobia) together with the sly suggestion that "If we less Wise and Rational are grown [than these women], / 'Tis owing to your Management alone" (ll.689-90); she serves up ironical flattery to men ("Wit like yours we never hope to gain" [l.705]) and self-deferential put-downs (women's "Infant Minds" [l.694] could only hope to achieve similar wit); she extends promises to be obedient and quiet; and finally she rounds out her case with a plea to men that they listen to

"Reason" and not to "Humour" (l.712), and grant women more privilege to learn.

Melissa's rhetorical pose is ironic. Her multiple strategies suggest that the only way to persuade men is to argue with them in their own terms: with flattery, put-downs, and promises. Her final plea to reason is perhaps the most unlikely strategy of all, given the male characters' disregard for reason to this point in the dialogue. In fact, the futility of rational argument with men serves as a turning point in her monologue. At the volta "but" she suddenly shifts from asking men for better education to condemning their unwillingness to grant it:

> But you our humble Suit will still decline;
> To have us wise was never your Design:
> You'll keep us Fools, that we may be your Jest;
> They who know least, are ever treated best. (ll.714-17)

Her tone swerves from polemic back into satire, becoming angrier and more and more sarcastic as she mocks the notion that men might be persuaded by logic. How can men be considered rational, respectable creatures when one considers what they respect and admire? Men revere self-loving "noisy Lawyers" (l.724), applaud fawning courtiers, approve of the brutish squire's life of rude carousing, credit cheating tradesmen, and are taken in by gold-digging doctors. Most depressing of all, these men allow their consciences to be guided by a fumbling scholar who "mounts a Pulpit, and [at] th' exalted Height / Makes Vapours dance before his troubl'd Sight, / And he no more can see, nor think aright" (ll. 749-51).[50] (She smuggles in a suggestion that these institutions—law, court, church—need reform.) So long as men credit the vaporous rhetoric of frustrated, hypocritical parsons, logical appeals will be lost on them.

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[50] Cf. Rochester's "A Satyr against Reason and Mankind" l.23.

However, Chudleigh enacts a double strategy here: while Melissa's pleas for rational reform are, as she admits, a waste of time with the male voices in the dialogue, those same arguments may help to persuade actual *female* readers of The Ladies Defence of the need for reform. Chudleigh's audience, in contrast to Melissa's, was primarily female. She even wrote a preface to the poem, "To All Ingenious Ladies," in which she acknowledges her female readers and urges them to reform their ways of thinking about education, self-improvement, and self-image. Given Chudleigh's audience, then, Melissa's efforts at rational persuasion take on another meaning: the Parson, Brute, and Loveall may fail to be won over by rational argument, but Chudleigh may have had higher hopes for her more enlightened readership.

The Ladies Defence ends with a bleak view of women's chances at receiving better treatment from men. Given the male sex's track-record in recognizing virtue (mistakenly seeing it in parsons, but failing to spy it in women) and the unlikelihood of reform to these institutions (such as the clergy), Melissa concludes that women should not expect vindication or even recognition soon; instead they must be content with the knowledge that they will receive their due respect and love in the hereafter. In the meantime, Melissa argues (as did Mary More in the 1670s), women must lead lives of stoical resignation, serving as wifely martyrs who quietly take abuse from husbands, comforted only by the knowledge that their superior morality will ensure them heavenly rewards in the end. Women will submit, honour, love, and obey their husbands (the parson's dream come true), and like the women in Astell's proposed "Religious Retirement," devote their lives to charity and virtue.[51]

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[51] This recalls Astell's description of "spiritual and corporal Works of Mercy" that would be performed in her proposed monastery for women: "relieving the Poor, healing the Sick, mingling Charity to the Soul with that they express to the Body, instructing the

Thus we will live, regardless of your hate,
Till re-admitted to our former State;
Where, free from the Confinement of our Clay
In glorious Bodies we shall bask in Day,
And with inlightened Minds new Scenes survey.
(ll.825-29)

Like Fyge's The Female Advocate, Chudleigh's satire ends with an assurance that women will be rewarded for their suffering with the gift of eternal heavenly bliss. Melissa's vision of an all-female heaven is the female counterpart to Sir John's all-male utopia, but while his paradise is characterized by unrestricted sexual pleasure, hers promises the joys of unfettered learning. Discovering the secrets of Nature, glimpsing the beauty of celestial Reason--these are the rewards women will reap in Melissa's heaven.

We shall, well-pleas'd, eternally converse,
And all the Sweets of Sacred Love possess:
Love, freed from all the gross Allays of Sense,
So pure, so strong, so constant, so intense,
That it shall all our Faculties imploy,
And leave no Room for any thing but Joy. (ll.840-45)

Melissa's monologue and the poem itself concludes with this image of a paradisiacal community of rational, Christian women basking in neoplatonic divine love.

The concluding utopian image of a female-only paradise recalls the ending of Fyge's satire; however, the tone is significantly different. While Fyge balances her image of utopia with a curse on men ("endless misery"), thus reversing the standard satirical hex on women, Chudleigh eschews such a reversal, opting instead for the morally superior pose of stoic, Christian, rational polemic (with strong hints of irony), reminiscent of Mary Astell. In fact, Melissa's heaven sounds

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Ignorant, counselling the Doubtful, comforting the Afflicted, and

remarkably similar to Astell's proposed community of rational, Christian women living in a "blissful recess from the noise and hurry of the World," a place where they can "attend the great business they cam into the world about, the service of God and improvement of their own Minds" (150). Like Melissa's heaven, Astell's "Happy Retreat" (151) would be a "Paradise" where women could feast on the pleasures of "ingenious Conversation," "instructive discourse" (150), Love and "good Works" (151).[52]

In her poem "To the Lady Chudleigh, The Anonymous Author of the Lady's Defence," Elizabeth Thomas offers the following assessment of the Sprint controversy: "This gen'rous Nymph [Marissa] in Action spoke her Mind, / She came, she saw, and gain'd what she design'd" (146). Thomas presents an image of Chudleigh as the undisputed victor in her literary duel with Sprint: the Parson's patriarchalistic arguments are left in shoddy pieces on the battlefield by the sharp blade of Melissa's rational wit. But while there's no doubt that Chudleigh's mouthpiece gets the best of the Parson in her fictional portrayal of the controversy, it would be naïve to project this fictional victory onto the real world. A fictional female voice's triumph over a fictional male voice is a long way from actual reform. Any immediate victory over male-supremacist forces was a minor one. It is true that Chudleigh points out the follies and logical flaws of domestic patriarchalism, argues for a more contractual approach to respect and equality between the sexes (earned not inherent), and articulates a partial strategy for reforming the education of women. However, the fruit of the reformist seed planted by Chudleigh (and her mentor Astell) would

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correcting those that err and do amiss" (Proposal, Part I 156).

[52] In "To Almystrea" Chudleigh praises Astell's utopian proposal of a women's retreat, and even imagines a heavenly utopia--an "Opera of eternal Love" (1.44)--similar to the one described by Melissa at the end of The Ladies Defence.

be a long time germinating and only be reaped in the very long term.

In fact, the radicalism of Chudleigh's message was played down by Chudleigh herself. In her own comments about the intent and satiric nature of The Ladies Defence, she downplays its sharpness as a critique of social institutions such as marriage and education. She claims she wrote the poem merely to divert some her female friends (228)--"I am not so vain as to believe any thing of mine deserves the Notice of *Man*." It was, she insists, "a satyr on Vice, and not, as some have maliciously reported, an Invective on Marriage" (249). Her purpose was to promote "Virtue" (249).

These comments, however, fail to give the poem its due. As a gentlewoman, Chudleigh was obliged to observe a certain decorum about publication matters. The Ladies Defence was first printed by Bernard Lintot without her permission, suggesting she may have had no plans to publish it at all. These later modest disclaimers, which seem to downplay the force of the poem's satire, need to be taken in context. Such apologies were standard in authors'--both male and female--prefatory comments and were part of the conventional apparatus of seventeenth-century satire.[53] Whether or not Chudleigh chose to announce the fact, she was, like Mary Astell, a perceptive analyst of the cultural work of "custom" on women as a social group. Although later presented by Chudleigh as a playful satire on vice, The Ladies Defence is also an engaging feminist polemic. Like all great satire, it is both a dazzling display of wit and a challenging social critique.

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[53] Margaret Ezell observes that self-deprecating apologies and prefaces renouncing worldly ambition were common to much seventeenth-century literature. In her survey, "women authors seem no more modest than their male contemporaries" (88). The prefatory comments of Gould and Sprint, for instance, display similar apologetic (if transparently insincere) tones.

The Sprint controversy is another instance of how antifemale tracts provided perfect platforms from which to present serious, satiric critiques of patriarchal ideology. But The Ladies Defence marks an even further shift away from the recreational view of the satiric debate represented by the satire of Robert Gould. Around the turn of the century, in particular, rational polemic plays an increasingly prominent role in women's contributions to the satiric debate about women. Like other late seventeenth-century women's satires, Chudleigh's defence is still concerned with convention and rhetorical display. It draws on most of the standard machinery of the genre: Eve arguments, catalogues of exempla, utopian visions, images of hell populated by women, stereotypical male characters, and ironically framed antifeminist and male-supremacist rhetoric. And it is a wickedly funny and effective response to Sprint's sermon. However, The Ladies Defence is an intertwining of social philosophy, critique, polemic and satire closer to the treatises of Astell than to the satires of Fyge and Gould.

The Sprint controversy was one of the liveliest and also one of the last instances of the late seventeenth-century satiric debate about women. The first decade of the eighteenth century witnessed a fizzling out of the genre as notions of 'satire' gradually changed and the issue of "woman" shifted to other genres. As seen in the detached, ironic style of The Ladies Defence, the conception of 'proper' satire had altered from the rough, obscene railing of Robert Gould in the early 1680s to a more dignified, restrained, Queen Anne-style of polite satire of manners in the early 1700s (which would later become typified by the writings of Addison and Steele). But while the satiric element of the genre softened, a third component gradually crept into the hybrid--serious, rational polemic--which would eventually absorb the serious debate on the topic of "woman." Under the influence of women writers, the satiric debate

gradually shifted from conventional, rhetorical discussions of the nature of "woman" to an increasingly rational, serious critique of the *institutions* (namely marriage and education) through which women were socially constructed.

Chapter Three

"Abhorred and shunned, for different ends": Augustan Women's Marriage Satire

> Marriage! O Hell and furies name it Not,
> Hence Hence, ye holy Cheats--a Plot a Plot:
> Marriage! 'Tis but a Licens'd way to Sin,
> A Noose to Catch Religious Woodcocks in:
> Or the nickname of Love's Malicious Fiend,
> Begot in Hell to persecute Mankind.
>
> --From "A Satyr Against Marriage," possibly by Rochester (ca. 1675)

> Thou tyrant, whom I will not name,
> Whom heaven and hell alike disclaim;
> Abhorred and shunned, for different ends,
> By angels, Jesuits, beasts and fiends!
> What terms to curse thee shall I find,
> Thou plague peculiar to mankind?
>
> --From "Wedlock. A Satire," by Mehetabel Wright (ca. 1730) (qtd. in Lonsdale 114)

As the Sprint controversy illustrates, marriage was a favourite theme of Augustan satire, by both male and female writers. The matrimonial state was the focus of reform for some (both Sprint and Chudleigh lobbied for change, though in opposite directions), and the target of scorn for many. In fact, cursing the nuptial state was, as these epigraphs suggest, a highly conventional art form in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Inevitably, the subject of marriage elicited lively curses and graphic imagery of hell, disease, and torture. But while Augustan marriage satire, like all Augustan satire, is usually

associated with male writers (the author of this first epigraph is almost certainly a man), women writers, like Mehetabel Wright, had their own complaints about the institution. In fact, these epigraphs, written over 50 years apart, suggest a remarkable similarity between male and female Augustan marriage satire. Yet the ostensible resemblance between these two excerpts belies the very different reasons eighteenth-century men and women had for satirizing the institution of marriage. The words and images in these satires may be similar, but the contexts couldn't be more different.

Men's Augustan marriage satire evolved out of two disparate, though at times overlapping, ideologies: the Christian, patriarchal model of marriage, and the secular, libertine critique of marriage. The Christian patriarchal prototype for marriage derives from New Testament interpretations of the Biblical account of creation and the Fall. In the Jahvist's version of the creation story (Genesis 2:18-22), Eve is formed out of Adam's rib for the purpose of being Adam's "helpmeet." New Testament writers, especially St. Paul, interpreted this story to mean that Eve was intended by God to be subordinate to Adam, and by extension, that woman was created as an accessory to man, to be subjugated to him. In addition to the order and manner of creation arguments, St. Paul also concluded that Eve was solely responsible for the Fall--"Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2:14); therefore, St. Paul argued, woman was to blame for the loss of paradise, and as a consequence, part of her punishment was servitude to man. From this reasoning, St. Paul produced his notorious prescription for wifely duties:

> Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife; as also Christ is head of the church,....

> Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their husbands in everything. (Ephesians 5: 22-24)

As Katharine Rogers notes, St. Paul's doctrine on marriage and, specifically, wifely obligation, wielded an enormous influence on Christian culture (11). By the seventeenth century, his insistence on wives' subjection to husbands had long been a fundamental tenet of Christian marriage ideology. An early seventeenth-century theological conduct book, William Gouge's Of Domesticall Duties (1622), contains headings such as "Of Wives' Subjection," "How an Husband is his Wife's Head," and "Of an Husband's Superiority over a Wife, to be Acknowledged by a Wife," all of which quote St. Paul's epistles and offer St. Pauline explications such as this one:

> Hereby the Holy Ghost would teach wives that subjection ought to be as salt to season every duty which they perform to their husband. Their very opinion, affection, speech, action, and all that concerneth the husband, must savour of subjection. (qtd. in Keeble 154)

(That St. Paul's doctrine of marriage also includes a detailed description of a husband's obligations to his wife was a fact often overlooked or downplayed by theologians and writers of conduct books. In fact, the description of matrimony in eighteenth-century editions of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer makes marriage sound fairly egalitarian in theory: the wife was to obey the husband, but he was obliged to "love her, comfort her, honour her, and keep her" (n.p.). Many theologians, however, tended to foreground the obedience element and relegate the husbandly duties to the background.) Similar images of the 'proper' Christian patriarchalist marriage model were set out

later in the century by followers of Sir Robert Filmer's theories of domestic obligation, such as the Reverend John Sprint.[1]

This ideology of what Margaret Ezell terms "domestic patriarchalism" is the foundation of much men's marriage satire. As Ezell points out, "domestic patriarchalism" was essentially a literary phenomenon, a concept of power derived from a literary source, the Bible, and codified in written documents like Gouge's conduct book (Patriarch's Wife 16). Real-life domestic arrangements, however, were not always as rigidly patriarchal as these writings would have us believe. Ezell makes a compelling case for seventeenth-century women having more say in domestic matters than is often assumed (16-35). This gap, however, between the literary model of "domestic patriarchalism" and real-life practice is one of the origins of marriage satire. Male satirists ridiculed real-life marriage for not living up to the Biblical model, and specifically, wives for failing to conform to the impossible wifely standards advocated by St. Paul. Thus, marriage satire was an ironic product of the incongruity between what *should* be (according to Christian doctrine) and what *is*, between the official model of marriage and the actual reality of husband-wife relations. Those favourite stereotypes of the "Bad Wife" in satiric literature--the ubiquitous scold, shrew, whore, and breeches-wearer--are all direct deviants from St. Paul's prescription of the perfect, quiet, submissive, obedient wife.[2]

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[1] On Filmer and his followers, see Margaret Ezell, The Patriarch's Wife (1989). On Sprint, see chapter two.

[2] In fact, if the Pauline interpretation of Genesis is taken a step further, it can even be suggested that men have Biblical authority for satirizing wives who failed to live up to these lofty standards. Because Eve was guilty of eating the fruit and tempting Adam, women had to pay the consequences, including admonishment from their superiors. Milton's Paradise Lost, which relies heavily on St. Paul's version of the Fall, perpetuates this myth in the seventeenth century. Adam's immediate response to Eve after the Fall in Book X of Paradise Lost shows the connection between Christian patriarchalism and "Bad Wife"

While Christian patriarchalism was an ancient influence on matrimonial matters, the second ideology shaping Augustan men's marriage satire is a much more recent phenomenon: the secular libertine critique of the nuptial state. The libertine ideology, which originated in the courtly love tradition and flourished in the Restoration, was predicated on hedonistic and naturalistic assumptions: "that Nature had made men to follow pleasure, that sex was pleasurable, and that it was natural to follow one's sexual urges" (Porter 4). Marriage, then, by virtue of its being a supposedly monogamous institution, was antithetical to "natural" sexual impulses. The ideal libertine rake (libertinism was a deeply masculine ideology, although it did acknowledge the sexuality of women, to a lesser extent)[3] thrived on roaming sexual predation; marriage, in contrast, was unnatural, inconvenient, restricting, and above all, boring.

As a result, the libertine distaste for marriage frequently took the form of satires that castigated husbands for copping out of "natural" single life and wives for weighing down husbands, and cautioned young men against falling into the marriage trap. For example, the anonymous "Satyr Against Marriage" (ca. 1675) of the epigraph, possibly by Rochester, opens with a typical libertine condemnation of matrimonial life:

> Husband, thou Dull unpitied Miscreant,
> Wedded to Noise, to Misery and want:

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satire. Adam engages in a long, bitter rant against Eve, which employs many of the standard techniques of anti-wife satire: hateful name-calling, accusations of vanity and pride, images of marriage as confinement ("linked and wedlock-bound" [905]), and a wish that woman had never been created. In Milton's version of the creation and Fall, Eve's transgression provides men with the justification and precedent to satirize marriage and wives.

[3] Certain female characters in Restoration plays as well as the supposedly roguish life of Aphra Behn are often cited as evidence of the increased libertine acceptance of female sexuality in the Restoration. See Marilyn Williamson 136 and John Traugott, "The Rake's Progress from Court to Comedy: A Study in Comic Form." Studies in English Literature 6 (1966): 281-307.

> Sold an Eternal Vassal for thy Life,
> Oblig'd to Cherish and to Hate thy Wife,
> Drudge on till Fifty at thy own Expence,
> Breath out thy Life in one Impertinence.
> Repeat thy Loath'd Embraces every Night,
> Prompted to Act by Duty, not Delight. (Rochester 93)

Monogamy, for the libertine satirist, is a ridiculous, man-made, "Slavish Law" (l.39); the satirist prefers to follow "Nature's Laws" (l.41), flitting from one "Sprightly youthful Wench" to another as his whims lead him (l.49). In contrast to the sorry nuptial bed where sex is a chore that can only produce "Dull Offspring," the speaker portrays sex outside of wedlock as a hot, passionate adventure from which "spring the Noble, Fortunate, and Great" (ll. 57,55). He prefers to take his chances with prostitutes rather than with a wife. Venereal disease at least can be cured (or so he thinks), "But a Damn'd Wife by inevitable Fate, / Destroys Soul, Body, Credit and Estate" (79-80).

The libertine critique of marriage found a useful literary ally in Juvenal's "Sixth Satire," perhaps the most famous marriage satire ever, and certainly the blueprint for countless Restoration and Augustan attacks on matrimony and women. Ostensibly structured as an advice poem warning a young man against marrying ("A Sober Man like thee to change his Life! / What Fury wou'd possess thee with a Wife?" [ll.40-41; Dryden's translation Works 4), Juvenal's long, sprawling satire is really, as Dryden says, "a bitter invective against the fair Sex" (4: 145): women are the reason men should not marry. The speaker bemoans the loss of a golden age when women were pure, mothers breast-fed their babies, and wives worked so hard that they had no time for vices. This is no longer the case, he argues, and to prove it he offers an extensive list of the vices that Roman women are prone to--adultery, lust, ambition--illustrated with a gallery of vivid exempla.

Juvenal and the libertines are linked in several ways: their shared abhorrence of the idea of marriage (based on a belief that monogamy is unnatural and passé), the excuse this abhorrence of marriage offers for satirizing women, and the sensationalization of female sexuality as a satiric strategy. (Both Juvenal and the libertines revel in offering graphic details of the scandalous antics of insatiable whores and cheating wives.) Thus, Juvenal served as an ancient inspiration for libertine satirists to carry on the anti-matrimonial torch. The sheer volume of the "Sixth Satire" provided a vast fund of anti-marriage and anti-female stories, jokes, and insults for these satirists to exploit.

These two ideologies, then, patriarchalism and libertinism, formed the foundation of Augustan men's marriage satire: the impossible patriarchal model served as justification for satirizing wives; the libertine critique offered a masculinized framework for satirizing the institution and women. These two ideologies, however, were also, indirectly, the basis for Augustan women's marriage satire too. Women's satire on the nuptial state grew out of women's critiques of these ideologies, critiques that evolved out of an ideology of "reformism," the Cartesian-influenced, rational critique of the pressure of "Custom" on women's lives.

The best known articulation of the early Augustan reformist position on marriage is Mary Astell's Some Reflections Upon Marriage (1700). In this treatise, Astell defends the institution of marriage from libertine attacks, and then goes on to consider the pitfalls of marriage from a woman's point of view. She maintains that while individual husbands and wives may deserve ridicule for poor choices and bad behaviour, the institution of "Marriage in general is too sacred to be treated with Disrespect; too venerable to be subject of Raillery and Buffonery. It is the Institution of Heaven" (9). Astell was a devout High-Anglican, and in accordance with her Christian

disposition, "marriage" meant the Christian patriarchal model. She believed, according to St. Paul, that when a woman marries she makes her husband "her Head" (41), and "She who Elects a Monarch for Life...gives him an Authority she cannot recall however he misapply it" (32). A husband has absolute authority and a wife must "follow all his Paces, and tread in all his unreasonable footsteps" (30). In fact, Astell wryly concludes, "she then who Marrys ought to lay it down for an indisputable Maxim, that her Husband must govern absolutely and intirely [sic], and that she has nothing else to do but to Please and Obey" (59).

Astell subscribes to the Christian patriarchal model of marriage, but as the tone of these passages suggests, she also implicitly contests it. For husbands, although technically justified in exercising carte blanche authority over wives, sometimes abuse their privilege of authority. Husbands are "too froward" in their demands for obedience and "claim their Right oftener and more Imperiously than either Discretion or good Manners will justifie" (43). They forget that there is a "mutual stipulation" in the Bible (often overlooked) that calls for both wife *and husband* to "Love, Honour, and Worship, by which certainly Civility and Respect at least are meant" and "are as much the Woman's due as Love, Honour, and Obedience is the Man's" (44). Too many men looking for wives really seek only a servant who will breed and raise children, keep house, and (if fortunate) entertain. Given these expectations, Astell chooses not to marry at all, preferring a life of independent freedom to married servitude.

The reformist arguments of Astell's treatise on marriage are, in part, paradoxical: on the one hand, they subscribe to the Christian patriarchal model and defend the institution of marriage from the libertine critique; on the other hand, they contest certain practices within that model and caution women against entering into it. Much Augustan women's marriage satire

shares this paradoxical feature of "reformism": this satire both criticizes marriage practice and custom from a woman's perspective and yet upholds an ideal model of Christian marriage. As in the writings of Astell, women's satire often advises other women against marrying at all, unless they can be assured of that ideal. Eighteenth-century women's marriage satire employs many of the same strategies as men's marriage satire--images of confinement and torture, "Bad Spouse" stereotypes, and curses--but in a different context, for different purposes. While Augustan men tended to use marriage satire as an excuse for satirizing women and bemoaning a loss of imagined sexual freedom, Augustan women tended to satirize the *system*--the customs by which marriage operates--and the denial of real domestic freedom. In this chapter, I examine the most prevalent issues in Augustan women's verse marriage satire and consider how the treatment of these issues changed with the rise of new ideas of marriage in the first half of the eighteenth century.

* * * *

> How hard is the fate of poor womankind,
> Forever subjected, and always confin'd;
> Our parents controll us until we are wives,
> Our Husband's [sic] enslave us the rest of our lives.
> --From "The Condition of Womankind," anonymous (1733) (ll.1-4)

The most common theme in Augustan women's marriage satire is that illustrated in the epigraph above: confinement. Women's satire on the matrimonial state is filled with images of wives condemned to restricted lives of suffering and servitude, constrained by the knot of an all too literal wed*lock*. In the anonymous lyric "Woman's Hard Fate" (1733), marriage is a "fatal

bondage" (l.13) for woman;[4] she is confined to "marriage-chains" (l.14) and a "slave's fetters" (l.23) by her "sovereign" (l.12) husband. Elizabeth Tollet, in "Hypatia" (1724), decries the vagaries women can expect from "the domestic Chain"--"Servitude" and "A Will resign'd to an imperious Lord" (67). While marriage promised financial security and social acceptance for eighteenth-century women, the price, these satires suggest, was a steep one: confinement and virtual domestic slavery.

Images of confinement were nothing new in marriage satire. Male satirists, in both the libertine and patriarchalist traditions of marriage satire, had long exploited the conceit of the "lock" in wedlock, at least as it pertained to men. For instance, the libertine advice poem "A Satyr Against Marriage" (1700) warns young men of the bondage of married life. No sooner does a love-sick wooer vow to serve his beloved than he finds himself wedded and "a very slave indeed" (4). According to libertine ideology, marriage was a voluntary enslavement antithetical to the ideal of libertine sexual freedom: "He who might rove the Universe around, / Is to the Arms of a Weak Woman Bound" (3). Despite the supposedly patriarchal customs of marriage, actual matrimony rarely works out that way, libertines warn: "So must the Husband, paid for all his Pains, / Meet proud Insults, while she, the Tyrant Reigns, / And holds him like a Fetter'd Dog in Chains" (11).

Images of fettered husbands and comparisons of married men to trapped animals are commonplaces of libertine marriage satire. The anonymous Rake in Fetters: or, The Marriage Mouse Trap (17-) presents a pathetic husband lamenting his loss of freedom and his relegation to running "to and fro the Length of my Chain" (1). Similarly, Thomas Flatman's "The Batchelor's Song" (1674) offers a series of typical entrapment images:

Like a Dog with a Bottle, fast ty'd to his tail,

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[4] Lonsdale 136.

Like a Vermin in a Trap, or a Thief in a Jail,
Like a Tory in a Bog,
Or an Ape with a Clog:
Such is the man, who when he might go free,
Does his liberty loose,
For a Matrimony noose,
And sells himself into captivity. (120)

While confinement motifs are a staple of libertine satire, similar enslavement imagery is also found in Augustan versions of the much older tradition of satirizing hen-pecked husbands. This strain of satire is an offshoot of patriarchalist advice satire warning against women who wear the breeches--women who usurp their husband's domestic authority.[5] Hen-pecked husbands suffer the humiliation of enslavement. For example, Spectator essay 176 (1711) presents a letter from a confessed "Hen-peckt" husband, 'Nathaniel Henroost,' "one of those innocent Mortals who suffer Derision under that Word, for being governed by the best of Wives" (23). The sorely oppressed Henroost describes his lot as enforced "servitude" (25) and explains that "there is not such a Slave in Turkey as I am to my Dear" (24). Similarly, in Spectator 212, another hen-pecked husband tells of his wife's means of "confining" him in his own house. He is relegated to "the Life of a Prisoner of State" (132).

However, despite the common thread of confinement motifs in both men's and women's marriage satire, these images should not be regarded as offsetting conceits. The reality of a man's actual restrictions in eighteenth-century marriage was radically different from a woman's. One's perception of confinement is relative to one's expectations of freedom, and measured this way, what men considered enslavement pales beside what women had to

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[5] See, for an illustration of this type, the 1689 ballad "My Wife will be my Master; Or, the Married-Man's Complaint against his Unruly Wife, being a warning for all Unmarried persons to have a special care in choosing their Maike, lest they meet with such a

endure. Men were accustomed to exercising absolute domestic authority, and they had at least the idea of total freedom as a realistic alternative to marriage, so they might complain about a degree of domestic restriction that was 'normal' for women. Women, however, had a much more limited range of options to begin with. There was no realistic alternative of total freedom outside marriage and within it, domestic slavery was to be expected, as Astell warned.

The co-existence of hen-pecked husband satires by male writers and enslaved wife satires by women writers reflects very different views of this sexual double-standard. Hen-pecked husband pieces decry a divergence from the supposed marital status quo. Nathaniel Henroost suggests the problem is that the institution of marriage is not working as it should. Men are not *meant* to be governed by women, he would say, nor are they *meant* to be confined indoors the way he is (closed interior spaces are associated with the feminine, while open exterior spaces are gendered male). Meanwhile, women satirists argue that it's this same ideal patriarchalistic model of marriage that Henroost aspires to (the supposed status quo: husband in command, wife his servant) that is the very problem.

Anne Finch's poem "The Unequal Fetters" (1713) cleverly illustrates this disparity between men and women's different senses of matrimonial confinement. This witty critique of the double standard custom allows the two parties in marriage is a parody of carpe diem seduction lyrics (McGovern 49). Reversing the conventional "seize the day" syllogism, the speaker argues that if we could "stop the time that's flying" (l.1; Poems 150-51)), then "To Love wou'd then be worth our cost" (l.5) (versus the expected: if we could stop time then it would be worth waiting to love). But since we lose our youth and "you" (husbands) grow bored with wives (seeking for that spark "in new

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Myre-Snype as this poor-man did" (Roxburghe Ballads 7:188).

Faces / When our Spring of Life is done" [ll.8-9]), and since one sex "walks a freer round" (l.15) than the other, what is the point, for a woman, of loving and marrying at all? For

> Marriage does but slightly tye Men
> Whil'st close Pris'ners we remain
> They the larger Slaves of Hymen
> Still are begging Love again
> At the full length of all their chain. (ll.16-20)

Both men and women may be tied down by marriage, but of the two, men have the much freer reign.

A recurring motif of this confinement theme in Augustan women's satire is the image of domestic slavery. These satires are filled with the clanking of fetters, chains, and bonds, and words like "servitude," "subjection," "bondage," and "slavery" abound. Wives aren't just confined by their husbands; they are forced to *serve* them too. As Mary, Lady Chudleigh, puts it in the opening couplet of her best-known lyric, "To the Ladies" (1703): "Wife and servant are the same, / But only differ in the name" (Poems 83-84). Chudleigh's speaker describes a wife's duty roster in language reminiscent of the patriarchalist rhetoric of John Sprint. She must "serve" and "obey" (l.17) her husband "as a god" (l 16), and must submit to being "governed by a nod" (l.15), for his authority is ordained by "law supreme" (l.6). On the one hand, this overblown rhetoric is deadly serious: marriage could turn a woman into a virtual slave. On the other hand, the speaker's use of this dictatorial language is partly ironic. Taken to its extreme, such patriarchalist rhetoric conjures an image of the married couple as a silent, fierce, nodding, god-like brute and a meek, submissive slave who communicates with her husband through semaphore ("Like mutes, she signs alone must make" [l.13]), lest she risk his wrath by presuming to actually speak to him.[6]

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[6] This is also part of the poem's Orientalist rhetoric: rulers

Domestic slavery for wives is a consequence of domestic patriarchalism gone awry, this satire suggests. The husband in Chudleigh's poem is worse than just a slave-driver. He oversteps his God-given authority (fancying himself supreme sultan of his own little domestic kingdom) and ignores *his* duties to his wife (the ones Astell points out). As a result, the speaker is left cynical and resigned about marriage. Men put on a good show when courting, she suggests, but they are bound to change for the worse once married; as soon as the couple utter the vows, "all that's kind is laid aside, / And nothing left but state and pride" (ll.7-8). A husband cares only for "power" (l.20), and once he has it, his wife is doomed to a life of drudgery.

Critics have read this poem as an autobiographical account of Chudleigh's supposedly unhappy marriage. Not only does this approach make for problematic biography, as Margaret Ezell has shown (Poems xxii-xxv), it fails to recognize that Chudleigh's poem exists within an established literary convention of marriage satire: the seventeenth-century "Bad Husband" satire. Satire on the "Bad Wife" was a staple of Renaissance marriage satire, but as Margaret Ezell has shown, there was also a much smaller corresponding tradition of "Bad Husband" satire in seventeenth-century popular literature, one with which I would argue Chudleigh's poem is at least partly aligned. Wives, in this "Bad Spouse" literature, rate 'good' or 'bad' according to their obedience, constancy and housekeeping abilities; husbands, meanwhile, are ranked in terms of their ability to handle money and sex. The "Bad Husband" is usually portrayed as either a "playboy spendthrift or an impotent miser" (Ezell Patriarch's Wife 101-2). For example, in the ballad "The Good Fellow's Resolution; Or, the Bad Husband's return from his Folly" (ca. 1682), the speaker admits

I have been a bad Husband this full fifteen year,

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were served by mutes in some of the stories in Arabian Nights.

> And have spent many pounds in good ale and strong beer:
> I have ranted in Ale houses day after day,
> And wasted my time and my Money away.
> (Roxburghe Ballads 4:343)

Some "Bad Husbands," however, are loose with more than just their money. Another ballad, "The Maiden's Counsellor; Or A fair Warning before Marriage" (1685-88), advises that

> Bad Husbands they abroad will Roam,
> And take their pleasure where they please,
> While their poor Wives must stay at home,
> There is too many such as these. (Roxburghe Ballads 4:78)

These ballads rebuke husbands for being irresponsible drunkards, adulterers, gamblers, and sportsmen.

Similarly, advice poems warn women to beware that even though a man may not partake in these activities before marriage, he probably will once he is wed. In the ballad "The Kind and Careful Mother," the speaker instructs her daughter to watch out for "Bad Husbands," for once married,

> To gaming, and hawking and hunting they'l tide,
> With drinking and feasting and harlots besides;
> Full quickly [they] will squander and waste their Estate,
> And they may be sorry when it is too late. (Roxburghe 7:147)

Such a sudden matrimonial metamorphosis is a common warning of ballads cautioning women about marriage. Men may seem like "Gods 'till Marry'd," only to be "prov'd Divels then [after]" ("Advice to Virgins," qtd. in Ezell Patriarch 109). By then, of course, it is too late. As Jane Barker observes in "The Preference for a Single Life Before Marriage," once a woman is "subject to the Jugal Bands / Her Will's confin'd, she's under a Command" (102).[7]

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[7] Barker's choice of the word "jugal" ("relating to a yoke,

The "Bad Husband" lives on in Augustan women's marriage satire, but as Chudleigh's poem illustrates, he comes to be characterized less by financial frivolity and more by emotional neglect. The "Bad Husband" in Augustan women's marriage satire is often brutish, sometimes even abusive. In addition to being a philandering spendthrift, he may neglect his wife altogether, be oblivious to the distress he causes her, ignore her tears and pleas, and devote all his time and energy to the pursuit of his own selfish pleasures, all at the emotional expense of his wife (Ezell 103).[8]

In the realm of literary patriarchalism, the "Bad Husband" is a domestic parallel of that favourite figure of the stage, the "Bad Ruler." But while a "Bad Ruler" such as Claudius in Hamlet is a loathsome character, this portrayal does not constitute a critique of the *institution* of the monarchy. Most "Bad Husband" satires follow a similar pattern: the target of satire is the individual husband, not the institution of marriage. However, some "Bad Husband" satires by women, in addition to portraying husbands as unfeeling brutes, also offer an implicit or explicit critique of domestic patriarchalism and the institution of marriage itself.

Elizabeth Thomas's "The Forsaken Wife" is an instance of the former category. This poem is a dramatic monologue by the forsaken wife of the poem's title confronting her cold, cruel husband about his neglect and infidelity. The tone, like that of

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especially the matrimonial yoke" [OED]) rather than the more common "conjugal" (which suggests a *shared* yoke) emphasizes the unevenness of marriage. In fact, this description suggests that the husband may be the driver of the beast (his wife) who carries the yoke all by herself.

[8] Incidentally, this kind of "Bad Husband" is also a stock character of ridicule in Restoration comedy. Pinchwife in The Country Wife, Sir John Brute in The Provoked Wife, and Squire Sullen in The Beaux Stratagem are all brutish husbands who neglect and chastize their wives while indulging in their own selfish diversions.

"To the Ladies," sounds a combination of anger and despair. The speaker begins with a calm observation and a sarcastic question:

> Methinks, 'tis strange you can't afford
> One pitying look, one parting word;
> Humanity claims this as due,
> But what's humanity to you? (ll.1-4)
> (Miscellany Poems 294-95)

Like the fierce husband in "To the Ladies," the forsaken wife's spouse is inhumanely indifferent to his wife's existence. This "Cruel Man" (l.5) is also unfaithful, guilty not just of breaking her heart, but also their marriage vows. However, the wife's response is not one of even greater indignation, as we might expect from the tone to that point. Rather, she retreats to the higher moral ground of stoic loyalty:

> Yet maugre all your rigid hate,
> I will be true in spite of fate;
> And one preeminence I'll claim,
> To be for ever still the same. (ll.9-12)

Only when she meets "a man that dare be true" (l.13) will she believe a man's vows again. Until that time, she will bear her burden quietly, comforting herself with the knowledge that "I yet am superior to you." Despite her torment, the speaker still believes in the *possibility* of a happy marriage with a "true" man.

Similarly, Mehetabel Wright's partly satiric "Address to her Husband" (written ca. 1730)[9] presents a female speaker telling another pathetic story of neglect by a cold, cruel husband. Wright's speaker describes her attempts to get her indifferent husband "To throw his cold neglect aside, / And cheer once more his injured bride!" (ll.11-12). She asks if he *ever* cared for her, and if so, whether there is any way to rekindle the "cold remains of former love" (l.20). Or, if nothing else,

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[9] Lonsdale 11-14.

she begs him to at least tell her why she ceased to please him. Has she lost all the physical appeal he once "fanciedst fine" (l.26) in her? Has she harangued his ear with "loud complaints" and made their house the "seat of noise and discontent"? (l.42). Has she not "practised every art / T'oblige, divert, and cheer thy heart, / To make me pleasing in thine eyes, / And turn thy house to paradise"? (ll.53-56). In fact, her patience and tolerance sound even more incredible than that of "The Forsaken Wife."

Wright's speaker does shift briefly from pathos to anger, however, in the process suggesting at least a flash of an implicit critique of the institution. She complains that marriage has deprived her of "freedom, health, and ease" (l.69) and that her husband cares more for his lewd drinking mates than for her. She boldly threatens him: "Soft as I am, I'll make thee see / I will not brook contempt from thee!" (ll.73-74). However, this brazenness is short-lived; in the next lines she returns to wondering whether she will ever be able to regain his heart. Despite knowing that her life with him is guaranteed misery, she resolves to persevere until death, when her husband's liberty will be restored, and he can "laugh when Hetty is no more" (l.94).

This paradoxical combination of bitter critique of a "Bad Husband" together with a vow to remain true and devoted to him nonetheless is a puzzling feature of some women's marriage satire in the early 1700s.[10] Some women satirists, like Thomas, Wright, and in certain instances, Chudleigh, implicitly condemn the *practices* of the patriarchal model of marriage and yet explicitly uphold that model's legitimacy. On the one hand, they point out

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[10] Outside the context of satire, there are even earlier precedents for this view. For instance, in her essay "The Womans Right" (ca. 1670), Mary More advises wives: if a husband turns out 'bad', the wife must nevertheless submit, hide her troubles, and strive to outdo him in virtue.

the un-Christian by-products of such marriages--the double standard, neglect, and even abuse. But on the other hand, they insist, like Astell, that patriarchal marriage is God's institution. In fact, the reformist position of Astell asserts an almost perverse Christian opportunism in a husband's bad behaviour: "the Husband's Vices may become an occasion of the Wife's Vertues, and his neglect do her a more real Goodness than his kindness could" (18). Wives with "Bad Husbands," Astell reasons, are forced to learn how to suffer, survive, be independent, and distinguish between "solid and apparent Good"--all skills that make wives better Christians. Such suffering also endows wives with moral superiority over their husbands, as the speaker suggests at the end of Thomas's poem. Astell argues: "There is not a surer Sign of a noble Mind, a Mind very far advanc'd towards Perfection, than the being able to bear Contempt and an unjust Treatment from one's Superiors evenly and patiently" (51).

Such stoicism is similarly recommended by Chudleigh in the dedication to The Ladies Defence, where she advises women stuck with the "Hard Fortune to be marry'd to Men of brutish unsociable Tempers" to pay their husbands "as much Respect and to obey their Commands with as much readiness, as if they were the best and most indearing Husbands in the World" (5). In The Ladies Defence itself, Melissa's conclusion professes wives' unflinching devotion to the cruellest of husbands:

> Honour and Love we'll to our Husbands give,
> And ever Constant and Obedient live:
> If they are Ill, we'll try by gentle ways
> To lay those Tempests which their Passions raise;
> But if our soft Submissions are in vain,
> We'll bear our Fate, and never once complain. (ll.809-814)

As in Thomas's poem, Melissa claims wives will submit unconditionally in the knowledge that they will be rewarded for their suffering in the long run.

Elsewhere, however, Chudleigh offers less stoic advice. In the conclusion to "To the Ladies," the speaker shifts from talking about a woman who is already married to offering advice to those women not yet wed. In the final lines she exhorts "you" (the "Ladies" of the title) to "shun that wretched state" (l.21)--marriage. Instead, she advises women to look out for themselves rather than to look for a husband: "Value yourselves, and men despise: / You must be proud, if you'll be wise" (ll.23-24).

Chudleigh was not alone in sometimes refusing the Astellian martyr-wife stance. Other women satirists also favoured bolder positions on the injustices of the matrimonial state. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's "Epistle from Mrs. Y--- to her Husband. 1724" presents yet another "Bad Husband" story, but this time there is plenty of explicit criticism of the institution and no wifely self-sacrificing. In contrast to the previous two poems, we know this one is based upon a specific historical instance: the scandalous divorce of William and Mary (née Heathcote) Yonge in 1724. Yonge was, by all accounts, an unpleasant man, notorious for his marital infidelities (Grundy 423). But it was his wife who became the centre of a messy scandal and court case for adultery. With the aid of testimony from spies, she was found guilty, responsible for damages (most of her dowry went to Yonge), eventually divorced, and even forced to suffer the humiliation of having her love-letters read out in the House of Lords. Disgraced in public and abandoned by her relations, she quickly vanished from historical records. Montagu's poem is, according to Grundy, a piece of "feminist propaganda" (417), which presents a side of the story not represented in the newspaper accounts of the trials.

Montagu's poem, in the voice of Mrs. Y--- after the fact, offers both a vigorous critique of the social systems

constraining women in marriage and stinging satire on Mr. Y--- and other "Bad Husbands" of his sort. The poem begins, like the other forsaken wife satires, with the speaker addressing her cold, obdurate husband with a mix of resolve (setting out to explain how she feels) and despair (knowing he will never understand). But instead of asking for an explanation for her husband's cruel behaviour, as the other forsaken wives do, Mrs. Y--- embarks on an explication of *her* behaviour, opening with a general complaint against the social restrictions on her sex: "Too, too severely Laws of Honour bind / The Weak Submissive Sex of Woman-kind" (ll.9-10; Essays and Poems 230-32). As in many of these marriage satires, the speaker associates women's lives with images of slavery, torture, and "eternal Chains" (l.24).

From this general critique of the treatment of her sex, the speaker shifts into a personal defence of her actions. She admits she is guilty of a "tender Crime" (53); however, she questions the double-standard by which her husband's "infamously loose" (l.61) conduct is acceptable and even celebrated, while her single indiscretion means her ruin. Men expect women to be weak and simple-minded, yet superhumanly virtuous, while their own acts remain morally unaccountable. Because she failed to live up to her impossible end of the double-standard, Mrs. Y--- finds herself doomed to the life of a "wretched Outcast," an "abandonn'd Wife," relegated to a "shameful Life" (ll.59,60). As for the fate of Mr. Y---, the tone shifts from pathos to sharp satire as the speaker concludes the poem with a scathing portrait of life after divorce. Made conveniently rich by his ex-wife's fortune, he is free to "Court the brittle Freindship [sic] of the Great" (l.71), flattering and pandering his way into finding a mother for his children. The poem then ends with the nasty image of Mr. Y--- fathering a "Glorious Race" (l.79) of ugly, spineless, inbred brats. Significantly, as Isobel Grundy points out, this polemical poem opens with images of suffering women and ends with a scene depicting the weakness and foolishness of men

(426). With this strongly worded critique of women's predicament and a sharply satiric ending, Montagu's poem ventures beyond the pathetic "Bad Husband" complaints of martyr-wife satires, like Thomas's "Forsaken Wife" and Wright's "Address to her Husband," and into more vigorous, reformist, satiric territory.

An even more vigorous reformist satire on marriage by a woman, earlier in the period, is "The Emulation" (1703) by Sarah Egerton (née Fyge, Field). Twenty years (and two husbands) after penning her biting reply to Gould's satire on woman, Sarah Egerton was writing satire that was even more irreverent than her impressive debut. Egerton's social critique begins with an angry, questioning opening reminiscent of The Female Advocate: "Say, tyrant Custom, why must we obey / The impositions of the haughty sway?" (Poems 108-9). As in Montagu's poem, the target of Egerton's satire is broader than just the "Bad Husband". She trains her reformist focus on the more abstract concept of "tyrant Custom" and its effects on women's lives: "From the first dawn of life unto the grave, / Poor womankind's in every state a slave" (ll.3-4). Marriage, however, rates special status as "the last, the fatal slavery" (l.7) of a woman's existence. Custom accords husbands "insulting tyranny" over wives; they are "justified by law" to treat wives with "ill manners," as slaves (ll.8,9). Egerton's tone suggests disgust and outrage; there is no retreating to the morally superior position of stoic devotion. Her speaker is remarkably brazen, a feisty scrapper to the end, mocking "tyrant Custom" and condemning its influence on women's lives, especially through marriage.

These last two satires articulate some of the strongest and deepest reformist critiques of marriage by Augustan women satirists. Domestic slavery and "Bad Husbands" were merely manifestations of larger ideological issues affecting the subject of marriage. Montagu and Egerton take women's marriage satire beyond describing the *symptoms* of the injustices of Augustan marriage for women (confinement and "Bad Husbands"), to examining

the *causes* of those injustices: the perversion of domestic patriarchalism and the "tyranny of Custom."

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The likelihood of landing a "Bad Husband" or ending up with a life of matrimonial confinement was so high for eighteenth-century married women that it should not be surprising that Augustan women satirists had such a cynical view of the institution. In fact, while Astell and her followers had insisted that it was not the institution of marriage itself, but rather the people in it who were the problem, not all women satirists concurred. Some women mocked the institution itself, implicitly, by undermining the literary forms associated with it, or explicitly, by cursing the nuptial state as the male libertines did.

The literary form most closely associated with marriage, the epithalamium, was an obvious ironic vehicle for marriage satirists. From its probable origin in ancient fertility ceremonies, to its early classical forms (Sappho, Theocritus, Catullus), to its English heyday (Spenser, Herrick), the epithalamium has been associated with commemorating the fulfilment of the cosmic or natural order that marriage symbolises.[11] However, at times, this form has also been employed ironically as a means of mocking the idea of marriage (Horne 183). But while Horne suggests that eighteenth-century women epithalamists worked only in conventional ways to celebrate marriage (189), I want to consider some instances where women used that form to satirize it.

"An Epithalamium" (1731), by "A Lady," is a mock-homage to the matrimonial state, a witty condemnation of marriage masquerading as a celebration. The poem begins conventionally, describing a procession of relevant mythological figures (Hymen

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[11] For more on the epithalamium, see Virginia J. Tufte, The Poetry

and Cupid); however, instead of signalling a joyous occasion, these gods conjure an ominous mood: Hymen is a "hideous tyrant" (l.2); Cupid is a pied-piper of doom, bringing only "False hopes and phantom joys" (l.5); as he passes, "witless maids and swains, / Lured by the show, put on his gilded chains" (ll.7-8).[12] Following this foreboding image of wedlock, the speaker offers other conventional anti-marriage warnings from the libertine tradition: marriage may be a sure way to catch a spouse, but it is also the best way to lose a lover. In other words, Hymen's torch is bound to overwhelm Cupid's fire. Before long all passion evaporates and husband and wife "grow Platonic" (l.29). The speaker even offers a witty scientific explanation for this phenomenon. Sages know that

> Two distant bodies, while they're free and loose,
> May action and reaction still produce:
> But by compulsive force together tied,
> No motion can begin from either side. (ll.39-43)

This is the libertine argument: that marriage is incompatible with 'natural' human sexuality, which requires absolute freedom. To round out the argument, the speaker presents the story of Salmacis, the nymph who, whilst embracing Hermes' son, begs Jove to "grant me to remain / Thus joined, for ever, to the lovely swain!" (ll.59-60). Her wish is granted--literally--and she and the boy are physically merged into a single monstrous creature, Hermaphrodite. Thus the moral of the story and the poem is that marriage is unnatural, that it produces monstrous results.

The satire in "An Epithalamium" is strongly libertine in its censure of the idea of marriage. In fact, it is so libertine that Horne doubts the attribution to a female writer (89). He argues that such glorification of romantic passion outside of wedlock by a woman writer may have been possible in the Restoration (he acknowledges some of Aphra Behn's songs in this

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of Marriage: A Critical History of the Epithalamium (1968).

tradition), but was not likely in the 1730s (89). I agree that, generally, libertinism became a less acceptable ideology for women to espouse as the eighteenth century wore on, but there were always exceptions to the trend, as Mehetabel Wright's "Wedlock. A Satire" proves. In addition, "An Epithalamium" is written in the second person, *to* women (l. 17); it is an advice poem cautioning women to "shun the tempting bait" (l.9) of matrimony, whereas most libertine marriage satires by men are addressed to other *men*. The argument may be libertine and thus associated with men, but the subject of the poem is clearly how marriage is bad for *women*.

While this anonymous mock epithalamium concerns marriage in general, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's short, satiric "Epithalamium" (probably written before 1739) is addressed to a specific, though unidentified, couple described only as "Mr. H**d" and "black Kate" (l.1). The first two lines consist of a conventional offer of "good wishes [to the couple] for that blessed state," followed by a darkly ironic "blessing":

> May you fight all the day like a dog and a cat,
> And yet ev'ry year produce a new brat.
> Fal la!
> May she never be honest--you never be sound;
> May her tongue like a clapper be heard a mile round;
> Till abandon'd by joy, and deserted by grace,
> You hang yourselves both in the very same place.
> Fal la! (ll.3-10)

There is an element of personal lampoon here: the address to the man has the effect of implying that fault will lie mostly with the woman. But Montagu's main target is marriage itself. The rhetorical structure (with conventional opening and "May you..." format) and the gleeful "Fal la!" refrain suggests a joyful celebration of matrimony, but the actual content of the

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[12] Lonsdale 116-17.

"blessings"--that the couple may fight, produce brats, lie, cheat, nag, and finally hang themselves--wickedly undermines any celebratory mood.

Similarly, Elizabeth Thomas's "A New Litany, Occasioned by an Invitation to a Wedding" (1722) combines a serious form with deeply ironic content. Instead of epithalamium, she plays off the conventional structure of another ritualistic form, the litany. Her poem is a parody of an actual litany, such as this one from the Common Book of Prayer:

> From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation,
> Good Lord, deliver us.
>
> From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle, and murder, and from sudden death,
> Good Lord, deliver us.
>
> From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred and malice, all uncharitableness,
> Good Lord, deliver us. (n.p.)

Thomas's litany, however, petitions God to "free us" not from plagues and tempests but from the scourges of matrimony:

> From marrying in haste, and repenting at leisure
> Not liking the person, yet liking his treasure:
> Libera nos.
>
> From a mind so disturbed that each look does reveal it;
> From abhorring one's choice, and not sense to conceal it:
> Libera nos.

From a husband to govern, and buy him his wit;
From a sullen, ill-natured and whimsical cit:
Libera nos. (Miscellany Poems 98)

As in Montagu's satire, there is a deeply ironic relationship between form and content. In using the mock-litany form, Thomas implicitly compares the evils of marriage to those of an actual litany (the devil, pestilence, malice, etc.) Although the poem offers a darkly cynical view of marriage, the seriousness of the refrain ("Libera nos."--"free us" or "deliver us") is undermined by the rollicking rhythm of the couplets.

All three of these poems are parodies of forms associated with matrimonial rituals. The mock-epithalamia and Thomas's litany appropriate forms associated with the glorification of matrimony and use them instead to mock the institution. The poems poke fun at the discrepancy between what marriage is supposed to be, according to the rhetoric of epithalamia (a state of elevated bliss), and what it often actually is (a struggle marked by deceit, arguments, and abuse). This ironic discrepancy is mirrored in the relationship between form and content of these poems: epithalamia and litanies are sacred forms, intended for the celebration of God's institution. The content--which portrays married life as a cruel farce--undermines the sanctified form.

The view of marriage in these mock poems is cynical, but it is downright rosy compared to the portrayal of marriage in Mehetabel Wright's "Wedlock. A Satire" (written ca. 1730).[13] Wright's satire goes far beyond the irony found in mock epithalamia and litanies; she presents an out-and-out attack on the institution, a brazen version of the old male libertine critique of matrimony. In contrast to most of the poems discussed so far, this one contains no deep social critique, no

[13] Lonsdale 114.

rational dissection of the double-standard, no questioning of the patriarchalist model of marriage, no hint of reformism. Rather, its purpose is pure invective. In fact, Wright's poem curses the institution of marriage in ways that the immediate followers of Mary Astell, such as Chudleigh and Thomas, never dared. In the Elizabethan-Restoration tradition of satiric cursing, she rails against her "Eternal foe" (l.13), wedlock, calling it every name in the book ("scorpion," "plague," "bane of freedom," "deep damnation," "serpent," "monster," etc.). She even summons help to hate, invoking "maidens old and matrons sage" (l.10) to "lend [her] for a while your rage" (l.9) to help her curse that devilish state.

It is difficult to say how much of this satire is rhetorical exercise and how much is genuine contempt for marriage. William C. Horne reads this satire autobiographically--and it is difficult not to, considering what we know about Wright's own unhappy marriage--as an expression of her heartfelt aversion to the institution.[14] However, it is possible she was at least partly penning a conventional exercise. Wright was unusually well-educated for an eighteenth-century woman (she could read Greek by the age of eight [Lonsdale 110]); she may have been familiar with the rich libertine tradition of vituperative attacks on the matrimonial state (recall the first epigraph), and this poem may be a deliberate exercise in that tradition, as Elspeth Knights suggests (19). Wright invokes the standard libertine criticism that marriage brings a loss of "freedom, ease and mirth" (l.19). However, even if she is echoing the libertines, the kind of freedom she laments losing is almost

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[14] Mehetabel Wright (née Wesley), a sister of Charles and John Wesley, married a hard-drinking plumber, William Wright, in 1725. In letters to her father, she describes "what hurt matrimony has done me." She explains that her marriage lacks "a mutual affection and desire of pleasing, something near an equality of mind and person, either earthly or heavenly wisdom, and any thing to keep love warm between a young couple" (qtd. in Lonsdale 110).

certainly not the same purely (mythical) sexual liberty the libertines coveted. The loss of "freedom, ease, and mirth" for an eighteenth-century woman suggests the loss of a much more literal *domestic* freedom than the sexual freedom the libertines idealized.[15]

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The view of marriage in Augustan women's satire is generally cynical: the matrimonial landscape is dominated by pitfalls such as confinement and domestic slavery ("loss of freedom, ease, and mirth") and ominous "Bad Husbands." However, some women's marriage satire offers a more complex view of the nuptial state, emphasizing potential positives as well as negatives of marriage. Elizabeth Thomas's "Epistle to Clemena. Occasioned by an Argument she had maintained against the Author" (published 1722; written around 1700, according to Lonsdale [36]) is one satire that features many of the same themes as the poems already discussed but also adds a few twists, some of which foreshadow the changes in women's marriage satire around mid-century.

Thomas's poem is a progress piece, a favourite satiric verse form of the Augustans. Distinguished from the static "character" by its dynamism, the "progress," as the name suggests, illustrates the character's *development* over a lifetime or career. (The name progress is often ironic, however, since the protagonist's chronological progress is characteristically a regression in fortune.) Progress pieces abounded in the Augustan period (Griffith 218), the best known instances being Willian Hogarth's cycles of paintings: Harlot's Progress (1732), Rake's Progress (1733-5), and Marriage à la Mode (1743-5). In their literary form, progress pieces are "brief narratives, generally in poetic satire," that trace the career of an individual or

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[15] Whatever her intent in writing this poem, her brother Samuel took it as a genuine critique of marriage and responded with "an outraged harangue": his poem "A Full Answer" (see Knights 19).

sometimes two individuals ("parallel" or "dual progress") from childhood or early adulthood to death, disaster, or ironic success (Sitter 6). Grub Street writers produced such progress satires in droves (Horne 118); well-known examples by a more prominent writer include Swift's "Phyllis, or the Progress of Love" and "The Progress of Beauty."[16]

In particular, marriage progresses were a favourite subgenre. These typically take the form of advice poems warning young men and women of what to expect from matrimony. The best-known Augustan marriage progress is probably Swift's "The Progress of Marriage," written around January 1722 but never published in Swift's lifetime (Complete Poems 719). This poem recounts the story of a marriage between an old, rich, bookish Dean and his young coquettish wife, Lady Jane.[17] The couple is a dreadful mismatch, doomed from the outset. Although "Both from the goal together start; / Scarce run a step before they part" (ll.31-32). Beginning with a farcical account of the marriage ceremony, the speaker describes in brief stages the comic incongruity between husband and wife, culminating in the gradual disintegration of this matrimonial union, the Dean's death, and the widow's subsequent entertainment of new suitors.[18] The point of Swift's satire is the folly of marital mismatches. But while both characters come off appearing ridiculous (he the stuffy penny-pincher, she the vain coquette), the wife receives special

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[16] Sitter also points out "progress" sections in larger poems by other poets: for instance, the Corinna segment in Rochester's "Letter from Artemisa in the Town to Chloe in the Country" and the section on modern philosophical man in his "Satyr Against Reason and Mankind." An example of a "dual progress" is Prior's "An Epitaph" (Sitter 8-9).

[17] In Swift's original draft of this poem, the wife's name is Philippa (as in "Philippa, daughter to an Earl" [l.2]). However, he rewrote the line to read "A handsome young imperious girl / Nearly related to an Earl" (ll.3-4), and elsewhere he refers to the wife as Lady Jane (Rogers 719).

[18] For a full discussion of this poem see Horne 123-26 and Sitter 16-18.

criticism for her imprudence and gregarious sexuality. By the end, the speaker openly blames Lady Jane for the unhappy marriage, cursing her with a wish for a "Bad Husband" in her second marriage and a "rooted pox to last forever," to boot (l.166).

In contrast to Swift's male-biased treatment of the marriage progress, Thomas's "Epistle" portrays the pitfalls of marriage practice from a woman's perspective. This progress is set in the framework of an address to the author's cousin, Ann Osborne (pen name "Clemena"), regarding a previous argument that seems to have been about Thomas's critical opinion of contemporary marriage practices. Following a brief introduction, the speaker states her thesis: despite the supposedly egalitarian model of marriage in the Bible (probably a reference to St. Paul's explication of the *mutual* duties both husband and wife have to love and respect one another), custom allows for a distinct double-standard in practice:

> Equal's the contract, equal are the vows,
> Yet Custom different licences allows:
> The man may range from his unhappy wife,
> But woman's made a property for life. (ll.11-14)

To illustrate her thesis, the speaker offers the story of the marriage of the "lovely and beauteous maid" (l.19), Aminta, and the "master of her charms" (l.22), the ominously named Nefario. The courtship and early married life of this beautiful couple was idyllic: he showered her with "rich presents" (l.24) and the "finest brilliants" (l.25); "nothing that she liked could purchased be too dear" (l.28). In return, he received the unparalleled "bliss" of her affections. But in less than a year the honeymoon was over, and true to the advice ballads' warnings about husbands' inevitable metamorphoses, "the libertine [Nefario] resumed his brutal life: / Oh! then how nauseous grew the name of wife" (ll.32-33). Just as the libertines cautioned, he grew weary of her conversation and bored by her once-fetching

wit and beauty. In short, he did precisely what "Advice to Virgins" warned would happen: he metamorphosed from a dashing gallant into a "Bad Husband." Like that "Bad Husband" of the stage, Sir John Brute in Vanbrugh's The Provoked Wife, Nefario enacts his hatred of married life by ignoring his wife and living his life as if he wasn't married at all. He carouses with the rakes of the town, staying out all night drinking, playing, whoring, and fighting with the watch. When he finally stumbles home at five a.m., drunk and cursing, he kicks the servants, showers Aminta with "a thousand brutish names" (l.88), and threatens to strike her. But before violence erupts, "overcome with wine, / Dead drunk he falls, and snoring lies supine" (ll.92-92).

Nefario is almost a mirror image of Vanbrugh's Sir John Brute; however, Thomas's Aminta is no Lady Brute. The neglected wife in Vanbrugh's play counters her husband's abuse with the oldest revenge in the book: she threatens to cuckold him. Aminta, however, is more an idealized creature of pastoral romance than a sly character of the Restoration comic stage. Like the martyr-spouse in "The Forsaken Wife," she remains incredibly steadfast to Nefario in spite of his meanness: she waits up for him each night, fears for his safety, prays for his soul, and even "patiently receives" (l.89) his insults and imprecations. He shows "no repentance" (l.94); she exhibits endless patience. She bears her burden with the stoic patience of Griselda: "with pain she draws her breath, / And still survives an evil worse than death" (ll.96-97). Thus ends the mixed tale of Nefario and Aminta: he ends up happy, she is distraught. In contrast to Swift's "Progress of Marriage," here it is the man--a "Bad Husband"--instead of the woman who is the main "reason" for the unhappy marriage.

In conclusion, the speaker steps back to explicate the moral of this story. She remarks with a sigh,

> Ah, friend! in these depraved, unhappy times,

> When vice walks barefaced, virtues pass for crimes:
> Many Nefarios must we think to find,
> Though not so bad as this, yet villains in their kind.
> (ll.98-101)

This is where the poem ends in Miscellany Poems (1722). However, another version of the conclusion of this poem appears in the first volume of Thomas's posthumously published correspondence with Richard Gwinnet, Pylades and Corinna (1731), in between Pylades' (Gwinnett's) ninth and tenth letters. In letter nine, Gwinnet praises Thomas's poetry and thanks her especially for the "Comfort" she afforded him in "the Conclusion to your NEFARIO and ARMIDA [sic]." Following this letter, the editor (Edmund Curll) intrudes with an "N.B." to explain that "Among CORINNA'S Papers I found the following Characters, of NEFARIO and ARMIDA, referred to in this Letter." These "Characters," which Curll reproduces, begin with the final 18 lines of the "Epistle to Clemena" (with slight changes, the most notable being the name change from Aminta to Armida).

However, this version of the ending of the poem features an extra 21 lines not found in the Miscellany version of the "Epistle." The extra lines seem to attempt to clarify the speaker's purpose in the poem and perhaps even make a bold proposition. She denies that she is out to "Satyrize the perfect'st State on Earth" (marriage), insisting rather that her target is the *double-standard* custom permits *within* marriage. She hopes only to warn women against falling for Nefarios. As if to prove she has no grudge against the institution itself, the speaker explains she would gladly get married herself, once she finds a suitable prospect. Of course he would have to be everything Nefario is not: pious, loyal, just, wise, truth-loving, modest, a hater of flattery, a man of principles, "Not learn'dly vain, yet skill'd in lib'ral Arts."

> One who the World's Temptations can withstand,
> And all his Passions equally command;

If this uncommon Creature should agree,
To like an honest, dull, Sincerity,
(For Wit and Beauty ne'er belong'd to me)
I could contentedly accept the Bliss,
And with a Pleasure know no Will but His.

A man with such qualifications would stand out as a rare diamond amongst a field of dull Nefarios.

This added portrait of the speaker's ideal man serves as a positive norm to counterbalance the negative Nefario, thereby fulfilling certain neo-classical models for proper satire.[19] But in contrast to the portrait of an ideal husband in another marriage satire by a woman, Montagu's "The Lover. A Ballad" (written ca. 1721-25), there is no cynicism in Thomas's portrait.[20] While Montagu doubts that such a perfect man exists, Thomas not only seems sure that he *does*, she may have written the ending of the poem *to him*, to prove it. Gwinnet was certainly pleased with the ending; he wrote back to Thomas: "I am glad your Opinion of Matrimony agrees with mine" (207). Perhaps he first read the version of "Armida and Nefario," as Curll calls it, without the ending and mistakenly assumed that Thomas was hostile to the idea of marriage, an opinion that would have had dire consequences for his personal plans. (Gwinnet courted Thomas and the couple planned to eventually marry, although circumstance and his sudden death prevented the match.)[21] The added conclusion to the poem may have served to clarify for Gwinnet the exact nature

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[19] See Mary Clare Randolph's "The Structural Design of Formal Verse Satire." Philological Quarterly 21 (1942): 368-84.

[20] Montagu also describes an ideal lover:

Oh was there a Man (but where shall I find)
Good sense, and good Nature so equally joyn'd?)
Would value his pleasure, contribute to mine,
Not meanly would boast, nor lewdly design,
Not over severe, yet not stupidly vain,
For I would have the power thô not the pain. (ll.11-16)

Like Thomas, Montagu envisions a companion who is "Friend" and "Lover," "handsomely mixed" (l.34) (Grundy Essays 234-36).

[21] For more on Thomas's biography and satire, see chapter four.

of Thomas's views of marriage: that, no, she was not against the *idea* of marriage, just *bad* marriages in which the husband and wife fail to treat each other with love and respect.

But Thomas does more in these added lines than just clarify her views on marriage. In context, her addition amounts to a virtual proposal of marriage ("If this uncommon Creature should agree . . . I could contentedly accept the Bliss . . . .) The result is a curious mixture of conformity and radicalism. On the one hand, Thomas suggests she is quite willing to be a conventional wife in the patriarchal tradition (she is self-deprecating, willing to obey a husband who knows how to command: she would "with a Pleasure know no Will but His"); on the other hand, she hints at a need for reform in some husband-wife relations and is not afraid to act the part of female suitor (she boldly propositions Gwinnet, like a heroine in a comedy).

Thomas's unorthodox "Epistle" also points to a shift toward an emerging new ideology of marriage. The speaker's insistence on holding out for an ideal marriage companion (one with the attributes of a friend as much as a provider) reflects the growing trend in the eighteenth century toward what Lawrence Stone calls the "companionate" model of marriage. Instead of accepting the often harsh patriarchalist model of matrimony, such as that illustrated by the story of Armida/Aminta and Nefario, the speaker reveals her belief in the possibility of a different kind of partnership between spouses, one based on mutual respect and love. In the eighteenth-century companionate model of marriage, husbands and wives are more closely matched in age, temperament, and interests, rather than merely by class or status. As for motives for marrying, the prospect of emotional satisfaction begins to take precedence over ambition for increased income or status (Stone 325). Addison, for example, describes just such a marriage as the ideal: it consists of

> [t]wo Persons who have chosen each other out of all the Species, with Design to be each other's mutual

> Comfort and Entertainment, [who] have in that Action bound themselves to be good-humour'd, affable, discreet, forgiving,patient, and joyful, with Respect to each other's Frailties and Imperfections, to the End of their Lives. (Spectator 4:237)

According to this model, the husband/wife relationship starts to look less and less like a master/servant tie and more and more like an affectionate bond between friends, lovers, and parents (Horne 1). Patriarchalism still dominated social thought; as Thomas's "Epistle" suggests, wives still saw their duty as submission to their husbands, but instead of absolute domination, husbands were expected to show their wives affection, fidelity and kindness.

The rise of companionate marriage occurred hand-in-hand with another ideological shift in the conception of marriage, away from the domestic patriarchalism and toward a new contract ideology. As Susan Staves suggests, with the development of contract ideas in seventeenth-century political theory (the 'social contract,' a king's obligation to his subjects), it was only a matter of time before the same ideas were applied by some to the domestic realm: "If a political sovereign's authority over his subjects was justifiable by a contract ideology, so the husband's authority over his wife was similarly justifiable" (164).[22] In fact, Staves argues, contract ideology is, in some ways, more plausible in the domestic sphere than in the political one. A citizen might wonder when exactly he or she personally agreed to the social contract, "but a wife could easily enough remember the words she had spoken on her wedding day" (164). Staves shows that in eighteenth-century society in general, and in courts of law, in particular, there was an increasing tendency

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[22] Astell had observed precisely this in 1700: "Again, if Absolute Sovereignty be not necessary in a State, how comes it to be so in a Family? Or if in a Family why not in a State; since no Reason can be alledg'd for the one that will not hold more strongly for

to recognize marriage as in some sense a contract more than a status. The speaker in Thomas's "Epistle" reflects this growing contractual element too. She is not just indirectly proposing to Pylades; she is also setting out her terms for an informal marriage agreement or contract. She says, in effect, here is what I expect in a husband; here is what a husband can expect of me as a wife.

Thomas's poem illustrates one effect of these emerging ideologies of marriage on Augustan women's marriage satire. Instead of depicting just the negative aspects of married life, she also offers her version of an ideal marriage, one that is less harshly patriarchalistic and more companionate. But these new ideas of marriage affected Augustan marriage satire in other ways too. In broad terms, Horne argues that with the rise of companionate and contract ideology came what he calls a "feminization" of Augustan marriage poetry, a shift from satire and censure towards celebration and sentiment (5). In other words, he argues that the growth of the new ideology caused a general decline in marriage satire, both in quantity and intensity, by mid-century: instead of blasting matrimony with invectives or portraying marriage as a torturous state in which husband and wife tormented each other, poets turned to praising it as a blissful end in which the happy couple brought out the best in each other. As Horne puts it, the Augustans traded a mythical portrayal of marriage as hell, for a mythical depiction of it as heaven (5). In fact, none other than Richard Gwinnett's views on the subject reflect precisely this shift that Horne describes. Gwinnett writes to Thomas:

> Invectives against Marriage I take to be like railing at Vertue, which will still be admired even by those who are void of it themselves; and the greatest Libertines cannot but confess, that real Happiness may

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the other?" (Reflections 17).

> be found in a faithful beloved Wife, which they in vain seek after in promiscuous Conversations, and unsatisfactory Licentiousness. (P&C 1:94)

According to Gwinnett, satire and invectives on marriage are passé and delusional, the desperate resort of unhappy libertines; he prefers to celebrate the institution as the only source of "real Happiness".

Horne's theory that there was a decline in Augustan marriage satire around mid-century, prompted by a shift from satire to celebration in Augustan marriage poetry, is founded, in part, on a liberal assumption. This is the belief that marriage evolved from a harshly patriarchal model in the late seventeenth century to a more companionate one by the mid-eighteenth century, and that, therefore, there was less reason for wives and husbands to complain about the institution, and thus less reason to satirize it. Stone argues that the rise of the companionate ideology led to a softening of domestic patriarchalism and an equalizing of the husband-wife relationship (325). Practices such as wife-beating became less tolerable and conduct books began to describe wives as "companions" and even "equals".[23] Although I agree, in general, with Horne's suggestion that marriage satire declined in popularity as the eighteenth century wore on, I see the reasons for this in more complicated terms.

First, marriage satire probably declined around mid-century because satire, in general, lost popularity at that time. It should not be surprising that there was less marriage satire as the eighteenth century went on, since, as I explain in the introduction, there was less satire overall.

Second, the liberal, progressive view of the history of eighteenth-century marriage behind Horne's theory is not entirely accurate. As Staves persuasively argues, in the eighteenth century there *was* a shift away from the old ideology of domestic

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[23] A Father's Legacy to His Daughter 114.

patriarchalism, toward more equitable contract ideas and contract ideology; however, this shift in marriage ideology did not last long before "deeper patriarchal structures" won out and elements of the old ideology were re-entrenched in different ways (4). Mid to late eighteenth-century wives may seem to have been better off in some ways (for example, they were usually entitled to a jointure), but they were worse off in others (the price of acquiring that jointure was giving up any claim to dower, which was often much more valuable). There is a liberal tendency to perceive mid-century marriage as more egalitarian than early century marriage, but that was not necessarily the case.

Mid-century women still had good reasons to satirize marriage; they were just *different* reasons. The rising companionate ideology did have an effect on women's marriage satire, but I would argue that, if anything, it served to bolster women's satire rather than mitigate it. The liberal thesis--that the companionate ideology left little to satirize about marriage--may hold for *men's* marriage satire, but I argue that the companionate ideology actually strengthened the basis of *women's* reformist critiques of marriage. The rise of the companionate ideology gave further credence to what women satirists had been saying for years: matrimonial union should be based more on mutual respect than on just a patriarchal ideology of blind submission to male authority.

In fact, the shift toward contract ideology and a companionate model of marriage gave rise, especially in the 1730s and 40s, to new targets in women's marriage satire, some related to marriage for the wrong reasons, and others associated with new breeds of "Bad Husbands".

As the new ideology begins to be accepted as the norm (Stone suggests it was the norm by 1740)[24], the old reasons for marrying--money, status, security, and parental choice--begin to

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[24] Stone 329.

be seen as crude and primitive, and thus logical butts of satire. Women satirists, in particular, condemned the old motives for marriage, since they were the ones with the most to gain from the new ideology. Although parental choice remained a significant factor in marriage matches well into the nineteenth century, women satirists ridiculed the pitfalls of arranged marriages as early as the Restoration. Aphra Behn's "Song," from before 1689, is an early, fierce condemnation of arranged marriages and those who make such matches:

> As wretched, vain, and indiscreet,
> Those matches I deplore,
> Whose bartering friends in council meet
> To huddle in a wedding sheet
> Some miserable pair that never met before. (ll.1-5)
> (Fullard 98)

Love is "of no account" (l.6) to these money-grubbing matchmakers; "No merit but in gold they see; / So portion and estate agree, / No matter what the bride and bridegroom do" (ll. 8-10). The speaker curses all "covetous husbands" who "wed with such designs" (ll.11,12). For although they care only for fortunes, it is really the genuine lover who "Reaps the true bliss, and digs the richer mine" (l.15). Behn's satire holds up the companionate ideology--which advocates the bliss of a love-based relationship--as the positive norm of her marriage satire.

Chudleigh also condemns arranged marriages in one of the soberest passages in The Ladies Defence (1701). Melissa considers the sorry fate of young unmarried women: "Unhappy they, who by their Duty led, / Are made the Partners of a hated Bed." Chudleigh paints a devastating portrait of greedy fathers matching their innocent young daughters with "Empty Fops," "Nauseous Clowns," or old, ill-humoured, money-bag-hugging curmudgeons (ll.139-40,142). Images of bondage, torture, and human sacrifice dominate: such young women "are like Victims to

the Alter led, / Born for Destruction, and for Ruine bred" (ll.161-62).

Elsewhere, in contrast, Chudleigh praises the possibility of a companionate marriage in which compatible partners choose to join together. In "A Dialogue between Alexis and Astrea," Astrea celebrates the idea of such a marriage: "When Humors are alike, and Souls agree, / How sweet! how pleasant must that Union be!" (ll.25-26). However, even here Chudleigh undermines this prospect by observing that "that Bliss is but by few possest, / But few are with the Joys of Friendship blest." Companionate marriage is an ideal, one that is all too rare. For most women,

> Marriage is but a fatal Lott'ry made,
> Where some are Gainers, but the most betray'd:
> The mild and froward, cruel and the kind,
> Are in unequal Chains by Fate confin'd:
> Most are a Sacrifice to Interest made,
> Interest, and Gold, now more than Love persuade.
> (ll.27-34)

The chances of an arranged marriage being a happy marriage are about as good as the chances of winning a lottery. When the interests of "Gold" outweigh those of "Love," the consequences usually involve sacrifice and "unequal Chains" (a phrase recalling Finch's poem) for the woman.

As Behn and Chudleigh suggest, arranged marriages are usually driven by money and such motivation--marriage for money only, even when not in arranged marriages--quickly becomes a target of satire in the eighteenth century. In women's satire, especially, the hypocritical husband, who claims to be in love but really only cares for his wife's fortune, and the fortune-hunting beau[25] emerge as stock figures of ridicule. For instance,

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[25] In his "Essay on the Mischief of giving Fortunes with Women in Marriage," Gwinnett attacks male "Fortune-Hunters" as one of the biggest problems with contemporary marriage practices (P&C 2:102).

Anne Finch's "Ralph's Reflections: Upon the Anniversary of his Wedding" (1713) is a pseudo-dramatic monologue in which "Ralpho," a married man, laments (to himself) the day he sealed his nuptial fate. He recalls his words on that fateful day and admits his true motives for marrying were less than romantic:

> Th' expressions I remember well,
> For better or for worse,
> Till death us part, I take thee Nell,
> (That is I take a Purse). (ll.5-8)

Only gold could make the bitter pill of matrimony go down, he explains. Financial concerns are, in fact, the driving force of marriage, in Ralph's view. Everyone is in it for money, he figures, including the mercenary priest (who, incidentally, charges the same fee for a wedding as for an execution) and even the wedding guests who are only there for the free supply of biscuits and wine at the church! In the end, however, Ralph is too much of a coward to put his mouth where the money is. Instead of admitting that he hates being married and only did it for the money in the first place, he bites his tongue, kisses his wife, and pays lip service to the joys of the nuptial state: "Oh! happy state of human life, / If Marriage be thy best!" (ll.21-22). The irony of these final hollow words, however, only enhances the brief portrait of Ralpho as a pathetic hypocrite who not only marries out of greed but is too much of a coward to admit it to anyone but himself.

Finch uses the technique of ventriloquism to allow her "dummy," Ralph, to be exposed as a hypocrite through his own words. Mary Leapor uses a similar ironic narrative structure in "Strephon to Celia. A Modern Love Letter" (Poems 104-6). This satire is a monologue billet-doux from a sly, smooth suitor to his wealthy beloved. The target of Leapor's satire is the doublespeak of romantic courtship: the combination of a lover's idealizing, romantic flattery with his practical desire to land a wife with a fortune. Strephon opens his letter with a fervent

declaration of his love, reinforced with all manner of Petrarchan conceits: descriptions of his lover's rosy cheeks, coral lips, pearly teeth, ivory arms, and her cold breast in contrast to his burning forehead and frequent swooning fits. But once this obligatory praise is out of the way, he proceeds to the real business of his letter: "Now, madam, as the chat goes round, / I hear you have ten thousand pound" (ll.29-30). Of course, he assures her, it is her "person" (l.32), not her gold, for which he burns. Nevertheless, he fears "for [her] own sake" (l.33) (certainly not his) that her money and houses should really be "secured" and "insured" (ll.33,34). Real estate is a tricky business, he reminds her, and Celia might be wise to allow a "friend [male, no doubt] to manage it" (l.38) for her. In fact, such a "friend" she "soon might have, / By fixing on your humble slave" (ll.39-40). Again he insists (obviously protesting too much) that he cares not a louse for her money; he only wishes to "secure" her situation for her.

This business stated, Strephon smoothly shifts back to his Petrarchan mode, closing with more entreaties and flattery:

> Then smile upon your slave, that lies
> Half murdered by your radiant eyes;
> Or else this very moment dies-- (ll.45-47)

The clichéd enslavement and death imagery--the dangling dash at the poem's end suggests Strephon may even have succumbed mid-sentence to yet another swooning fit--serves as a distraction to offset the speaker's true concern: verifying Celia's fortune and proposing means to get his hands on it. The point of Leapor's satire is not just that Strephon is only after Celia's money, but that he is so ridiculously *obvious* about it, only bothering to try to hide his greed with the tritest of flowery rhetoric.

At the opposite end of the satiric spectrum from Leapor's coolly ironic "Love-Letter" is Elizabeth Boyd's "To Mr. B--k, on His Leaving His Mistress for Want of Five-Hundred Pound" (1733). This short satire against men's strictly financial motives for

marrying presents an angry, satyr-figure persona (reminiscent of some of the satires of "Ephelia" and Sarah Fyge/Egerton) chastizing a man who left his mistress of three-hundred pounds for a woman with a larger fortune. The most prominent satiric techniques in Boyd's poem are heavy-handed invective, name-calling and insults in the Elizabethan satiric tradition: the speaker calls Mr. B--k a "Base sordid fop," (1), a "mercenary knave" (l.9), a "wretch" (l.8), and a "churlish elf" (l.10), and advises him that if three hundred pounds is not "sufficient pelf" (l.3), then "for want of five go hang thy self" (l.4; Fullard 112). The target of Boyd's satire is the same as Finch's and Leapor's: men who make pretence to love--who "Lament and pine, nay storm, curse, rave and fret" (l.5)--but who really only care about a woman's fortune--a source of "Gold" to help "support thy timber trade" (113).

As mid-century approaches, the foppish "Fortune-Hunter" begins to supplant the "Bad Husband" as the chief target of women's marriage satire. For example, in Sarah Dixon's "Modern Love" (1740), an advice poem and satiric critique of "Romantick Notions" (146) of love as manufactured by poets, the speaker offers the brief progress story of the "fair Lucinda," a rich, naïve, young woman with "Num'rous Slaves, obsequious and sincere." Amongst her many admirers, however, it was Philander who the most "Homage paid;"

> He lik'd her Fortune--but <u>ador'd</u> the Maid.
> Perpetual sigh'd, made Vows, and dy'd away,
> Not less than <u>twenty</u> thousand times a Day. (148)

An asterisk marks this last line in the text, and the corresponding footnote explains the significance of the exact number of Philander's swoons: "The Lady had 20000 l. in <u>South Sea</u> Stock." Thus, his adoration for Lucinda is carefully meted out in perfect proportion to her fortune. So not surprisingly, when the bubble bursts in "a <u>South Sea</u> Blast," it takes "one short Day," to lay "all her Beauties waste" (148). The speaker

observes: "Lucinda's ruin'd,--where's the Lover now? / Her Charms (at once) to his admiring Eye, / Vanish'd, like gaudy Iris, from the Sky" (149). His romantic flights of passion suddenly subside and out of nowhere

> bright Reason re-assumes;
> He sighs,--is sorry,--and at length presumes,
> His Chariot waits,--past Ten, upon my Word?
> Madam, your Pardon,--I must meet my Lord. (149)

Philander shifts from poetic to more practical language as he stutters and shuffles his way to a hasty exit, another shallow fop who suddenly loses interest when a woman loses her fortune.

Mary Leapor's "The Mistaken Lover" is also, like Dixon's poem, a progress piece/advice poem about the courtship and marriage of a young couple: the "sprightly" beau, Strephon and the "fresh" coquette, Celia. The stock pastoral names of the characters, as well as some of the situations, recall Swift's boudoir poems, "The Lady's Dressing Room" and "Strephon and Cellia." A naive young man becomes enamoured with a beautiful young woman only to have that infatuation turn sour when the initial idealized romance wears thin. However, to this revival of the "Bad Husband" structure, Leapor adds the old commercial twist: the spendthrift husband who loses interest in his wife but not her fortune.

The speaker describes the couple's meeting with appropriate Petrarchan hyperbole: Celia's "killing Eyes" struck Strephon's admiring stares at the playhouse, and he "receiv'd a mortal Wound." Not sure how to proceed with his wooing, he decided to "Commence the Beau, / For Women oft are caught by Show," or so he presumed. He appears decked out like a Sir Fopling Flutter, "Array'd in Coat of Green and Gold," donning a "scarlet Plume," and featuring sleeves "á-la-mode de France." For the courtship he purchased "all the Songs of Note, / And got the Lover's Cant by rote." He sneaks into Celia's garden to serenade her, dance for her, and recite poetry for her while she performs her toilet.

The consummate wooer, he even languished "at her feet dejected lying, / Praying, weeping, sighing, dying," as any proper lover would. In turn, Celia was "kind"; the match made, "Grave Hymen's sacred knot was ty'd, / And Celia Fair commenc'd a Bride."

The speaker forgoes an account of the wedding and honeymoon ("We'll leave it to a softer Pen"), preferring instead to fast-forward six months to the moment of truth. For, as

> Some learned Casuists make it Clear,
> A wife may please for half a Year:
> And others say, her Charms will hold
> As long as the suspended Gold;
> But that her Bloom is soon decay'd,
> And wither'd when her Fortune's paid. (84)

True enough, Strephon proves a fickle, spendthrift of a husband. He fritters away Celia's "Five thousand Pounds of Sterling clear" on various flights of fancy, and gradually grows weary of her company:

> Mistaken Strephon finds no more
> His Celia charming as before:
> Her Eyes!--why, they have lost their Fire:
> The Roses in her Cheek expire. (86)

However, he does see that rosiness in other cheeks: in Clarinda's at the Park or Lindamire's at the playhouse. But for Celia he begins to feel only disgust. When she confronts him, he, unlike Finch's Ralph, comes clean:

> Why, Madam, I must own that you,
> Have Merit, (give the De'l his due)
> And was the Pleasure of my Life,
> Before you wore the Name of Wife:
> But Ma'm, the Reason was, I find,
> That while a Lover I was blind:
> And now the Fault is not in me,
> 'Tis only this--that I can see. (86)

Like Swift's character of the same name, Strephon suddenly notices all kinds of defects in his wife that he somehow missed before: her incorrect posture, the freckles on her face (which he *thought* was fair), the common brownness of her hair (which he *thought* was black), and the unsightly pimples on her chin. Disillusioned and distraught, he announces to Celia,

> Thus, Madam, I the Truth have told;
> 'Tis true, I thank you for your Gold;
> But find in searching of my Breast,
> That I cou'd part with all the rest. (90)

The "learned Casuists" are proven correct. After half a year of marriage, Celia's charms are non-existant for Strephon; it is only her fortune that maintains his interest.

However, in contrast to Swift's boudoir poems, which focus exclusively on the mindset of the male protagonist, Leapor's progress tells both sides of the story. Far from being crushed by Strephon's proclamation, Celia is relieved. She responds to his truth-telling with a smile: "in my Turn I'll own it too, / That I'm as much deceiv'd as you." Oddly enough this progress of a marriage gone bad actually concludes with an almost happy ending. Celia suggests that they agree to be civil; they may not love each other, but they can "live in short like courtly Friends."

The purpose of this poem, like many women's marriage satires, is, at least partly, to advise women of the dangers of matrimony. The speaker explains, at the end, that she aims to "Instruct the Celia's of the Age," to teach them to beware mismatches and marriage for money: "From here let our Example show / The gay Coquette and sprightly Beau: / That Love like theirs will never hold,/ Not tho' 'tis cemented with Gold." Behind this mock-didactic warning is the implicit belief that marriage can only work out happily for both partners if the husband and wife are compatible companions who share more than idealized fantasies of each other.

Leapor's satire may be evidence of the "softening" of marriage poetry in the eighteenth century that Horne describes. While this poem features themes similar to those of earlier women's marriage satires--a mismatch exacerbated by a philandering "Bad Husband"--Leapor's treatment of the subject here is playful and comic compared to the anger and despair of Wright's, Egerton's, and some of Chudleigh's satires from early in the century. In contrast to the pathetic conclusions of some of these earlier polemical satires, in which neglected wives are relegated to marital martyrdom, Leapor's Celia is not at all distraught over her husband's frank admissions of growing indifference toward her. In fact, the comic irony of this poem is highlighted by her response: not pathetic despair but casual relief. In general, as Leapor's poem suggests, Augustan women's marriage satire becomes less pointedly polemical and more playfully and broadly comic as mid-century approaches. Pathetic, forsaken wives and angry polemics grow scarcer and scarcer. "Bad Husbands" are replaced by merely "Foolish Husbands," like Strephon of "The Mistaken Lovers." Scathing critiques of old "male" marriage ideologies--patriarchalism and libertinism--begin to be rivalled by comic portrayals of marriage for the wrong reasons. In a sense, women's marriage satire shifts from being largely reformist and combatative to being more purely comic, as if women satirists were acknowledging that reform might not happen any time soon; women are stuck with the status quo, so why not poke fun at the institution as it exists?

Such a "softening" of Augustan women's satiric verse on marriage should *not* be taken as a sign that all was perfect with the state of married women at mid-century. I agree with Susan Staves that the liberal analyses of social historians such as Stone and Randolph Trumbach tend to exaggerate the impact of the companionate ideology on women's lives and paint an over-simplified picture of the eighteenth-century egalitarian family. These historians believe that the companionate ideology "bettered

the condition of women, making them 'more equal' with men" (Staves 222). As evidence of this improvement, they point to legal changes limiting a husband's control over his wife's estate and to the decline of arranged marriages: women had more say in the choice of a marriage partner and then more freedom within actual marriage, they argue.

However, as Staves points out, the situation of married women in the eighteenth century was much more complicated than Stone and Trumbach suggest. Although contract ideology did penetrate the legal field of married women's property in the eighteenth century, and it did challenge older models of patriarchalism, these challenges were "turned back" in the late eighteenth century (Staves 229). As for the increased freedom to choose a marriage partner, Staves points out that, in some ways, this development made wives more psychologically dependent on their husbands: because women had more power to choose, they also had an increased sense of personal responsibility for the consequences of that choice (224). In addition, the ostensibly liberalizing (for women) companionate ideology rose to prominence around the same time as another ideology that actually legitimated the *subordination* of women and proved more restrictive to wives: sentimentalism. As Susan Okin argues, sentimental ideology acted as a "reinforcement" for the patriarchal relation between husband and wife that had been temporarily challenged by seventeenth-century individualism and the new companionate ideology (72). In the sentimental family, the wife was restricted all over again, but in a new way: not so much as domestic slave but as keeper and protector of the sacred domestic sphere, responsible for the "good order and happiness within a family" (Staves 224).

Augustan women's marriage satire declined, changed, and "softened" around mid-century, but not because there was nothing left about marriage for Augustan women to satirize. More likely,women's marriage satire dropped off at that time because

satire in general declined at that time. If anything, women's contributions to the genre actually helped keep at least part of it alive and fresh in the eighteenth century. While male marriage satire clung to old libertine and patriarchalist-informed critiques of the nuptial state and exploited matrimonial satire as an excuse for satirizing the female sex, women satirists, in contrast, used the form as a means of articulating a genuine reformist social critique of marriage practices--one first based on a critique of these "male" ideologies and later bolstered by the rise of the companionate ideology of marriage. At mid-century, as much as in satire's heyday, marriage was an irresistible and important target for female satirists: although the institution had changed, there was still much to expose and to hold up to ridicule, in the hopes of effecting—however gradually--social change.

Chapter Four

Reform, Revenge, Reward: Elizabeth Thomas, Laetitia Pilkington, and the Uses of Women's Satire

> CORINNA vanquishes on Sight
> Her Beauty, and her Pen, both Fight.
>
> --From "The Vision" by Richard Gwinnet (Pylades and Corinna 1:87)

> I have just read the first volume of Mrs. Pilkington. She has a pretty genius for poetry, a turn of wit and satire and vanity....
>
> --From a letter from Elizabeth Montagu to Ann Donnellan, n.d. [early 1749?] (qtd. in Relke 118)

In chapters two and three, I explored a favorite sub-genre and a prevalent theme of Augustan women's verse satire, but in this chapter I want to address a broader question: why did Augustan women write satire? This issue of purpose is an intriguing paradox of much Augustan satire: what did the Augustans use satire for? On the one hand, the rhetoric of eighteenth-century satire associates the genre with noble aims: moral reform and the defence of virtue. On the other hand, among the more practical and less glorified uses of satire are the aims--certainly amoral if not immoral--of revenge and making money. For despite all the flowery rhetoric about lashing vice and exposing folly, satire was, most practically for some, a handy vehicle for paying back one's enemies and making money in the process. These latter motivations especially are too often overlooked in discussions of Augustan satire. In the Augustan literary marketplace, satire was a valuable tool and commodity, and 'female' satire, that supposedly anomalous entity, was no exception.

This Augustan literary marketplace, like satire itself, is usually considered a 'masculine' realm run by male patrons, publishers, printers, and writers. Only recently have feminist scholars such as Cheryl Turner and Paula McDowell begun to show that, in fact, significant numbers of women participated in all of the Augustan literary "economies" of patronage, charity, and hack writing, in various roles as patronesses, writers, and printers.[1] These "economies" were certainly male-dominated, and they had particular obstacles and pitfalls for women. As Dustin Griffin observes, some women may have been hesitant to enter into patronage arrangements which implicitly engaged them to exchange "benefits" with a male patron or to accept his "protection" at a time when "protection" was a euphemism for sexual "keeping" (Literary Patronage 189). In addition, some publishers refused to even consider publishing works by women; the novelist Jean Marishall recalls one publisher boasting that he "never published the productions of ladies" (160). Grub Street was often "a marketplace more interested in [women's] bodies than their books," a "shifting world of unreliable acquaintances intent on sexual favors as often as literary commissions" (Rumbold 161).

But some women navigated their way through these "shifting" literary economies nonetheless. Elizabeth Thomas (1675-1731) and Laetitia Pilkington (1708?-50) were two women satirists who were active in this Augustan literary marketplace and their stories illustrate some of the ways Augustan women writers used satire: for the noble aims so often articulated in the rhetoric of satire but also for revenge and making money.

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[1] See Turner's Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century (London: Routledge, 1992), McDowell's The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678-1730 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), and also chapter 8 of Dustin Griffin's Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

Pilkington and Thomas, like many Augustan women satirists, are far better known as objects of satire than as satirists themselves. Pope's infamous depiction of Thomas in The Dunciad as "Curll's Corinna" dropping her "evening cates" and urinating in the Strand has ensured her an ignominious place in the footnotes of the satiric tradition (Poems 5:66-68). Pope exacts sweet revenge on Thomas for selling to Edmund Curll, without permission, some of Pope's early letters to her friend Henry Cromwell. Although Thomas was herself a writer, the author of a collection of Miscellany Poems (1722; reprinted 1726 and 1727), a handful of individually published letters and poems, and a posthumously published collection of correspondence and a memoir (Pylades and Corinna, two volumes [1731-32]),[2] it is not her own writing that her name most often conjures today but Pope's image of her. In a few biting lines, he sealed her literary reputation as a disgusting, morally questionable slave to a piratical printer.

Pilkington is also chiefly remembered as an object of ridicule. In her case, she had scandal cast on her for having been caught "in the fact," as Swift put it, with a man other than her husband in her bedchamber at an unseasonable hour (Corr. 6:69). (In her defence, she insisted she was merely reading a book the man refused to lend her.) For this indiscretion Pilkington became the target of satiric pamphlets (many by her husband, Matthew) and the subject of much pointed gossip. She was so plagued by scandal that she chose to live under an alias, "Mrs. Meade," during her years in London, 1738-47. However, that she was a writer, as well as a target, of satire was more commonly acknowledged by her contemporaries than were these facts about Thomas. Her Memoirs (three volumes, 1748-54) have long been considered a lively, if not entirely reliable, source on Swift.[3] But while her contemporaries

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[2] The Miscellany Poems are clearly Thomas's, but everything published posthumously passed through the hands of Edmund Curll and might have been altered in ways to make it sell better.

[3] Elias suggests Pilkington's Memoirs are "the liveliest and most

acknowledged her wit more so than Thomas's did, even this was held against her. After remarking on Pilkington's genius for wit, Elizabeth Montagu undercuts the compliment with her famous assertion: "I am sorry to say that the generality of Women who have excelled in wit have failed in chastity" (qtd. in Relke 118). Pilkington, like Thomas, was known more for the reputed shadiness of her personal life than for anything she wrote.

These unsavory literary reputations, however, tell only part of the story of these writers' relationships to satire. In fact, both were accomplished satirists themselves. As the epigraphs illustrate, "Corinna," as Thomas was known, was celebrated for her "fighting pen," and Pilkington was briefly famous for her "wit and satire." Thomas's Miscellany Poems contains an impressive selection of satiric verse. In addition, she published a long verse satire, The Metamorphosis of the Town (1730), she has been credited with penning the anti-Pope satires Codrus and Farmer Pope and His Son (1728),[4] and many of her letters display a keen satiric edge. Even Pope's biographers, who were less than kind to Thomas, remark on her sparkling "wit" (Steiner, "Misrepresentation" 507). Meanwhile, Pilkington also penned her share of satire. She published a few individual satires in the 1730s and her Memoirs are sprinkled with satiric pieces. Even in the prose of the Memoirs she demonstrates what one admirer called her "lively Wit" (Clarke qtd. in Memoirs 126). Her patron, Lord Kingsborough, described her pen as "fatal" to "such as deservedly fall under its censure" (J.C. Pilkington 248). In fact, she was known as such a wit that a volume entitled The Celebrated Mrs. Pilkington's Jests, or the Cabinet of Wit and Humour appeared the year she died (a second edition, with additions, followed in 1765).

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realistic first hand glimpse of Swift that we have" ("Laetitia Pilkington on Swift" 127), and in fact, "in many ways the best" source on Swift, period (Memoirs xix).

[4] I discuss the authorship of these two pieces later in this chapter.

But a bad reputation and a penchant for wit and satire are not all that Thomas and Pilkington had in common. Though they were born a generation apart, there are striking similarities in their situations. Both saw themselves as primarily poets (though both ended up writing memoirs too) who entered their respective literary scenes under the aegis of the key male literary figures of their respective generations and homelands: Thomas was an unofficial protégé of Dryden, Pilkington was a friend and follower of her countryman, Swift. In addition, both Thomas and Pilkington lived much of their adult lives under serious financial strain, to the extent that both served time in prison for debt. And in response to their economic woes, both turned to writing, including writing satire, as a means of income.

This last point especially makes for an intriguing comparison between Thomas and Pilkington as satirists. Because of their financial situations, both writers ended up participating, in different ways and to different extents, in the eighteenth-century "economies" of writing: from soliciting old and new-style patronage, to petitioning for charity, to selling work in Grub Street. I want to suggest that in all of these transactions their satire and wit played a significant role. In patronage arrangements, a writer's satiric wit in writing or conversation was often one of the benefits accorded to the patron or patroness in exchange for financial support (Griffin Literary Patronage 19; Turner 103).[5] In petitioning for charity, witty applications in writing or in person may have increased the chances of a reward. But it was in Grub Street (and in Pilkington's case, Smock Alley in Dublin too) that satire was an especially hot commodity.

At different points in their lives, both Pilkington and Thomas lived as one of those scribbling creatures who, according to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, were forced to "praise to drink and satyrize

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[5] See also Johnson's Rambler 174.

to eat" (Essays and Poems 147).[6] They wrote plenty of both, but as Pilkington's son, John Carteret (Jack) Pilkington, observes in the afterword to his mother's Memoirs, panegyric might bring "Nods and Smiles," but it did "not fill the Belly" (345). Satire, however, was a different story. Grub Street and Smock Alley paid for satire and these women knew or learned how to work the satiric marketplace.

Yet satire wasn't and couldn't always be used to make money. In some cases it was more useful as a vehicle for revenge or intimidation. Satire was an effective way to get back at one's enemies or to enact a kind of literary blackmail. Pope, in particular, was a master at using satire in this way. He made his fortune with his translations, but satire was what enabled him to settle personal scores and consolidate support. In the mainstream male tradition of satire from the Restoration up to the mid-eighteenth century, this was one of the most common uses of the genre. The favourite satiric modes of the Restoration 'Court Wits' were scurrilous lampoon and ridicule (Elkin 60); their satire was often mean and personal, calculated to punish their enemies. But the climax of this use of satire for revenge in the Augustan period comes in the 1720s with Pope's Dunciad.

Using satire for personal revenge was nothing new in the 1720s, but the extent and scope of personal revenge in The Dunciad was unprecedented. Johnson called it "the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire ludicrously pompous" ("Prefaces" 747). By 1725, Pope was constantly under attack as a papist, a Tory, and a translator (Poems 2:x). In the preface to the 1728 edition, he lists numerous recent attacks on his "Character and Person" (xvi-xvii). The Dunciad, it seems, was conceived as Pope's revenge. In a letter to Swift in May, 1728, he refers to a poem he is working on which "will rid me of those Insects" (Corr. 2:481). And contemporary reception of the poem suggests it was taken by the

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[6] From the Nonsense of Common Sense 9 (14 March 1738).

dunces as personal revenge on them (Griffin Alexander Pope 221). Not that Pope *publicly* admitted the poem was about revenge. He insisted that the design of the poem was moral, but as Johnson says, this is difficult to accept ("Prefaces" 747). Instead, The Dunciad ushers in a new age of personal satire in which the genre is used for revenge, often disguised as justice, on an unprecedented scale.

Both Pilkington and Thomas often used satire as a way of making money and getting revenge, but for Thomas anyway that wasn't always the case. Around the reign of Queen Anne, some women satirists reacted against this male use of satire for personal revenge. Satirists such as Lady Chudleigh and Mary Astell turned satire to more constructive purposes. They used it as a vehicle for articulating subtle reformist social critiques aimed at indirectly improving the status of women in society and by extension, all of humankind. Instead of using satire for reward or revenge, they used it to encourage reform. In her youth, Thomas was associated, if only peripherally, with this circle of women, and her early satire reflects this reformist edge. (She corresponded with Chudleigh for a time.) Only later in life does she use the genre for more pragmatic purposes. Pilkington's satire, in contrast, shows no hint of using the genre for reform. Her satire, written a generation after Thomas's early satire, was *always* used for reward and revenge.

Although Thomas is usually associated with Dryden and Pilkington with Swift, the key to understanding the different ways these women used satire lies with the author of The Dunciad, Pope. Thomas has clear connections to Pope; after all, she knew him personally, sold some of his letters, and was attacked by him in The Dunciad. Pilkington's connection to Pope may be less obvious, but I argue that her brand of satire was even more influenced by The Dunciad. My argument is that The Dunciad marks a crucial dividing point in the continuum of Augustan satire, in particular in the way satirists *used* satire. For the most part, the satires

of Elizabeth Thomas and Laetitia Pilkington fall on either side of this Dunciad dividing line. The satires in Thomas's Miscellany Poems represent a pre-Dunciad, Queen Anne style of women's satire, the goals of which are rhetorical and reformist. Pilkington's satires, however, reflect a post-Dunciad brand of women's satire concerned more with revenge and remuneration. In fact, The Dunciad is so clearly the dividing line between these two styles of women's satire that even Thomas's satire written after The Dunciad reflects a shift toward this Popean model of using the genre for payback, both personal and monetary.

* * * *

i) Elizabeth Thomas

In 1699 the 24 year-old Elizabeth Thomas entered the literary world by sending two poems to the aging poet-laureate, John Dryden. He wrote back to her praising her poems as "too good to be a Woman's" and fulfilling her request for a pen-name:

> Since you do me the Favour to desire a Name from me take that of Corinna if you please. I mean not the Lady with whom Ovid was in Love, but the famous Theban poetess, who overcame Pindar five Times, as Historians tell us. (Letters 126)

Dryden encourages the young female writer, but his attempt at "naming" Thomas seems ironic now given her subsequent reputation. Despite his insistence that he is naming her after the *poet* Corinna and not the *courtesan* Corinna, literary history after Pope usually associates Thomas with the latter rather than the former.[7]

Eighteenth-century biographers of Pope paint Thomas as little more than a sponging harlot. In his Memoirs of the Life and Writing of Alexander Pope (1745), William Ayre describes her as "a Lady of Wit and Pleasure" with whom Henry Cromwell and the young Pope had the misfortune to get involved. Ayre asserts that the

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[7] See articles by Anne McWhir and Joanna Lipking.

"beautiful, witty, generous, and young" Thomas passed "whole Days, and often more than Days, with Mr. Cromwell and Mr. Pope, or both" (1:92). On the authority of Ayre's unsubstantiated innuendo and perhaps a remark by Pope's contemporary, John Dennis[8], the editor of the Twickenham edition of The Dunciad, James Sutherland, assumes that Thomas was Cromwell's "mistress," though "almost certainly" not Pope's (Poems 5:456). In another eighteenth-century biography of Pope (1759), W.H. Dilworth expands the range of Thomas's supposedly disreputable behavior. He suggests that not just Cromwell and Pope but "many other gentlemen of parts and eminence" were "intimately acquainted with her" (84-5). Interestingly, no mention is made in any of these biographies of her being a poet and writer herself, except where this can be held up as further evidence of her supposed lewdness. Walter Scott, in annotating Dryden's letters in 1808, observes that "Her person as well as her writings were dedicated to the service of the public" (167).

Thus was Thomas's reputation entrenched in literary history. With the help of these literary biographers and critics, Pope's personal revenge transformed the poetic Corinna into a mythical courtesan Corinna. Only recently have scholars begun to sift out the facts of the real Elizabeth Thomas from this myth. We now know that her unsavoury reputation was founded on little more than Pope's biased opinion (he had reason to be upset with her) and unsubstantiated assumptions made by Pope's biographers. In fact, T.R. Steiner argues that "outside of material directly connected with Pope, one cannot find a scrap of reliable eighteenth-century evidence to support this received view" of her as Cromwell's "mistress" and "probably trollop-general to fashionable London" ("Misrepresentation" 506). Steiner suggests that Pope's early biographers, perhaps swayed by their subject's antagonism to

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[8] In a letter to Pope, Cromwell refers to a transaction involving some of Pope's letters. He explains, "Mr. D[ennis] . . . charg'd me with giving 'em to a Mistress" [Thomas] (Corr. 2:437-41). On the basis of this wording, biographers have assumed Thomas was

Thomas, interpreted ambiguous passages in his works as evidence of her wantonness (506).[9]

On closer examination, assessing Thomas's public character in her day is a complicated business. Aside from Pope's remarks, she seems to have been entirely respectable. John Norris, Lady Chudleigh, and numerous bishops all testified to her character.[10] She almost certainly wasn't Cromwell's "mistress," at least not in the sense that Ayre and Dilworth assumed.[11] In fact, surviving letters describing Pope's and Cromwell's interaction with Thomas indicate that theirs was no more than a polite literary friendship; they recited, circulated, and discussed poetry ("Young Pope" Steiner 496). In her third-person autobiography, The Life of Corinna, she claims to have "little, if any, of the Amorous in her Constitution"; she doesn't even believe in friendship between the sexes unless it is in a "conjugal state" (P&C 1:xii). As Jeslyn Medoff points out, unlike some other women writers before and after (for example, Behn and Pilkington) she "never cultivated a radically defiant or liberated literary persona" ("Daughters" 39). Even Pope, although responsible for the fatal blow to her reputation, later equivocated--though probably not without irony--and included a footnote in the Dunciad Variorum which denies that he meant Thomas by "Corinna" at all and explains that "she is a decent woman and in misfortunes" (Poems 5:106).

Cromwell's mistress.

[9] The only sympathetic portrayal of Thomas in eighteenth-century scholarship is that found in The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland, vol. 4, (1753), attributed to Theophilus Cibber, though probably written by Robert Sheilds. Cibber/Sheilds didn't think much of her poetry (he called her a "second-rate authoress"), but did think she had been ill-treated by Pope ("the lady was very little to blame") (161).

[10] For Norris, see P&C 2:199-24; for Chudleigh, see P&C 2:47-55; for the bishops' petitions, see the preface to P&C, volume 1.

[11] Steiner shows that although Cromwell used the word "mistress," he probably meant it in "its more common eighteenth-century sense, [of] 'a lady favoured and gallanted.'" Cromwell "was not regarded as a serious suitor" to Thomas ("Misrepresentation" 507).

Misfortune, indeed, was the story of her life. The Life of Corinna tells a pathetic tale of poverty, bad luck, and suffering. Born into a family "of rank in life beneath envy, and above contempt" (Cibber 146), Thomas was the daughter of a teenage mother and a 60 year-old London lawyer who died when Elizabeth was two. She lived "frugally" but happily in rural Surrey with her mother until "a Chimney took fire, and their home was burnt down" (P&C 1:lxix). The mother and daughter were forced to return to the city where they eked out a living. Meanwhile, Elizabeth was courted, mostly at a distance, by a family friend and lawyer, Richard Gwinnett (later known in their correspondence as "Pylades"), the son of a gentleman in Gloucestershire. Gwinnett's health forced him to live in the country, and as a result they only saw each other for about a week each year. Their courtship-by-correspondence went on for 16 years before he was in a position to marry. When he was finally financially ready, she had to postpone their nuptial plans in order to care for her dying mother. However, before her mother passed away Gwinnett himself died suddenly, and any prospects for a secure life died with him. By the time her mother died in 1719, Elizabeth was deep in debt and her luck went from bad to worse. In 1727, she was sent to Fleet prison for debt, where she remained until June 3, 1729, when she was granted an Act of Insolvency after several bishops and distinguished gentlemen petitioned on her behalf. She died destitute in 1731 after years of painful illnesses (she was "always afflicted with Fevers and Defluxions" [P&C 1:iv]), including a rare medical condition occasioned by swallowing a chicken-bone in 1711.[12]

Thomas never enjoyed a day of financial security; her economic situation started out poorly and steadily declined over the course of her life. Her parents had some family money but lost it before Elizabeth was a few years old. According to her letter to the

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[12] Her physical suffering from this is described in graphic detail in Appendix 5 of P&C, volume 2: "The Surprizing Case of Mrs. Thomas as it was given in, to the College of Physicians, 1730."

bishop of Durham, her mother had married with "a Gentlewoman's Fortune, tho' a small one, being but L1200." Her father, meanwhile, was a lawyer who "was supposed to be vastly rich" with "a House in Town, another at East-Ham in Essex, . . . [a] chariot, and five Clerks." However, he lost his fortune through a series of poor investments and bad luck (P&C 1:lxviii). After he died, Mrs. Thomas and her two-year-old daughter moved to Surrey with "a sum of about L800" and "a small Annuity she had purchased on L40 per Annum" (lxix). Much of this money was lost after their house burnt down and Elizabeth's mother was "obliged by an ill-worded lease" to rebuild it. When her mother got sick and Elizabeth moved with her to London, they lost the remainder of their money through bad loans and the loss of the annuity when "the Gentleman" who granted it died (lxix). In order to support her by-now-invalid mother, Elizabeth sold off their family assets bit by bit: a bed, a watch, jewels, plate, and even her prized collection of books (lxx). When these were gone she was forced to live on credit, which was granted to her, "it being well known to the Neighbourhood, that [she] had L600 left me" through Gwinnett's bequest. When her mother finally died, Elizabeth was forced to take on her debts as well, and she ended up receiving only L213 from Gwinnett's estate (after being "barbarously used" by his family), most of which went directly to her creditors (lxxvi). As a spinster with no family to support her, we are not sure how she lived after 1719, or where she got the money to support herself for the last decade of her life. It seems that she continued the earlier practice of selling off assets. However, by now the only assets she had left were writings--her own and others'.

Thomas's writing career can be traced back to her childhood. According to her Life of Corinna, she was a child prodigy who early on showed a genius for reading and writing. As a toddler she rejected toys in favor of "poring over [books] from Noon to Night, without knowing one Letter" (vii). Before long she was reading, and before she was five years old "she had read the whole Bible

three times over" (viii). She was "Covetous" of "Learning" and as a child began to collect the books of "the best Authors" (x). Meanwhile, she was "for ever a Scribling [sic]" and by the age of 10 she was writing prose and verse letters to her cousins (x). This love of reading and writing continued into her adult life. In her late teens she admired the works of Katherine Philips and "Mr. Norris of Bemerton" (xii). Her correspondence with Gwinnett in the early 1700s is full of discussions of the books each had been reading. A survey of "Les Nouvelles de Lettres" was part of their "usual correspondence" (P&C 2:178). She recommends Astell, Addison, and Wycherley (1:121), in addition to Dryden's fables and Garth's Dispensary (2:178-79), and she sends Gwinnett her own abstracts of various historical and scientific treatises she has read (P&C 1:125-37;199-207). As well as writing to Dryden, she struck up correspondences with a handful of other intellectuals and writers of her day, including John Norris, Mary Astell, and Lady Chudleigh, whose Ladies Defence she greatly admired.[13] Around 1708 she briefly became associated with the minor writer Henry Cromwell and through him Alexander Pope. Through Cromwell she had access to some of Pope's early letters and manuscripts and probably discussed them with Cromwell if not Pope himself. As for her own writing, her letters to Gwinnett suggest that she was writing poetry from as early as the mid-1690s. But apart from one poem published anonymously in the collection on Dryden's death, Luctus Britannici (1701), she published nothing until the 1720s. Earlier in life she claimed she had no desire to publish her poetry, explaining in one poem that she did not wish to write for "sordid Gain" or "Popular

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[13] Although a correspondent and admirer of Astell, Thomas's relationship with her may have eventually become strained. They had always had political differences--Thomas was a Whig and Astell a Tory--but there may have been other factors. In "A Conversation between Melissa (Lady Chudleigh), Musidora (Mrs. Bridgeman), Corinna, the Stoic (Captain Hemington) &c.," Thomas denounces Astell's "haughty Carriage" and implies that Astell, who is "so much sollicited by Women of the greatest Quality and Fortune," thinks she is too far above someone like Thomas (P&C 2:8-81).

Applause"; rather she was content with "Obscurity" (P&C 2:129). In an early letter to Gwinnett she sneers at the "Hackney-Scriblers" who sell their "Hard-Labour" for cash (P&C 1:179), and another time she boasts that she "ne'er to Laurels did aspire, / Ne'er wish'd for Fame, or wrote a Line for Hire" (2:129).

By the 1720s, however, she seems to have changed her mind, almost certainly out of necessity. With nothing to support her after her mother's death, literature became a key source of income for the destitute Thomas. She sold her writing and others' for "sordid Gain" any chance she got and almost certainly worked "for Hire". At first she sold her own work, starting with a collection of Miscellany Poems (1722), printed for T. Combes, and dedicated to the Princess of Wales. We don't know how much she received for the poems, though she claims that a bookseller once offered her L30 for "a Manuscript Folio of my Poems" (P&C 2:289). She may have received something from the Princess of Wales for the dedication too; it was customary to be awarded anywhere from L10 to L30 for a dedication (Korshin 1806). Although her husband was notoriously stingy, Princess Caroline did have a reputation for offering occasional literary patronage to men and women of learning and to poets (Griffin, Patronage 51; 190).[14]

Thomas may have written other poetry in the hopes of receiving patronage as well. There is a handful of panegyric poems, dated the late 1720s, inserted in Pylades and Corinna, including pieces to the Duchess of Somerset and the Duke of Bedford, who headed two wealthy Whig families with deep pockets. These poems must have

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[14] According to Lord Hervey, Caroline's husband, George II, bragged of his contempt for books and letters and paid his "Court drudges" "so ill for all their assiduity and slavery"; he afforded them "much of his time" but "little of his money" (37). Caroline, however, "loved reading and the conversation of men of wit and learning," even while George mocked her for "dabbling in all that lettered nonsense (as he termed it)" (38). The best known examples of her patronage (Richard Savage and Stephen Duck) occurred when she was Queen, but she was known to reward some writers, such as Edward Young, before ascending the throne. See Griffin Literary

been written in prison, possibly in the hopes of gaining charity or patronage (1:230-32; 1:233-35). With Charlotte Finch, the Duchess of Somerset, Thomas may have had some kind of patronage arrangement. The panegyric to her is dated April 12, 1726, just a few months after she married the Duke.[15] In addition, Pylades and Corinna is dedicated to her, and Thomas wrote an elegy "On the Death of the Earl of Nottingham," the duchess's father. We don't know the exact nature of the relationship between her and Thomas, but there seems to have been some connection, possibly involving financial reward. In the dedication to Pylades and Corinna, the author mentions "the bounteous Hand of your GRACE," perhaps indirectly thanking her for her patronage.

In addition to selling her own work and seeking patronage, Thomas also turned to selling other people's work that she had in her possession, in particular the "Letters of my dead, or absent Friends,"[16] including her correspondences with Dryden, Chudleigh, Norris, Captain Hemington, and the Pope-Cromwell letters she still had from 1714. (Thomas justifies selling Pope's letters by saying she thought the letters "too good to be lost in Oblivion," and that she knew "common Modesty would have oblig'd you [Pope and Cromwell] to refuse what you would not have been displeased with [publication], if done without your Knowledge." Besides, she explains, she was desperate for money, "plung'd into unforeseen, and unavoidable Ruin.")[17] All of these letters appear in various miscellanies published by Edmund Curll between 1727 and 1728.[18] According to Curll, she even sold off pieces of the late Gwinnett's

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Patronage 51.

[15] Charles Seymour, sixth Duke of Somerset, married his second wife, Charlotte Finch, on 4 February, 1725-26.

[16] From a letter to Henry Cromwell, 27 June 1727, quoted in Ayre 1:289.

[17] Qtd. in Ayre 1:289.

[18] The correspondence between Thomas and Captain Hemington, Dryden, Chudleigh, and Norris appeared in Atterburyana (1727) and Whartoniana (1727); the Pope-Cromwell correspondence was published in Miscellania (1727, for 1726).

poetry. Curll's edition of Pylades and Corinna refers to two other works, An Essay on the Mischief of giving FORTUNES, with WOMEN in MARRIAGE (1727), and The Wish, a Poem (1728), which were "written by Pylades" but "published by Corinna" (Advertisement, n.p.). Curll's specific use of the word "published" to describe Corinna's role in the process of printing the works suggests that she may have sold them to Curll. She may even have worked for hire as a Grub Street hack for Curll while she was in Fleet prison, as one critic suggests (Medoff "Daughters" 38). The anti-Pope satires Codrus and Farmer Pope and his Son (1729), which I consider later, may have been written by her for Curll.

In my examination of Thomas's use of satire, I want to divide her work into two distinct phases: first, the satires in the Miscellany Poems, most of which were written at least twenty years before they were published and reflect a use of the genre not for "sordid Gain" but more noble goals; and second, the satire written after The Dunciad, which reflects a very different use of the genre: for money and revenge.

Many of the satires in Thomas's Miscellany Poems, though published in 1722, represent a Queen Anne style of women's satire. By this I mean that the form and content of the satires in her Miscellany Poems fall into the same generic category and time period as satiric works by Queen Anne-age authors such as Lady Chudleigh, Mary Astell, Sarah Egerton, and Judith Drake. These writers engage in the conventional satiric sub-genres favored by women satirists at the turn of the century: the satiric debate about women, male character pieces, and especially reformist satire. The intent of Queen Anne style women's satire is three-fold: to answer attacks by male satirists, to demonstrate female writers' wit, and to advocate, in an indirect way, social reform of patriarchalist institutions such as the education system.

Thomas was accomplished in many of the conventional satiric sub-genres of her day, including the satiric debate about women.

She demonstrates her skill in, and familiarity with, this genre in her "Satyr Against Man, written on the Desire of a Friend" (Miscellany 27-29). This poem is a conventional anti-male satire, in the tradition of Sarah Fyge and "Eugenia," featuring a rough, Restoration-satyr-figure speaker railing against men.[19] (In contrast to these two predecessors, there is no evidence to suggest Thomas's poem is a response to a particular attack. Unprovoked attacks, however, by women as well as men were common in the satiric debate.) The speaker's attack, like Fyge's, focuses on male ambition and pride, and true to satiric debate form, it relies heavily on an interpretation of the creation story.[20] Males, the speaker argues, are guilty of over-reaching their God-given roles. Man was "first created Lord of all, / And seated Monarch of this earthly Ball" (ll.5-6), but this was not enough. "Devil-like," he

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[19] In the first few lines, it is not clear whether the target of the attack, "Man" is meant in the generic or sex-specific sense: "Pernicious Race! with ev'ry Vice accurst, / The least of Comforts, but of Plagues the worst" (ll.1-2). If the "Man" of the title is interpreted in the generic sense, then this poem might be read as a general satire on humankind, in the tradition of Rochester's "Satyr Against Reason and Mankind." Such a generic reading is tempting, at first, since most of the charges against "Man"--pride, ambition, meanness--are vague enough to apply to both the male sex and the entire human race. However, near the end of the piece the speaker makes the poem's only clear reference to "the Sex" as a referent for "Man." This may be an intentional ambiguity, which may force the reader to reconsider the context.

[20] In addition to creation story arguments, the speaker employs a variety of other conventional rhetorical ploys of the satiric debate. She compares the male sex unfavorably to wild animals. Like Rochester, she finds beasts (wolves, tigers, and bears) immensely preferable to men. In a clever reversal of the standard Pandora's box image, the speaker describes how, "Over all the World their Vices they [men] disperse, / And load with Crimes the burthen'd Universe" (ll.23-24). Finally, the poem concludes with a conventional wish for an all-female utopia, courtesy of the annihilation of the male sex. In a final twist on the tradition of cursing names ("Man" and "Woman"), the speaker calls for a change to the very name of "Man" to "some [more] emphatick Word, whose awful Sound / Might show their Souls, and them with Shame confound" (ll.27-28). Presumably the new word would not apply to the whole human race, just the male sex.

tried "unlawful Means" to raise his station, and consequently "lost his Sov'reign Power thro' his Pride" (ll.7-8). Man fell from "God-like Grace" (l.9) and freed from "faithful Conscience" (l.11), he succumbed to "Unmanly Passions" and soon exceeded his "Hellish Precedent" (l.12). (Strangely, Thomas makes no mention of man's partner, woman, in her version of the creation story, no customary defence of Eve's role in the Fall. Thomas knew how to use Eve arguments; they appear in some of her other satires, which I discuss later. Here, however, she opts for pure attack.)

But Thomas's attack is more than just rhetorical posturing; it is also a critique of the Filmerist theory of patriarchalism, reminiscent of the arguments found in Augustan women's marriage satire: the speaker emphasizes that man's original role as "seated Monarch" with "Sovereign power" was once legitimate; it was God-given. However, that claim was "lost" through male pride. The Filmerist brand of patriarchalism may once have been valid, she implies, but not any more. The male sex foolishly forfeited the throne.

Thomas's short lyric "On a certain TEA-TABLE" is another satiric debate piece, this time a conventional defence of the female sex and a counterattack against men. This poem is an actual response to an anti-feminist satire, John Gay's "The Tea Table. A Town Eclogue" (1720). (Thomas seems to have had her differences with Gay; in her Metamorphosis of the Town [1730], she calls The Beggar's Opera a "tedious" "Magpie's Chatter" of "Clitter Clatter" and "Ballad Fragments, without Matter," "lacking Sense," "Moral," "Plot," and "End" [14-15].) Gay's eclogue satirizes the gossipy chatting of two town ladies, Doris and Melanthe, who sip "Cup after cup" of tea and talk "by fits" (Poems 1:234 l.5). The tea-table of the title refers to that unofficial social centre of a household, often associated with women's conversation and gossip. In Congreve's Way of the World (1700), for example, Mirabel, in negotiating with Millamant, cheekily submits to the "female dominion of the tea-table" and catalogues the 'female' topics of

"genuine and authorized tea-table talk--such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth" (Act 4 scene 5).

Although Thomas's response was not written in the Queen Anne period, it nevertheless features many of the characteristics of the earlier satiric debate. Her speaker affects indignation over Gay's exploitation of the stereotype of the talkative woman. The opening tone is aggressive, angry, and blunt, like the opening of Fyge's Female Advocate. The speaker commands the male sex: "No more, ye proud Tyrants, burlesque Women's Tongues, / But down on your Knees, and acknowledge our Wrongs" (ll.1-2). Men not only unfairly accuse women of gossip, they are in fact the worse perpetrators. In their lust to conquer all, the speaker suggests, loquacious men have taken over even that dominion of the tea-table: "Unfortunate Sex! we've not one Province free, / The Men now usurp both our Chatting and Tea" (ll.7-8). In a reversal of gender stereotypes, it is the men with clacking tongues "more loud than the Bells at St. Peters," whose babble drowns out women's voices (l.4). Given this male invasion, the speaker resigns her place at the tea-table and swears off the beverage altogether. "For if this be the Eloquence Tea does inspire, / I'll no more such a talkative Blessing desire" (ll.11-12).

In typical satiric debate fashion, this short poem seems to have triggered a series of responses and counter-responses, all debating the merits and defects of the two sexes. Thomas explains that "a Gentleman" (perhaps Gay?) wrote "a very rough Answer to the preceding SATYR." Though she doesn't include this piece and gives no clue as to where it can be found, she does offer her "Reply" to it, another short satire, this one addressed to "Diogenes," the infamous tub-dwelling misogynist. She defends her sex against accusations of being controllers ("Hold! hold Diogenes, you're too severe! / Women are meek, 'tis Men that domineer" [ll.1-2]) and attacks the male sex with conventional epithets (men are "incarnate Devils" [l.4]). She even resorts to the old satiric debate

arguments about Adam and Eve: Man was created first, but not to show his "Preheminence" so much as to serve as a practice run "To render Woman perfectly refin'd" (l.7). Thomas concludes her reply with an angry warning reminiscent of Restoration sex satires. She tells the "snarling Cynick" to stick to his tub and "urge me not! No more my Patience vex, / For know, that I was born to plague thy Sex!" (ll.12-13).

In these "Tea-Table" and anti-male satires, Thomas demonstrates her knowledge of, and skill in, the satiric debate genre. In defending her sex and attacking men, she shows off her wit and rhetorical skills and also hints at her reformist position. In addition to satiric debate pieces, Thomas also wrote "character" satires, another favorite seventeenth-century satiric form. Pylades and Corinna contains several prose character pieces,[21] but her "True Effigies of a Certain Squire: Inscribed to Clemena" is a verse "character" satire, in the Overburian tradition, against a certain male stereotype: the foppish country gentleman. In the early eighteenth century, "effigies" meant a likeness, image or portrait, whether drawn, painted or sculpted (OED). Like Andrew Marvell and Judith Drake before her and Alexander Pope after, Thomas enlists the Restoration satiric metaphor of visual drawing or portraiture. The speaker implores "Some generous painter" to "assist [her] pen, / And help to draw the most despised of men" (ll.1-2). She turns specifically to the Muse for inspiration, and entreats her to guide her brush: "Revenge thyself, with satire arm thy quill, / Display the man, yet own a justice still" (ll.5-6).

But in a reversal of one usual pattern, it's the speaker who offers the Muse step-by-step instructions in how to draw this fool:

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[21] After Gwinnet mentions a foppish visitor in one of his letters to Thomas, Curll includes "CORINNA'S Account of the Poetaster mentioned in the foregoing LETTER" before the next letter. This four-page prose "character" piece describes an insufferable editing session with a pompous fop (1:53-56). Thomas also includes another scathing character piece on a "Gentle Knight," almost certainly the rakish Henry Cromwell (1:191-94). Her poem "To Basina" also

> First, paint a large, two-handed, surly clown,
> In silver waistcoat, stockings sliding down,
> Shoes (let me see) a foot and half in length,
> And stoutly arm'd with sparables for strength. (ll.7-10)

The speaker directs the brush up and down the emerging sketch of the squire, with a frenzy of descriptive detail: "Ascend! And let a silver string appear, / Which seems to cry 'A golden watch is here" (ll.11-12); "Forget not, Muse, gold buttons at the wrist, / Nor Mechlin lace [Belgian] to shade the clumsy wrist" (ll.21-22); "Next draw the giant-wig of shape profuse, / Larger than Foppington's or Overdo's" (ll.30-31). This flurry of sketching creates an image of a ridiculously ornamented fop: a bestockinged, bejeweled spectacle of a man profusely decked out with rings, buttons, snuffboxes, glasses, scarves, powder, papers, orange peels, and powdered "elf-locks" (l.33).

This description is hilarious, though thoroughly conventional. Thomas's squire recalls Etherege's Sir Fopling Flutter or Judith Drake's "Beau" (Essay 68-74), and the speaker herself alludes to fop figures in Vanbrugh's The Relapse (1696) and Jonson's Bartholomew Fair (1631). Conventional or not, it is all too much for the speaker: she suddenly breaks off her paint-the-fop-by-numbers exercise, claiming it is all too vivid: "Enough, O Muse! Thou hast described him right, / Th' emetic's strong, I sicken at the sight" (ll.35-36). Despite the speaker's queasiness, she asks the muse to resume her description by portraying the squire's pretentious posture. In a manner reminiscent of Anne Finch's description of the god of poetry preparing to speak in "The Circuit of Apollo," Thomas's speaker meticulously describes each graceless maneuver that makes up the squire's "awkward bow":

> Set one leg forward, draw his other back,
> Nor let the lump a booby wallow lack;
> His head bend downward, with obsequious quake,

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contains a satiric character in verse (Miscellany 134-37).

Then quickly raise it, with a spaniel shake. (ll.41-44)

The squire then proceeds to speak. Looking around the poet's study he is moved to comment on the preponderance of books found there.

"Madam," he cries, "Lord, how my soul is moved
To see such silly toys by you approved!
A closet stuffed with books: pray, what's your crime,
To superannuate before your time,
And make yourself look old and ugly in your prime?
(ll.51-55)

According to his brand of philistine anti-feminism, books alone are bad enough (reading and learning are for "blockheads" [l.58]; he boasts of having read but "six books in all [his] days" [l.91]), but books and *women*, or worse, a *wife*, are too much to bear. He rehearses all the conventional patriarchalist arguments against women's learning: that women were meant to play cards, chat, and mind their "economic care" (l.72) and that "learned ladies are but learned fools" (l.57). Horrified at the thought of having a "bookish woman" for a wife (l.63), one who might dare to correct his grammar, he vows to spend his wedding day burning all his wife's books. If ignorance is bliss, then this squire is in ecstasy.

Thomas employs a strategy of ironic ventriloquisim, similar to that of Lady Chudleigh in The Ladies Defence, whereby she presents a male speaker uttering patriarchalist rhetoric, for the purpose of exposing that very rhetoric.[22] The first part of this poem establishes the foolishness of how this squire *looks*, but the second part shows the absurdity of what he has to *say*. In the course of his speech, he unwittingly exposes the logical flaws, prejudices, and absurdities of his "customary" view of the incongruence of women and books.

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[22] This was a favorite technique of Thomas's. She also uses it in "To Basina."

Books were important to Thomas. In her youth, her fine "Collection of the best Authors and Editions, esteemed by a Bookseller at an Hundred Pounds" (which she was later forced to sell) was her prized possession (P&C 1:x). And in an early letter to Gwinnett she refers to some books he had lent her as "those agreeable companions you left me." "[W]e have such long conferences," she says of herself and the books, "that we generally fall asleep together" (P&C 1:181). Reading, as we saw earlier, was a favorite pastime for her. Books may be a comfort and companion to Thomas, but more importantly, they also represent opportunities for intellectual stimulation and moral improvement--opportunities too often denied her sex by characters like the squire.

The anti-books-and-women sentiment of the squire appear again in another satire, "On Sir J--- S--- saying in a Sarcastic Manner, My Books would make me Mad. An Ode." Like the second half of "True Effigies," this satire is another reformist critique of the conventional view of women and books and the way women are "still denied th' improvement of the mind!" (l.5). As befitting an ode, this poem begins as a serious lament, in particular on the hard fate of the "Unhappy sex" (l.1), wrongly confined by "Custom's tyranny" (2) and denied even the opportunities of learning. But Thomas's favored technique of male ventriloquism soon exposes the supreme smugness of man's customary view of women's role:

> "Women," men cry, "alas, poor fools!
> What are they but domestic tools?
> On purpose made our toils to share,
> And ease the husband's economic care.
> To dress, to sing, to work, to play,
> To watch our looks, our words obey,
> And with their little follies drive dull thoughts away.
> Thus let them humbly in subjection live;
> But learning leave to man, our great prerogative."
> (ll.6-14)

The female speaker, like Chudleigh's Melissa, responds to this male voice with sarcasm, logic, and questions. After sarcastically acknowledging that women must always submit to sovereign male wit, she points out that since men accuse women of ignorance, wouldn't it make sense to encourage women to read more so they might "improve [their] store" (l.29) of knowledge? Since married women are so busy taking care of their seemingly helpless husbands, wouldn't it make sense to allow women to improve their minds *before* marriage? Shouldn't they study "th' Almighty's works," God's creation (possibly a reference to the new science), thereby making themselves better able to serve God? (l.45). "Yet, if we enquire for a book, /" the speaker explains,

> Beyond a novel or a play,
> Good lord! How soon th' alarm's took,
> How soon your eyes your souls betray,
> And with what spite ye look! (ll.50-54).

More male voices chime in in response, suggesting that if women aren't difficult enough now, just wait until they get their hands on more books and start reading Plato. But the speaker knows that the real danger of women and books together is that educated women will pose a threat to men.

> What is it from our sex ye fear?
> That thus ye curb our powers?
> D'ye apprehend a bookish war,
> Or are your judgements less for raising ours? (ll.74-77)

Men, she suggests, are afraid to give up their monopoly on learning because it might mean giving up some of their power over women.

In "True Effigies" and "On Sir J--- S---," Thomas exposes the irrationality and folly of 'customary'--as in patriarchalist--views of women and learning. She even suggests ulterior motives behind a social system that excludes women from higher learning and discourages them from general intellectual improvement. So although her satire is humorous, there is also a serious point: there is a need for change or reform to attitudes about women and

learning. While she makes fun of the squire and Sir J--- S--- and men like them, her overall purpose seems to be constructive: to encourage men to allow women to improve themselves.

In these early works, Thomas uses satire for primarily rhetorical and constructive purposes. All of these satires in Miscellany Poems reflect this Queen Anne-style use of satire: for display and genuine reformist critique. The satire is critical, but in a positive way, encouraging a fairer social deal for women, and by extension, all of society, not by negatively affecting men but just according women some of the same rights as men. However, her use of satire changed in the late 1720s, specifically after the publication of The Dunciad. My argument here is based partly on the assumption that Thomas wrote two anti-Pope satires, Codrus: Or, the Dunciad Dissected and Farmer Pope and his Son. A Tale. These satires, published together in 1728, are responses to The Dunciad and personal counter-attacks or lampoons on Pope and his use of satire. We don't know for certain that Thomas wrote these works; in fact, they were published by Curll under the name "Mr. Philips." Nevertheless, a strong case can be made for her authorship. The external evidence comes from Edmund Curll, admittedly not the most reliable source, and Pope himself. In an appendix to the 1729 Dunciad Variorum, Pope attributes these works to "Curl[sic] and one Mrs. Thomas" (Poems 5:210). In addition, on an advertisement at the back of Pylades and Corinna, volume one (1731), in a list of other available works by the authors, Curll himself includes an entry for Codrus and Farmer Pope with the following information: "Written by Corinna (but published under the name Philips" [n.p.]). Guerinot suggests that "Mrs. Thomas" is "probably a pseudonym," though "almost certainly not for Ambrose Philips" but "some Curll hack" (152-3). However, Guerinot doesn't explain why he doubts Thomas's authorship. She certainly had a clear motive for attacking Pope, considering his treatment of her in The Dunciad. And given that she was now associated with, if not formally working

for, Pope's enemy Curll, and in desperate need of money which Curll could have paid her to write pieces like Codrus and Farmer Pope, it is entirely possible that she was the "Curll hack".

In addition, there is some internal evidence in the two works to support the view that Thomas wrote them. In the first piece, Codrus, an eight-page prose satire, the author condemns Pope for seeing fit to make "Poverty the Subject of his Satire" in The Dunciad (3). In fact, the title refers to a character mentioned in Juvenal's "Third Satire" who is so poor that he sleeps in a short, crusty bed surrounded by moldy books and vermin.[23] The author's point in Codrus seems to be that in The Dunciad Pope unfairly attacks writers who are forced into the Grub Street existence not by choice but by necessity. In effect, the author implies, he satirizes the misfortune of others. This was not an uncommon charge against Pope's Dunciad.[24] However, it makes perfect sense coming from Thomas, who portrays herself as a reluctant player in the Grub Street economy, forced into it by the very poverty she sees Pope making fun of.

Misfortune, Codrus suggests, is not a suitable target for satire; it is something over which we have little or no control. To illustrate this point, the author includes the story of two

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[23] "Codrus" may alternatively be a corrupted spelling of "Cordus," an unknown writer of epics and author of The Thesied (analogous to The Aeneid) whom Juvenal attacks in his "Satire I" as an example of the derivative, artificial, cliché-ridden nature of contemporary literature (Juvenal 72). Pope actually mentions Codrus' notorious bed in the Dunciad: "A shaggy Tap'stry, worthy to be spread / On Codrus' old, or Dunton's bed" (ii. 134-35). And in a footnote he cites Dryden's translation. Some readers have interpreted this passage as Juvenal satirizing the poor but others disagree. Pope cites "Mr. C<oncanen>," who assures readers that "Juvenal never satirized the poverty of Codrus" (Poems 5:117).

[24] See, for instance, "The New Metamorphosis. Being a Familiar Letter from a Gentleman in Town to a Lady in the Country: Occasion'd by the Dunciad" (1728):

> it raises Resentment and Wonder,
> To find in the DUNCIAD so cruel a Blunder:
> Where the Author on Poverty throws his Reflection,
> And Thinks that alone a sufficient Objection. (46)

anonymous "Ladies, now living, and both well known," who were once "much on a Level, as to Fortune" (8-9). One of the ladies, however, met with "a continued Series of unlook'd for Blessings," while the other encountered "an unavoidable Succession of Calamities" (9). The moral of the tale is simple: some people's fortunes in life "go Down unaccountably," while "others Rise so" (9). Thomas, who suffered from various illnesses, poverty, and was in prison when this poem was written, certainly fits the description of the former, while Pope (although obviously not a lady, he did, by his own admission, have some feminine qualities)[25] may be alluded to by the latter. When Thomas and Pope first met, their stations in life were not dissimilar (both were poets from undistinguished backgrounds), but thereafter their stars went in opposite directions. He became rich and famous; she became poor and infamous. Not that either necessarily deserved what they got. She did nothing to warrant a life of poverty; as for Pope, near the end of Codrus, the narrator remarks bitterly that the "large Profit [he] has made by a Nominal Translation of Homer, and the little Pains he took to deserve it need no Repetition" (9). If Thomas is indeed the author, she could be implying that just as she does not deserve the misfortune that plagued her, Pope does not deserve the riches he enjoyed.

The problem with The Dunciad, Codrus claims, is that in it Pope has corrupted the *use* of satire. The author observes,

> SATIRE was certainly of admirable Use among the Antients, and is of no less among the Moderns; but then they always chose for their Theme some reigning Vice, or growing Folly: but where can you find a Persius, a Juvenal, or Horace, lashing of Personal Defect, or Turns of Providence? (7-8)

Thomas, as we have seen in her Miscellany Poems satires, respected the "admirable Use" of satire; she used it for what she saw as

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[25] See my Introduction 7-8.

constructive purposes. Pope, she could have argued, has turned satire to ignoble uses: namely, making fun of other's misfortune. Even those "Pious Heathens," the classical satirists,

> well knew that Calamities were not Crimes; and always exempted such from being the Subject of Satire. They knew it was not in the Power of a Man to make his own Fortune, any more than he could his own Person. (8)

Of course the irony of Codrus is that in it the author attacks Pope's personal brand of satire with some personal satire of his or her own. The Dunciad, it seems, changed the rules of satire *for everyone*, including the author of Codrus. For Codrus is not so much a dissection of The Dunciad as a picking apart of Pope personally. This was typical of responses to The Dunciad. Pope's family origins, his personal character and physical appearance, and his writing style were all fair game, it seems.[26] In fact, Rumbold has called Codrus a "stupid travesty of [Pope's] early life, family and friendships" (165). Codrus portrays Pope as a thankless slanderer who has forgotten his own humble origins as the son of "a Husbandman on Windsor-Forest" (3). (This bit of biographical information was not true [Pope's father was not a husbandman at all], but it was part of the myth of his humble origins that Pope himself cultivated.) Although it is a response to a poem published in 1728, Codrus focuses on events 20 years before, during Pope's early years in London, when as Wycherley's protégé, he fancied himself as "Young, Rakish, and Witty" (7). Coincidentally, this was precisely the time when Thomas knew Pope through another rake, Henry Cromwell. The narrator is disgusted with the young Pope's treatment of Wycherley: "when he [Pope] found he had obtain'd an establish'd Character, he fell foul on his first and greatest Benefactor, by ridiculing him behind his Back" (6).[27] While Pope and Thomas were never so close, she could have felt some sense of

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[26] For example, see "The New Metamorphosis" 43, 48.

[27] Thomas had been a fan of Wycherley's. She recommends his work to Gwinnett in their correspondence (P&C 1:111).

betrayal upon reading The Dunciad's treatment of her, penned by a former acquaintance who once thought enough of her to share his poetry with her.

The second piece, Farmer Pope and his Son. A Tale, also contains internal evidence to support Thomas's authorship. This work covers much of the same territory as Codrus but in a different format: a verse beast fable. Thomas used the fable format, a favorite form of the Augustans, in another late satire, The Metamorphosis of the Town (1730). Farmer Pope tells the progress of an ancient toad and his deformed little son who goes off to the big city to become a famous poet, only to meet his eventual messy demise through an encounter with a wise ox. As in Codrus, the attack on Pope here focuses on his early years in London when he was associated with Wycherley (here "Willy") and Cromwell ("a gentle amorous Swain") (15). (Thomas had satirized Cromwell in a similar fashion in letters to Gwinnett; she portrays him in Pylades and Corinna as a foppish "Gentle Knight" [1:191-94]). And again, as in Codrus, The Dunciad comes under attack for its use of satire for personal revenge. The speaker condemns the "stinking Venom" (18) of the toad's "private Satire" (17) and his ingratitude to "those whose kind, indulgent Care, / Whose Fortune did his Grandeur rear," for they "Were sure to have the largest Share" of his spewing spite (18). This could be another reference to Thomas feeling betrayed by Pope. She was once considered enough of a literary confidante of Pope's to be given his work to read; she probably read and discussed it with Cromwell and Pope. But in return for her "indulgent Care," she received only a generous share of Pope's "Venom."

If, as I suggest, Thomas wrote these two anti-Pope satires, then there is the matter of explaining why they are so different, in both style and quality, from her earlier satire. In her early character satires she demonstrated a talent for lampoon which is evident in a much cruder form in Codrus and Farmer Pope. However, overall these anti-Pope pieces pale in comparison to Thomas's

earlier work. The clever creativity and sense of ironic detachment that was so striking in her early satires is largely absent in Codrus and Farmer Pope. They rely overly on crude caricature and stock satiric devices such as the beast fable. In addition, the author of the anti-Pope satires fails to maintain a sense of distance between himself or herself and her or his target. Thomas's best satire is characterized by a depiction of contact between the poet and her satiric butt (an imaginary opponent in the satiric debate pieces, John Gay, a "Certain Squire," or Sir J--- S---) together with a sense of the poet's cool detachment from that target. In Codrus and Farmer Pope, there is a sense that the author is trying too hard to punish his or her enemy, that she or he cares a little too much.

Fortunately, there is one post-Dunciad satire we *know* Thomas wrote before she died, and there are some similarities between the anti-Pope pieces and this final satire. The Metamorphosis of the Town: or, A View of the Present Fashions. A Tale. After the Manner of Fontaine (1730), though of a much milder and less personal strain of satire than Codrus of Farmer Pope, does have something in common with those other works: it was designed not to reform but to sell. In The Metamorphosis of the Town, Thomas employs her version of the fable format made popular in France by Jean de la Fontaine and imitated in England by Dryden, Finch, Gay and others,[28] together with the conventional trope of the naïve observer wandering through the streets, recording what he or she sees.[29] The poem tells the story of "Lindo," a "politely bred" (4) "Man of Sense and Honour" (3) who has been away from the town for 40 years, returning to London with a "humble Companion," "Belus" (3). The changes Lindo and Belus notice there, in the realms of fashion, manners, food,

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[28] Spectator 183 claims that Fontaine had "come into vogue more than any other Writer of our Time" (2:220). See also Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

[29] Precedents include Donne's "Satyre I" and Delarivier Manley's The New Atalantis.

entertainment, and architecture, make up the heart of the satire. In contrast to Codrus and Farmer Pope, The Metamorphosis of the Town is not angry, mean, personal satire. With the exception of a very brief passage attacking Gay's The Beggar's Opera (14-15), the satire is light, the tone more reminiscent of Tatler and Spectator pieces than the anti-Pope poems. But what this satire lacks in sharpness or reformism that might appeal to modern readers, it makes up for in detailed dialogue and clever observation of manners (reminiscent of "True Effigies of a Certain Squire") that *was* a hit with *her* original audience: it ran into five editions by 1744. This may have been precisely the point of The Metamorphosis of the Town—not to get revenge, as was certainly part of the motivation for the anti-Pope satires, but simply to make money. We don't know the context of the poem's creation nor the details of its publication (although it is probably safe to assume that Curll had a hand in it somewhere along the line), but given that we know it was published near the end of Thomas's life when she was sick and destitute, we can assume that her motivation was at least partly economic. The public had an appetite for this kind of satire of manners, and she had, out of necessity, learned the ways of Grub Street and knew that this satire would sell.

This change in the kind of satire Thomas wrote, from the Queen Anne age to her post-Dunciad days—from satire designed to display her wit and articulate reform to satire calculated to make money—helps explain how the anti-Pope pieces might fit into her satiric oeuvre. Like the Metamorphosis of the Town, Codrus and Farmer Pope seem to have been designed, above all, to sell. However, in all three cases, assuming Thomas wrote them all, the pressure of writing this kind of satire-for-survival affected the quality of her work. In general, Thomas's post-Dunciad satire lacks the spark of her earlier Queen Anne-style satire. Both the anti-Pope poems and The Metamorphosis of the Town are highly derivative (they rely unduly on conventional satiric tropes such as the beast fable,

caricature, and fashion jokes) and overly dependent on setting and "fact" as opposed to imagination and wit.

In the late 1720s something changed in the way Thomas approached the genre. Whereas in the Miscellany Poems the purpose of her satire was rhetorical display and genuine reform, later it is strictly revenge and remuneration. The Dunciad not only changed Thomas's life by forever tarnishing her reputation, it seems also to have changed the way she used satire.

ii) Laetitia Pilkington

Born a generation after Thomas, Laetita Pilkington picked up where Thomas left off and showed the extent to which a woman could use satire for revenge and reward in the post-Dunciad age. While Elizabeth Thomas's use of satire shifted dramatically from reform in her early days to revenge and remuneration later, Pilkington *always* used the genre for payback. Her satire was almost never concerned with social reform; it was almost always about personal retribution. Given Pilkington's social circle, it should not be surprising that she was not much of a reformist. While Thomas had the support and influence of a circle of like-minded reformist women such as Mary Astell and Lady Chudleigh,[30] Pilkington was on her own or else surrounded most of her life by men--her father, her husband, Swift, Colley Cibber, her son--who were neither sympathetic to women's situations nor well-versed in the reformist literature of the age. Instead Pilkington's use of satire follows directly in the footsteps of Pope's Dunciad: she used the genre for revenge, remuneration, and even intimidation.

Pilkington's life story, like Thomas's, is a cautionary tale about the power of a woman's reputation in the mid-eighteenth century. On the first page of her Memoirs, she announces, with help from Shakespeare, that the intent of her "Story" is to instruct the "Female Part of my Readers," by teaching them that "Reputation"

> Is the immediate Jewel of their Souls,
> And that the loss of it
> Will make them poor indeed!
>
> Othello.

Her life, she goes on to explain, should stand "not as an Example, but a Warning" to her female readers so that by her "Fall, they may

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[30] Her circle also included Lady Hester Pakington and Diana and Katherine Bridgeman; many of the works in Miscellany Poems are dedicated to other women.

stand the more secure" (9). Pilkington's life shows how a woman's "Reputation" could work for or against her: either as an asset (a "Jewel") to be guarded, or, once lost, as a terrible burden bringing with it sure poverty. After losing that "Jewel," her reputation, following her divorce from her husband, the Reverend Matthew Pilkington, in 1737, she lived a life not unlike that of Thomas's last years, filled with poverty, prison, and desperation. Cut off from any financial support from her husband or family and plagued by a scandalous reputation, she struggled to survive as a writer in London from 1738 to 1747. Then, after the publication of her Memoirs, she basked in the light of a different kind of renown back in Dublin until her death in 1750.

For while Pilkington laments her fall from good reputation in the opening pages of the Memoirs, the remainder of the three volumes stakes her claim to another kind of reputation, one that Elizabeth Montagu points out in her famous letter--that of a "wit". She displays those features of wit--a quickness of mind and memory, a comic touch, and an ability to join together seemingly unrelated ideas in surprising ways--that the Augustans so revered. In addition to her poetic and satiric skills, Pilkington, Montagu continues, "never suppresses a good thought, nor forgets a bon mot, tho said 7 years before." However, for the bluestocking Montagu, Pilkington's two reputations (as Fallen Woman and Witty Woman) go hand in hand. Montagu believed that "wit in a Woman is bound to have other bad consequences; like a sword without a Scabbard it wounds the wearer, & provokes assailants" (qtd. in Relke 118). In spite of these negative connotations of female wit, though, I want to suggest that Pilkington showed how a reputation for female wit could be almost as valuable an asset (a different kind of "jewel") as the one she lost. Her "story" tells us more about the power of "Reputation" than a simple morality tale of lost virtue.

After her divorce in 1737, Pilkington literally lived by her wits. Arriving in England with "but five Guineas in the world to carry me up to London" (Memoirs 117), she quickly had to figure out

how she could support herself. We don't know exactly how she scraped together a living during this period, but the Memoirs suggest that she realized that her female wit--in the form of her written or spoken words--was a unique and valuable commodity in the Augustan literary economies of patronage, charity, and hack writing. In transaction after transaction, mostly with men, she proved capable of converting that commodity into cash. As Diana Relke observes, a string of men, from her father to her husband's friend James Worsdale, to assorted bishops and aristocrats, "paid her for the products of her wit and learning" (125). She sold her writing (everything from love letters to pamphlets, political satires, theatre pieces, poetry, and the Memoirs themselves) and used her conversational wit to persuade noblemen, clergymen, and various "gentlemen" to grant her petitions for charity or, at the very least, to subscribe to her forthcoming volume of poetry (which never appeared, although she included many poems in the Memoirs). Her wit also enabled her to cultivate the long-term patronage of at least two men: the dramatist, actor, and poet-laureate Colley Cibber and the wealthy Irish landowner, Robert King, later Lord Kingsborough--who were charmed by her poetry and conversation.

Of Cibber's patronage we hear many details in the Memoirs. At one point, she claims she surely would have starved in London "but that the Almighty rais'd me one worthy Friend, good old Mr. Cibber, to whose Humanity I am, under God, indebted both both for Liberty and Life" (117). He gave her money (204), flogged subscriptions and garnered charity for her, passed her work on to various influential figures (245-48), intervened with booksellers on her behalf (Victor 1:146), helped bail her out of prison (Memoirs 206), backed her effort at setting up a print shop, and was the first to encourage her to write and sell her Memoirs (160, 285, 327). In turn, she wrote panegyrics to him, circulated some of his works (327), supported him against his enemies (34, 48, 248), and generally entertained him with her witty conversation and anecdotes.

As for Kingsborough's patronage, Pilkington is less forthcoming about the specifics. She refers to him as her "PATRON" in her dedicatory poem to volume two (volumes one and two are dedicated to him) and makes repeated mention of his generosity (208-9, 231, 245). Although she doesn't mention in the Memoirs specific amounts of money he gave her (the way she does with some one-time patrons such as the Duke of Marlborough),[31] her correspondence with Kingsborough shows that she received substantial amounts of money from him, at least for a short time. For instance, between 22 March 1748 and 20 May 1748, Kingsborough encloses, in various installments, more than L150 with his letters to Pilkington (John Carteret Pilkington 237-48). So thorough was his support of her that at one point in the Memoirs she feels confident enough to request that he provide her with a place to live. She hints that she would like her "best and dearest Friend" to allow her a "humble Hermitage" in some part of his "wide extended Domains" (317).[32] In return, Kingsborough had the pleasure of Pilkington's 'female' wit. As Cheryl Turner explains, patronage was often given in return for "flattery, entertainment, the projection of favoured opinions and beliefs, and social eclat" (103). She sent him poems, pictures of herself, and entertaining letters. By his own account, he was charmed by her correspondence and considered her wit worth every penny. In one letter he tells her she is "unrivalled in wit, ease, and vivacity" (J.C. Pilkington 237). In another, after hearing that she had visited John Brown in prison, he wrote to her, "I think it extremely good of Mrs. Pilkington to give him her conversation, which must render even a prison delightful" (J.C. Pilkington 242). Although the

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[31] In describing her meeting with Charles Spencer, 3rd Duke of Marlborough, Pilkington tells of him presenting her with a L50 note (139-40).

[32] This request was perhaps not as outrageous as it seems. Griffin suggests that it was still common for a patron to provide "hospitality" to a writer. Pope lodged with Burlington and Queensberry, Handel with the Duke of Chandos, and Watts lived with

relationship between Pilkington and Kingsborough eventually soured, the financial rewards of his patronage in return for her wit were substantial.[33]

Pilkington proved that a woman could be made poor by the loss of her reputation but that by establishing another kind of reputation--as a female wit--she could make ends meet. As Felicity Nussbaum points out, myths of a fortunate fall, where the protagonist loses something (reputation, love of a parent, etc.) only to be rewarded in the end, were generally unavailable to women in the eighteenth century ("Heterolclites" 157). A prodigal son may be welcomed back into the fold, but for women, as Pilkington observes in volume three, "Reputation once gone is never to be retrieved" (264). She was probably right--a woman's reputation for 'purity' once lost could not be regained. But that doesn't mean that a lost reputation couldn't be replaced by a found one that works differently but just as well. Instead of letting her bad reputation hold her back, she actually embraced the status of non-respectable woman and female wit, unconventional roles which gave her a freedom of voice that Elizabeth Thomas lacked. As a controversial female wit, Pilkington made a name for herself and, it seems, a living too.

One of the most lucrative elements of her wit was what Elizabeth Montagu called her "turn" for satire. She penned all kinds of satire for money: poetry, theatre work, pamphlets, political pieces, and even parts of the Memoirs consist of satire calculated to turn a profit. But I want to suggest that she used satire not just as a way of making money, but also as a means of

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Thomas Abney for 35 years (Literary Patronage 18-19).

[33] In fact, she received so much money from Kingsborough that she writes to him at one point, "I sincerely declare to you, my Lord, I have had so much money of late, that I have been at a loss what to do with it. B--ps, P--ts and D--ns liberally supply me, without my being at pains to sollicit their benevolence. I receive sums of money from unknown hands; nay, even the ladies now begin to honour me with their correspondence and contributions" (Letter XIV, 20 May 1748; J.C. Pilkington 259).

establishing a new reputation for herself and getting revenge on those--men, mostly--who crossed her. In this sense, I argue, her use of satire owes much to the example of Pope and The Dunciad.

Critics discussing Pilkington's connections to the Augustan literary milieu tend to focus on her relationship with her friend, countryman, and sometime tutor, Swift, but I want to suggest that her way of using satire owes a greater debt to that other great Augustan satirist, Pope. As far as we know, she never met Pope, though her husband Matthew did while on a mission to England for Swift. According to Laetitia, Matthew wrote her from Twickenham saying that he had shown Pope some of her poetry and that the great poet had expressed a desire to meet the author (Memoirs 63). We don't know what Pope really thought of her or her work, but she could have fit into that category of "witty and assertive woman" whom Valerie Rumbold suggests he couldn't abide yet found unsettlingly attractive at the same time (202). In any event, she seems to have admired Pope and his work, even though she occasionally quarreled with his opinions. She compares her prodigiously early predilection for poetry to his ("I may truly say with Mr. Pope, 'I lisp'd in Numbers for the Numbers came" [13]),[34] she quotes him over thirty times in the Memoirs (third most behind only Shakespeare and Swift), and she knew his work so well that according to her son, she "repeated a good many Lines of the Poem on Windsor-Forest" on her deathbed (336).

In some ways Pope seems to have been a direct influence on Pilkington's approach to poetry in general and satire in particular. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu even compared their work, writing in the margins of her copy of the Memoirs, beside some of Pilkington's verse, "as good Poetry as Popes [sic]" (Memoirs xxxix).[35] Moreover, she was impressed by Pope's financial example.

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[34] Epistle to Arbuthnot, l.128.

[35] Given the nasty state of Montagu's relations with Pope at the time this was written, such a comparison may not be as much of a compliment as it seems.

At one point in the Memoirs she cites him approvingly as an instance of poet who made money from poetry (196). Likewise, she strives to project an image of herself able to do the same. In her anecdote about her encounter with the Archbishop of York, she explains that when his Grace asked if she had any means to support herself and her family, she replied, "Nothing but poetry" (144). She cultivated this romantic image of herself as a 'natural' genius (often dashing off verse extempore) struggling, but managing somehow, to survive off poetry alone.[36] This was almost certainly not true; poetry was only one of a number of means by which she got by. But if Pope could live off poetry, then why couldn't she? In particular, she seems to have learned several tricks from Pope regarding the use of satire. Although she only explicitly mentions The Dunciad a few times in order to quote some pithy lines, she must have been familiar with it, for she uses satire in a Dunciad-like fashion: for displaying her wit, exacting personal revenge, intimidating her enemies, and even blackmailing them.

Upon landing in England in late 1738 as a scandal-plagued, penniless divorcee, Pilkington immediately enacted a multifaceted strategy for eking out a living, and a key part of this strategy was her writing. In addition to delivering poetic petitions for charity and peddling subscriptions for a book of her poems, she tried her hand at writing and selling a satiric poem to the

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[36] In this sense Pilkington was a forerunner of Joseph Lewis, the beggar poet and author of Mother Midnight's Comical Pocket-Book (1753) and The Miscellaneous and Whimsical Lucubrations of Lancelot Poverty-struck, an unfortunate son of Apollo (1758). Lewis made a living (just barely) as a poet who projected himself as a 'natural' genius at the mercy of fortune and dependent entirely on benefactors. See Betty Rizzo and Arthur Sherbo, "Found: Joseph Lewis, Elusive Author of Mother Midnight's comical Pocket-Book." Bulletin of the New York Public Library 77 (1977): 281-87; Karina Williamson, "Joseph Lewis, Our Doggrel Author." Bulletin of Research in the Humanities 81 (1878): 74-83; and Rizzo, "Joseph Lewis in Real Calamity" Bulletin of Research in the Humanities 81 (1978): 84-89.

footman-turned-publisher, Robert Dodsley. Only a few months after her arrival in London, her first published work, The Statues: Or, the Trial of Constancy. A Tale. For the Ladies, appeared anonymously in early April 1739. This poem shows how, at the beginning of her publishing career, Pilkington used satire for both rhetorical and practical purposes.

The Statues is a narrative verse satire in the style of a medieval courtly tale (she says she borrowed "a Hint from a Story in the Peruvian Tales" [391], written by Thomas-Simon Gueulette in 1734), combining elements of romance, magic, enchantments, and courtly heroes and heroines.[37] The poem tells the story of the courtship and marriage of the fairy Queen Lucida and an unnamed mortal young man. Before Lucida agrees to marry him, she explains that all prospective suitors must undergo a test: they must demonstrate their constancy by remaining faithful to Lucida while she is away visiting her father in the underworld one day a month or else be punished with instant death. Her previous suitors have been unable to demonstrate faithfulness: forty times men have tried to be true to her and all forty times they have failed to pass the test. Undaunted by these dismal statistics the young man accepts the terms and proclaims his utter constancy. They marry and are blissful as can be, until the first day she must leave him for the underworld. Despite her wishes and the youth's best intentions, "The Heart of Man the Queen's Experience knew / Perjur'd and false yet wish'd to find him true" (42). Sure enough, no sooner does she depart than the King, "to mitigate his tender Pain," makes directly for the "Apartment of the Virgin Train" (42). Even an old hag, left on guard there by the Queen, can't deter the King, and instantly forgetting his vows, he proceeds to ogle the "bloomy Maids" (43), pitching woo to one nymph in particular. She leads him, mesmerized, to a grotto full of marble youths and after chastizing him ("Thy changeful Sex in Perfidy delight, / Despise

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[37] All of my quotations are from the version of The Statues

Perfection, and fair virtue slight" [43]), transforms him into a statue, one more monument to the inconstancy of men.

This poem, Pilkington claims later in the Memoirs, was, in part, motivated by a desire for revenge. She says she wrote The Statues in response to antifeminist conversations and satires so prominent at the time, especially from the mouths and pens of her friend Swift and his cohorts, including her husband: "As the Dean, and, after his Example, Mr. Pilkington were eternally satirizing and ridiculing the Female Sex; I had a very great Inclination to be even with them, and expose the Inconstancy of Men" (39). Woman, as she observes, had long been a favorite target of men's satire; like Thomas in her "Satyr against Man," Pilkington turns the tables in her poem by making the male accusers the ones on trial for a change. Here man is tested and man fails. In addition, women are usually the ones thought of as being like statues: the ideal woman is elegant, inanimate, delicately limbed, silent, and on a pedestal. Not in Pilkington's poem. The women characters are in control, rational, and responsible, and it is the men who are silent, powerless, and on display for all to see.

Furthermore, inconstancy was an appropriate focus for her satire on men: it was a common charge against women and one of the most flagrant instances of the sexual double-standard. While proclaimed a mortal flaw in women, inconstancy was accepted and sometimes even glorified in men. (Laetitia had personal experience with this double-standard: her reputation was permanently tarnished after an alleged infidelity while, according to her account, her husband--a parson, no less--dallied with various actresses and widows with no significant damage done to his reputation.)[38]

Although this is a revenge satire, it is closer in spirit to Elizabeth Thomas's early satiric debate pieces than The Dunciad or

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reprinted in the Memoirs.

[38] In fact, Matthew Pilkington remarried a few weeks after Laetitia's death and settled down to a supposedly respectable life as vicar of Donabate and St. Mary's, Dublin, and later became known

Codrus. The tone is playful and the purpose more rhetorical than punitive. Pilkington shows off her wit, daring, and poetic skill by making fun of the inconstancy of man rather than woman. And while the mood is light, this poem sends a serious signal: Pilkington is willing to take up a public satiric voice. Although she published The Statues anonymously, she still defied the myth of passive womanhood by venturing into the supposedly aggressive, 'masculine' terrain of satire. Even bolder, in fighting back against male wits who pick on women, she dares to rank herself as an equal with these wits. She's not afraid to go on the offensive after her male accusers. For Pilkington, as we will see, satire could serve as a great equalizer between the sexes.

In spite of her comments about revenge, perhaps the most practical motivation for this poem was financial. The direct monetary return on this, her first published satire, was slight. She claims she received a mere five guineas for the poem from the publisher, Robert Dodsley (131), which, if true, was a bargain for the publisher since, as Elias shows, Dodsley routinely paid at least ten guineas for poems from unknown poets (510).[39] However, despite possibly being shortchanged by Dodsley in the short term, the poem paid off for her in an indirect way over the long term. At the urging of a friend, probably Benjamin Victor, she sent a copy of it to the dramatist and poet laureate Colley Cibber (Memoirs 510). Charmed by her satire, Cibber came to meet her in person;[40] the two hit it off famously, and she benefited from his "Favour and Friendship" thereafter (131).

Around the same time in London, Pilkington wrote a few

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as the author of an influential Dictionary of Painters.

[39] Dodsley typically paid 5 guineas in receipt of a poem from an unknown author and then another 5 guineas later (Memoirs 510). Pilkington may have forgotten one half of the transaction either genuinely or conveniently, for the sake of projecting an image of herself as exploited writer.

[40] She had met and befriended Swift in much the same fashion. The year before in Dublin, she gained an introduction to him by writing a poem on the occasion of his birthday (Memoirs 26).

political satires for money too. This was territory that Thomas never ventured into, but for Pilkington, writing about politics offered another opportunity to make some money. According to Elias, she cared "relatively little" about politics (Memoirs 530), but she nevertheless wrote two political satires in August and September 1739 after her compatriot, and at that time, friend (but later rival) Benjamin Victor suggested to her that "if she could write successfully for the stage--or dangerous satire--she might get money by her writing" (Victor 1:148-49). "Dangerous satire" meant opposition satire. At that time the opposition and its writers were supported and bankrolled by the Prince of Wales. While Walpole also paid well for government propaganda, writing for the opposition carried with it a certain cachet that pro-government writing did not. As Goldgar suggests, by late in the Walpole administration there was an assumption among many that the best writers and satirists worked for the opposition (19-20). In fact, Pilkington's mentor, Swift, was one of them. As Swift put it, "all the writers are on one side, and all the railers on the other" (qtd. in Goldgar 48). To a would-be author entering the arena of political writing, the opposition corner offered the reward of prestige in addition to cash.

The first of Pilkington's political satires was an anonymously published prose pamphlet called An Apology for the Minister (1739). This sarcastic attack on Edward Walpole, youngest son of Sir Robert Walpole, served both a public and private function, as political propaganda against the ministry and payback for the young Walpole's alleged mistreatment of Pilkington shortly after she arrived in London. (According to the Memoirs, Walpole agreed to subscribe to her poems only to later inexplicably change his mind and withdraw the promised sum in rude fashion [131-32]. This explains her sarcastic depiction of his "boundless" "Generosity" in the Apology: "His Charity is so extensive, that, notwithstanding the Largeness of Income, he is a very Beggar, as he frequently assures those who

apply to him." After all, although he is a "Batchelor," he has "numerous Offspring to provide for" [Memoirs 510].)

The second satire, however, An Excursory View of the Present State of Men and Things. A Satire. In a Dialogue between the Author and his Friend (reprinted in the Memoirs as A View of the Present State of MEN and THINGS. A Satyric Dialogue between the Poet and his Friend. In the Year 1739) is more purely political and more "dangerous."[41] This verse satire, combining Juvenalian vigour with a Horatian dialogue format, in the manner of Pope's Epilogues, is a more direct attack on Sir Robert Walpole and his ministry, which by this time was showing signs of faltering over the Spanish crisis. The subject was particularly "dangerous" because the year before a similar opposition satire, Manners, by Paul Whitehead, had gotten the author in serious trouble with the House of Lords.[42]

Pilkington's satire praises opposition figures as forces of light and virtue and attacks the Walpole administration as elements of darkness and corruption. But the structural conceit that makes this satire more than just praise of one side and attack of the other is the dynamic between the two voices in the dialogue. At his or her friend's urging, the poet announces her intent to forbear writing her usual satire and instead aim at depicting "Greatness" (151): "Well, if Encomiums Approbation gain, / For once, I'll try the Panegyric Strain" (152). However, the joke is that the poet keeps slipping from praise into ridicule and the friend is constantly interrupting to remind her of her initial promise. For instance, the poet begins by extolling the virtues of the ideal man "whose independent Mind, / No Ties but those of sacred Honour bind." But within a few lines she has slipped into describing his opposite, "Favonius," a corrupt noble who, after squandering his fortune, approaches Sir Robert to fix his

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[41] All quotes are from the version that appears in the Memoirs.
[42] The Lords decreed Manners scandalous and ordered both publisher and poet into custody. Whitehead fled to avoid prosecution. (Whitehead vii-viii).

situation:

> He bows to Walpole, whispers to his Grace,
> Then humbly begs a Pension, or a Place;
> The Pension's yours, my Lord,--but mind--this Note,
> 'Tis but a short Direction, how to vote. (152)

After more description of Walpolian nepotism the friend intervenes: "Softly, my Friend,--you quit the Task assign'd, / Which, to the Praise of Merit, was confin'd" (152). The poet renews her vows to stick to panegyric, but, of course, the pattern is repeated again and again--the poet slipping, the friend reminding. Gradually the poet introduces individual opposition figures (Stair, Cobham, Carteret, Lyttleton, the Prince of Wales) to hold up as praiseworthy examples in contrast to the ministry. The poem then ends with a swelling patriotic flourish complete with anti-Spanish rhetoric and romantic images of Britannia's gloriously expanding empire.

There is some dispute about how much of this satire Pilkington actually wrote. In his letters, Benjamin Victor claims that he wrote "several of the characters" in the poem himself, "to the amount of more than 200 lines." (The whole poem is not much more than 200 lines.) As proof, he suggests that Pilkington was not a follower of politics and "most of the [political] characters there [in the poem] were entirely unknown to her;" therefore, he implies, she couldn't possibly have written the piece herself (1:148-49). Similarly, Elias concedes that it is "probable" that she received much of her background information through Victor and that he may have helped her with revisions and "conceivably with the composition as well" (Memoirs 530).

However, before we retract full attribution for the poem from Pilkington, there are some factors to consider. First, Victor may not be the most reliable source. He seems to have had a history of trying to pass off Pilkington's work as his own. According to the Memoirs, she was employed for a time as ghostwriter for him in London, penning odes on the birthdays of the Princess of Wales and

Prince George for him as well as the first act of a comedy, Le Paisan Parvenu (148-50). Secondly, Elias may be too quick to believe the dubious word of Victor regarding Pilkington's supposed ignorance of politics. At the beginning of volume two she recounts a story concerning this very issue of the assumption that a woman cannot be politically aware. She tells of a journey where she sat quietly in a coach while a group of "great Walpolians" boasted of "many a Trick in the Elections" which they did "relate before me taking it for granted I was a Fool," only because she was a woman (129). She puts the men in their place when they eventually ask her what business she has in London and she glibly replies that she is going there "in the hopes Sir Robert would marry me" (129). Her joke, which they all enjoyed, makes it clear that just because she didn't say anything during the conversation doesn't mean she was a "Fool" when it came to politics. At one point she brags that George Rooke, "finding me a sort of a Politician," engaged her in an exchange of "entertaining Stories" about "Sir Robert Walpole's various Schemes" (169). And later she socialized in prominent opposition circles, mixing with figures such as Chesterfield (she wrote a poem for him [246]) and the Earl of Stair (he subscribed to her poems [163]). Elias's contention that she must have been ignorant about politics because she didn't write a lot about it is a dangerous assumption. More likely, she may have decided that political writing did not fit with the image of herself as free-spirited poet that she sought to project.[43]

Finally, aside from the political content of the poem, the structure definitely fits with Pilkington's style. She used the dialogue format with flair elsewhere in the Memoirs, such as in the Cibberian dialogue between "I" and "Myself" at the end of volume

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[43] There are several subjects that Pilkington could have discussed in the Memoirs but for some reason does not, such as her relationships with her children other than John Carteret or her time working for the theatre in Smock Alley in Dublin. Politics may be another one of those areas that she chooses to exclude.

two. Given these considerations, there is no reason to assume that Pilkington could not have written the whole satire herself.

A View of the present State is the closest Pilkington's satire comes to offering social critique. However, this kind of partisan political criticism is a far cry from the social reformism of Elizabeth Thomas's early satire. While Thomas was concerned with exposing the sexual double standard and inequities of women's situations (especially in marriage and education), Pilkington aligns her satiric focus along party lines. Her poem, like Pope's Epilogues, offers broad (though partisan) moral judgements of the ills of society. As one of the conventions of this type of satire, the speaker strikes the pose of a general moral watchdog, exposing and lashing the vices and corruption of humankind, and in this case, especially one segment of humankind, the ministry. However, such a sweeping moralistic satiric voice, while common to this kind of political satire, is relatively rare in the oeuvre of Pilkington's verse satires. In most of the satires inserted in the Memoirs (which is where we find most of her poetry), she opts for a less public and more personal brand of satire, one usually directed at specific individuals (almost always male) with whom she has some personal score to settle. Unlike The Statues and these political works, the immediate motivation for writing most of the satires in the Memoirs is not necessarily to sell them, but rather to show off her satiric talents and enact personal revenge.

These uses of satire also follow Pope's example: satire for display and retribution. As Dustin Griffin observes, 'display' or showing off is an often neglected feature of, and motivation for, much satire. Satirists ask, explicitly or implicitly, "that we observe and appreciate their skill" (Satire 73). Pilkington shows off her satiric skill and wit in the Memoirs in a number of ways, but one of her most innovative techniques is through quoting. As Griffin points out, there are certain strains of satire, most notably the Menippean tradition, "in which scholarship becomes spectacle" (Satire 74). Pope's satires show evidence of this; the

many classical allusions in The Dunciad and his imitations of Horace make those satires impressive as a kind of scholarship.[44] Similarly, Pilkington's Memoirs are filled with over 400 quotations from writers in the English tradition (Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, etc.), all of which she claims to have retrieved solely from memory. At one point she even apologizes for the sheer number of quotations:

> I must beg my Reader's Pardon for these numerous Quotations; but as Swift says, those anticipating Rascals the Ancients have left nothing for us poor Moderns to say: But still to shew my Vanity, let it stand as some sort of Praise, that I have stolen wisely. (88)

But as Susan Goulding notes, "[e]ven in explaining her theft she steals: although she mentions Swift overtly, she does not cite Pope's Preface to his translation of the Iliad, where he writes that without 'Invention,' 'Judgement itself can at best steal wisely'" (5). The purpose of the quotes, and even the explanation apologizing for them, is to show off her wide reading, memory, and wit.

In addition to using satire for display, Pilkington follows Pope in using the genre for retribution too. The Memoirs are full of male villians who wrong Pilkington in some way. In typical post-Dunciad fashion, satire is her preferred method of getting back at them. In volume one, for example, Pilkington tells the story of her encounter with a lawyer, "One Callaghan," in Dublin, sometime in the early 1730s. This anecdote, like the one she offers with The Statues, shows how she uses satire for revenge. But in this case, the satire is directed at a specific man rather than at the male sex in general. She laments that just when she thought she was safe "from any farther Attacks from the Male World"--a reference to being teased and harassed by her husband and

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[44] See R.A. Brower, Alexander Pope: The Poetry of Allusion,

his friend, James Worsdale--she had the misfortune to be singled out and tormented, for no apparent reason, by a babbling barrister (Callaghan) full of "Tricks and Roguery" (96). Since she "treated him with the Contempt he deserved," he in turn "railed" at her wherever he went (96). In response, she wrote him a poem, "To Councellor Callaghan," which she includes in the Memoirs, but which also seems to have been circulated independently (Memoirs 486). This verse satire presents a female speaker repudiating and chastising Callaghan as not just a false, foolish rogue but also as a ridiculous lover. Why else would he make such a fuss over her?

> 'Tis true, indeed, I cou'd not love you;
> But why shou'd that so greatly move you?
> Are you not us'd to plead in vain,
> And practis'd to endure Disdain?
> You tamely bear the Scorn of Men,
> Why vex'd at it from Women then? (96)

As Elias suggests, part of Pilkington's scorn toward Callaghan may be class-based. His background was obscure while hers was supposedly distinguished, as she goes to great pains to demonstrate early in the Memoirs. He is beneath her (she refers to him as "One Callaghan, a Person not otherwise known"), lacking the requisite skill in "Breeding or Address" to even consider wooing her, and she warns him not to "seek a Star beyond [his] Sphere" (97). Yet despite her superior stance, she is not above some name-calling and cheap shots at Callaghan (he is a "Cheat" and a cuckold) and even his wife (she sports a "Hide of well tann'd Oak" [97]). In the end Pilkington commands her "worthless, mean, rejected Lover" to leave her alone: "Thy Licens'd Tongue the Law may murther; / But, prithee, mangle me no further." The satire then concludes with a threat: if he doesn't cease and desist, she will present an even more public image of him--a "Print" by which "all Mankind shall know you" (97).

(Oxford: Clarendon, 1959).

However, as Pilkington explains, the satire did not have the desired effect of silencing "the Fellow"; in fact, he turned around and offered her satire on him as proof to the lawyers at the Rose Club that she had made love to him (97). Callaghan soon discovered, though, what a potent satiric force he was, quite literally, flirting with. Pilkington made good on her threat to expose him: she dashed off a satirical ballad and instructed a Mr. Taaffe to sing it out loud at the same tavern full of lawyers--an order given to Mr. Taaffe under threat of being the "next Subject for Satyr" (97). She includes this ballad in the Memoirs too, but it strikes a very different tone from the first poem to Callaghan. It is a mock-tragic literary tale recounting the fate of "Three Volumes of enormous Size, / O'Callaghan had penn'd," which he then lent "for to make him wise, To an ingenious Friend" (98). The friend pores over the massive texts for three days but cannot decipher a single word, never mind uncover a glimmer of reason. Undaunted, the friend recalls how on Gulliver's "fam'd La-puta's floating Isle," they "swallow Learning like a Pill." He tries this technique only to discover that "Those writings ne'er ascend" to his brain; instead "They Gravitation's Laws maintain, / And to the Center tend." In frustration, the friend comes up with an alternate use for Callaghan's book.

> Enrag'd to find all Methods fail,
> These Works, he surely said,
> May be adapted to the Tail,
> Tho' never to the Head.
>
> These Sybil Leaves, Oh Spright and Shame!
> In pieces torn he takes,
> And wip'd a part not fit to Name,
> And plung'd them in a Jakes. (98)

The tale concluded, so to speak, she addresses her enemy directly:

> Wake Callaghan thy noble Heart,

Explore that hoary Deep;[45]
Nor suffer thine immortal Part
In silence there to sleep.

Or on the Orifice all Day
Thy nether End expose,
By whose inspiring Fumes you may
New Systems yet compose. (99)

This lampoon achieved what the first satire didn't. As Pilkington explains, "I have been credibly inform'd that this Song made Callaghan blush, which was more than anything had ever done before" (99).

Given the effectiveness of this poem and Pilkington's threats against both Callaghan and Mr. Taaffe, it seems she was beginning to consider herself something of a satiric force not to be crossed. Callaghan learned the hard way; the more prudent Mr. Taaffe didn't push his luck. She even suggests elsewhere in volume one that she was starting to acquire a reputation as a satirist and wit. One story that illustrates this is her account of a visit to her uncle's place in Cork and Mallow also in the 1730s. As with the Callaghan story, she tells of being inexplicably harassed by a certain "Gentleman" who "took it into his head to do, what they call blackguard me, incessantly. It was the reigning Humour of the Place, amongst the young Folks, to call Names, sell Bargains, and sometimes talk indecently" (71). This particular gentleman, who she later makes clear was the son of Colonel John Murray, Member of Parliament for County Monaghan, singled her out as "a Mark for this sort of Wit" (71). She demanded what she had done to deserve this treatment, and he replied that "he heard I was a Wit; and wished I would write a Satire on him" (71).

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[45] The phrase "hoary Deep" is also found in Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room," l.98, which in turn is an echo of Milton's Paradise Lost II, ll.890-91.

(This male desire to be satirized by a woman is a curious pattern throughout the Memoirs. Dustin Griffin suggests that there exists "a link between satirical and sexual pleasure" (Satire 173). This seems to be the case here. For these men, Murray and even Callaghan, who considered Pilkington's first satire on him evidence of her desire for him, being satirized by a woman is somehow a titillating experience. Pope's reaction to witty women may offer further evidence of this theory. Rumbold argues that he found witty women unsettling and yet somehow attractive [202]. Pilkington used wit as a commodity in transactions with men, and for some of these men, female wit seemed to imply a sexual transaction. This sexual connotation of satire may have grown out of the Elizabethan association of the satirist with the lustful 'saytr' figure.)

To oblige the gentleman and live up to her reputation, Pilkington responded with a short verse satire, "The Mirror," also printed in the Memoirs. In tone, this satire is more restrained than either of those to the babbling barrister, though as in "To Counsellor Callaghan," she again presents a condescending female speaker patronizing and chiding a foolish, and in this case younger, man. With tongue firmly in cheek, she insists that her nature is so mild that she would "ne'er descend to flatter" nor "to deal in Satire." However, to appease Strephon she agrees instead to a supposedly impartial compromise: she will hold up "Truth's polish'd Mirror" so that Strephon might see both his "Errors" and his "Graces" (71). On the one hand she compliments his "Courage, Sense, and Fire" (72), but on the other hand, she chastises him as "Rude and Rash," displaying the manners of a "Shoe-boy." She wonders how he thinks he can ever aspire to the heights of "Fame" (as his politician father did) when his actions seem always on a "downward bend," sinking into the "Filth" of the "low Sublime" (72). In contrast, she suggests he doesn't have to look far for models of more respectable behavior (her footnote makes it clear she is referring to his father, Colonel Murray and his second wife,

Lady Blaney [Memoirs 456]). In conclusion, she insists that the sole purpose of her poem is correction: her satiric "mirror" is "kindly meant to mend you" (72).

Pilkington's satiric touch is lighter here; she opts for a tone of gentle condescension and sarcasm suitable for a speech to an immature young man who needs to do some growing up. By offering up this calm reserved pose, she undermines the frantic silliness of the young Murray's "blackguarding." There is nothing more frustrating to a taunting heckler than an unruffled, detached, ironic lecture that exposes the heckler as a puerile fool.

As with the Callaghan satires, "The Mirror" allows Pilkington to show off her satiric skills and get back at a man at the same time. A third incident in the Memoirs where satire is her means of revenge is found near the end of volume two in the story of her encounter with Arthur Mohun St. Ledger, third Viscount Doneraile. In this case though, Pilkington's satire takes an even stronger punitive function. She tells of a visit she received one day in London from a Lieutenant Southwel and his friend, Lord Doneraile. According to her version, upon meeting Pilkington, Doneraile "looked on [her] with the utmost Contempt" and, in disgust, complained to his friend that he thought they were going to visit "a Girl of Sixteen." Doneraile's reaction suggests that he believed their visit was for nefarious sexual purposes; to him Pilkington was just a sexual commodity, and an 'old' one at that. He quickly learned, however, that it was her wit, not her person, that was for sale, or in this case, that would cost him. Although she assured his lordship that she had indeed at one time been sixteen, that was sixteen years earlier. Doneraile, however, was not impressed with her wit and, scoffing, beat a hasty retreat (219). When Southwel returned alone later that day, he informed Pilkington that Doneraile had bad-mouthed her the rest of the day (220). Not one to stand by and allow such a challenge to remain unanswered, she responded.

> I was so highly provoked at Lord Doneraile's Insolence, and Pride, so little becoming the Character of a Nobleman, that I could not forbear writing some Lines on so proper a Subject for Satire, which Mr. Southwel had snatched from me, and directly carried to his Lordship. (220)[46]

This satire is not extant, though it seems to have triggered the appropriate response. According to the Memoirs, Doneraile showed up at her shop the next day and asked what he had done to provoke "so much Bitterness against him" (221). After denying that he had said anything to disoblige her, he assured her that "he would be a Friend to me, provided I gave him no more of my Pen." However, observes Pilkington, "as from that Hour to this, he never did me any kind of Service, I think the Obligation void on my Side, and present the Reader with the following Sketch of his inimitable Character" (221). The title of the poem that follows in the Memoirs, "To the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Doneraile," suggests a panegyric, but the invocation signals the ironic nature of the piece: "SATYRIC MUSE! let me prevail / On thee to picture Doneraile." Her crude satiric portrait, consisting mainly of insults, goes on to make the most out of the rhyming possibilities of his Lordship's name:

> What makes the Artist rot in Jail?
> Trusting the base-born Doneraile;
> The Rose-cheek'd Nymph turns wan, and pale,
> Touch'd by the infectious Doneraile;
> Light Gossamer would turn the Scale,
> Weigh'd 'gainst the Wit of Doneraile. (221)

Near the end of the poem Pilkington displays her self-conscious wit, making fun of the tiresome nature of her rhyme scheme: "In

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[46] She later speculates that the "true Cause of his Lordship's Aversion for me" had to do with a previous meeting years before in the pit of a theatre at Smock Alley, Dublin, where she had shunned his crude solicitations (222).

short, my Subject now grows stale, / I'm tir'd with Rhymes to Doneraile." However, after an interruption of one couplet that does not rhyme Doneraile, she ends the poem with another anyway: "To sum up, all the black Detail, / I'd name the Scoundrel Doneraile." This verse technique, with its repetition of the target's name, recalls the incantations of medieval verse satirists, in which the satirist casts spells on her enemies, in an effort to rhyme them to death. Then, as a mock afterward to the poem in the Memoirs, she addresses "my Lord," ironically announcing that she expects to receive a "handsome Reward for this extraordinary Panegyric!"--after all, she explains, she is the first poet, to her knowledge, to celebrate his Lordship's illustrious name in verse (222).

Pilkington's treatment of Lord Doneraile in the Memoirs--telling embarrassing stories about him and printing a satiric "celebration" on his name--is another instance of how she used satire for revenge. But in all these cases, the sweetness of the revenge is doubled by its repetition. These poems, she explains, were originally written for specific occasions and select audiences: usually the target of the satire, such as Freeman Murray, or the target and a select audience, such as Callaghan and the lawyers at the Rose Club. The Memoirs, however, offer Pilkington an opportunity to rehash these occasions; when she includes these satires in the Memoirs, complete with her version of the context, she enacts a second, much broader revenge, exposing the victim before a much wider and indiscriminate audience. We can probably assume that she penned more occasional satires like these, ones that did not make their way into the Memoirs.

Especially after the success of volume one, Pilkington seems acutely aware of the public platform the Memoirs offer: not only a chance to broadcast her side of the story of her marriage and divorce, and to show off her wit, but also a prominent position from which she could even the score with those who had crossed her in the past. She embraces her newfound reputation as

unconventional woman and female satirist and takes advantage of the satiric site the Memoirs provide. As Elias observes, toward the end of volume two (where we find the Doneraile satire), she "begins to sound more conscious of her power to repay old injuries through the Memoirs" (Memoirs xxx). In fact, in the satiric dialogue between "I" and "Myself" at the end of the volume, she raises this very issue of "Retaliation." "I" wonders if she isn't getting carried away with her "licentious Pen" and "lashing Humour." "Myself" replies that she has a "Right" to "Retaliation"; she is just settling scores that others instigated: "they were the first Aggressors; no Person who did not deserve a Stripe, ever got one from me" (253).

The language justifying her use of satire grows increasingly confident and aggressive the further we get into the Memoirs. By the beginning of volume three, her justifications turn into boasts.

> I cannot, like a certain Female Writer, say, I hope if I have done nothing to please, I have done nothing to offend; for truly I mean to give both Pleasure and Offence: Lemon and Sugar is very pretty. I should be sorry to write a satire which did not Sting. (263)

She dissociates herself from the conventional insincere humility common to prefaces by Augustan women writers. In fact, in places she affects the opposite role as confident warrior/satirist fired up to expose her enemies, like Pope in the Epilogues. She imagines anxious readers afraid "of what might be said of them" in the present volume (reminiscent of Pope's trembling enemies, not afraid of God, but afraid of Pope). Pilkington even taunts her enemies, adopting the chivalric battle imagery also used to describe the 'fighting Corinna.' Pilkington assures her readers that while any "Gentleman" may challenge her, "I have the right to chuse my Weapons; a Pen is mine, let them take up another, and may-hap they will meet their Match" (264). However, she is more confidant and aggressive than Thomas ever was; Pilkington revels in the sense of power and liberty her satiric pen provides.

By volume three, she seems to view her satiric position--that is, her skill combined with the platform of the Memoirs--as so powerful that she can use (and abuse) it to blackmail and punish her enemies at will. Again, in this use of satire for blackmail, she may have learned from Pope. The threat of satiric exposure was a source of leverage that Pope held over his enemies and potential enemies. The most famous example concerns his relationship with Joseph Addison. Pope penned an early version of what would later become the "Atticus" section of his Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot (1734-35) as early as 1715, and he made a point of showing it to Addison even though it wasn't published, in an early version, until 1722, after Addison was dead. In letting Addison know about the "Atticus" passage, Pope was consolidating Addison's support by making it clear that Pope had the upper hand. The elder writer and statesman would have realized that it was in his interest not to cross Pope.

Pilkington used satire in similar ways. By her own account, she was an accomplished blackmailer too. She tells of numerous incidents where that art got her out of tight spots.[47] In the second volume, for instance, she proudly tells a story similar to the Pope-Addison incident of how she once used satire for blackmail. During her quest to gather subscriptions for a book of poems, she wrote to an old acquaintance, Alderman Barber, a printer and "Man of considerable Interest," in hopes of increasing her subscriptions and "getting my Writings printed as cheap as I could" (192). She sent him a "very respectful Letter" but received no answer. She followed with a second note but still there was no reply. "At length," she explains,

> I found a method to make him speak to me, for, recollecting the best Part of a very severe Satyr Mr. Pilkington had wrote on him, I let him know I had it, on

[47] See, for instance, the story of Pilkington blackmailing the dastardly "Mr. H----l" into looking after his pregnant wife (164-68).

> which, he invited me to his House, received me very kindly, [and] apologized for his Silence. (192)

Though this story is not about one of her own satires, it nevertheless illustrates both the power satire can have for getting one's attention, and her awareness of how to manipulate that authority.

Elsewhere in the Memoirs she attempts to blackmail with her own satire. Early in volume one she makes humorous threats to expose by name some of those men who propositioned her: "if every married Man, who has ever attack'd me, does not subscribe to my Memoirs, I will, without the least Ceremony, insert their Names, their Rank ever so high, or their Profession ever so holy" (93). However, in volume one the only person she actually exposes for not subscribing is her nemesis, the Widow Warren, one of Matthew Pilkington's mistresses. Laetitia explains, with perfect irony, that since Mrs. Warren was the "principal Cause of Separation between the Parson and me, I thought I had a Right to demand a Subscription from her." She assures us she did so in "very civil Terms" and provides her readers with "a Taste of her [Widow Warren's] Excellent Style, in answer to me" (110).

> WHOOSOMDEVER yow aree, I aboar yow and yowr filthy Idyous; I submit my Cows to the Devil, and fear nout hiss Ennemoys, whileoust I am undder hiss Preteckshon. As to the parson yow metwon, tis wile nowne what hee iss; he ruinged my sun by his Ungraitfullnesse. It is not in your power to defamatonous my corector in your wild Memboirs. So I am, wythh harti Prawours for yowr speedi Deformation,
>
> Yours --------- (110)

Laetitia says she took "great Pains to find out the Meaning of this elaborate Epistle; what it is, future Critics (who are better skill'd in broken English) may decide" (110). With this 'authentic' quotation, Laetitia exacts a hefty measure of revenge on the Widow Warren; she is portrayed as an illiterate, foul-

mouthed whiner. But in this case, Laetitia is surely punishing the Widow for more than just not subscribing to her poems.

By volumes two and three, however, Pilkington's blackmail threats to any and all are more than just talk. She begins to "out" those who turned down her request for subscriptions. For example, she chides both a "Lady of Quality," who she makes clear is Ellis Agar Bermingham, Lady Athenry (227), and "a certain cross Dean" (302), a thinly veiled reference to William Crosse, Dean of Leighlin and rector of St. Mary's, Dublin, for refusing to purchase subscriptions. Even one actual subscriber gets named for being cheap in the amount he did give her. Pilkington ironically thanks Bishop Clayton for his generosity in sending her "Five British Shillings" for her book (303). However, two pages previous she remarked that "Gentlemen seldom send me any smaller Coin" than a Guinea Subscription" (301). The implication is clear: the Bishop, who gave her less than a guinea, is no "Gentleman." In some cases she doesn't just name the cheapskates; she insults them too. The Doctor Walker who refused to subscribe is more than just too cheap to spare five shillings (which wouldn't even make him a "Gentleman," though it might buy her a meal); he is a lousy doctor too. "[P]erhaps he could not spare them [the shillings], as it is more than probable, were he fee'd according to his Skill, he might not be worth a Single Marvedi [a Spanish coin worth less than a farthing]" (219).

This strategy of using satire as revenge against those who refused to subscribe to her poems may have even been used against her unofficial satiric mentor, Pope himself. Pope may have been a great influence on the way Pilkington used satire, but that did not make him safe from having some of his own medicine turned against him. According to Thomas Sheridan, Jr., Pope refused to buy a subscription to Pilkington's book of poems, and in order to avenge herself, she attacked him in the Memoirs (Memoirs 728). The attack Sheridan refers to occurs in volume one, where she subtly questions the public persona Pope presented. She begins by repeating Swift's

suspicions about the sincerity of Pope's invocation to the Dean in The Dunciad (34). Then she sarcastically praises Pope's "warm, sincere, friendship" to Addison (a reference to the "Atticus" character) and hints that Pope was known to speak ill of another of his close friends, John Gay (34). In questioning the sincerity of Pope's 'friendship,' she strikes at sensitive area. Pope went to great pains to foster an "impossibly virtuous" public persona of the loyal friend (Memoirs 408). Her suggestion that Pope was not as great or loyal a friend as he made out was a potentially damaging one to a reputation he had cared about.

Then later in volume two, she attacks Pope again. This time she is replying to a pamphlet, A Parallel between Mrs. Pilkington and Mrs. Philips, by "an Oxford Scholar" (1748), which satirized her and praised Pope. She is compelled to defend her earlier criticism of the great poet: "I never refused doing Justice to his poetical Merits, but all your Art will never persuade the World that he was not an envious Defamer of other Men's good Parts, and intolerably vain of his own" (248). She goes on to chide him for his allegedly demeaning portrayals of the Earl of Peterborough and the Duke of Chandos, and his belittling of the nobility in general (266); she even accuses him of plagiarizing Shaftesbury, Denham, and Milton (266). Like the author of Codrus, Pilkington resorts to the most personal kind of satire against Pope: questioning his talent, character, and morals.

All of this *could* be the result of Pilkington wanting revenge on Pope for his snubbing her request for a subscription. However, she might have had other motives too. One point on which we know she and Pope disagreed was in their attitudes toward Colley Cibber. Pope and Cibber had been enemies since 1717 when they had a run-in over Three Hours After Marriage (1717).[48] After that the two

[48] In 1717 Cibber accepted the play, written by Pope, Arbuthnot, and Gay, for Drury Lane but he withdrew it after only a week. Two weeks later Cibber made a joke about the play during a performance of The Rehearsal, at which Pope was in attendance. Pope was

quarelled extensively in print, most notably in Cibber's A Letter form Mr. Cibber, To Mr. Pope (1742) and the 1743 version of The Dunciad, in which Cibber is the mock-hero. Cibber, however, was one of Pilkington's chief patrons and dearest friends while she lived in London and she would certainly have felt some loyalty to him and perhaps even a sense of responsibility to defend him from his many detractors, especially Pope.

In any event, Pilkington's attacks on Pope were safe bets. Pope died four years before the first volume of the Memoirs; she did not have to fear retaliation from the great satirist himself. Such security may have helped make her other satire even bolder. She may have even hinted to her patron, Lord Kingsborough, that she was in a postion to blackmail him with satire if need be. In her dedicatory poem to volume two, "Oh! King, Live for Ever," she makes a point of describing her patron's private example as "pure" and "unspotted" (123). However, as she was surely aware, Kingsborough's "Fame" in romantic relationships was anything but. In fact, like Pilkington herself, he had an unsavory reputation. In 1747, Mary Granville Delany recorded his scandalous intrigues as "a vile young rake of considerable fortune," seducing and deflowering a string of unfortunate young women (Autobiography 1:482). So shady was his reputation that a second dedication to him from the same female writer (Pilkington) would inevitably have brought with it "shrewd innuendoes" and a suggestion of "intrigue" between them (J.C. Pilkington 231-32). (In a private letter to Kingsborough she makes light of such speculation, saying that "if I was not old enough to be your mother," people might talk [232]. Inviting such speculation was part of her overall strategy in interacting with men. Flirtation or at least the impression of flirtation was often part of the transaction of selling her wit.) But by making a point of mentioning the lack of spots on his character, she reminds him of the leverage she holds. In fact, she

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reputedly furious and their feud began (Poems 5:433).

knows the exact size and location of *all* the spots on his character and she could just as easily write about them if there was ever to be a falling out between patron and writer.

Hinting at the possibility of blackmail to her patron was bold (and perhaps imprudent), but the most vivid example of just how far Pilkington takes the punitive element of her satire is her attack, in volume three, on the source of the story about Pope refusing a subscription, Thomas Sheridan, Jr., the one-time treasurer and assistant manager of the Smock Alley Theatre.[49] As with the Callaghan and Murray satires, Pilkington claims she once again met with a man's request to be a victim of her satire. This time, however, it is hard to imagine the man obtaining any sexual pleasure from the result. She tells of an altercation at the theatre one night in which her young son, Jack, was arrested, at the behest of Sheridan, for allegedly forging theatre passes (328). She says she was "greatly astonished" that Sheridan would show so little respect for "the Son of a Clergyman," especially given that the two Dublin families knew each other. Then, in a blackmail threat typical of her style by volume three, she explains that she knew Sheridan's mother and father and, as she puts it, "had a Power of furnishing the World with some Anecdotes, which were hitherto unrevealed" (328). Clearly Sheridan did not realize what he was up against. A few days later, Pilkington says she learned through his "little deformed Brother" that "Mr. Sheridan would esteem any Satire I wrote on him a Panegyrick" (328). So, to oblige his "Taste," she forwarded a poem through her friend Benjamin Victor to his "Mightiness," fulfilling his request. The poem, "To Mr. Sheridan," included in the Memoirs, is a particularly nasty attack. In it she targets not just Sheridan but, as promised, his family too, calling his father a womanizing, tyrannical pedant and his mother a vice-ridden hag responsible for her son's "sordid avaricious Spirit" (329). The satire ends with an image of the

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[49] See Memoirs 725 for Benjamin Victor's somewhat different version

theatre players (Sheridan's employees) savouring the sight of "Their Tyrant stript of all Command" and hoisted up on the catwalk, surrounded by "thy Kinsman Hangman" and ready to receive the reward befitting such a "Beggar's Brat" and "Scoundrel Thief."

On the scale of sugar and lemon this satire is acidic. The piece is so mean and spiteful, such a stinging personal attack without any of the self-conscious wit characteristic of most of her satire that it stands at one extreme of her satiric oeuvre. Even compared to Codrus and Farmer Pope, this piece is excessive, an example of the pitfalls of revenge satire--traps that she is elsewhere careful to avoid. It lacks the cool detachment of her earlier revenge satires against Callaghan, Murray, and Doneraile; she seems too earnest in her desire to inflict punishment; even more so than the author of Codrus and Farmer Pope, Pilkington gives the impression of caring too much. This poem is evidence of how revenge satire, if not handled delicately, can produce the lowest kind of lampoon.

Another factor to consider when discussing Pilkington's satire in volume three of the Memoirs, however, is the circumstances of publication. Volume three was incomplete at her death in 1750; it was advertised as "In the Press" at least eight months before she died, but advertising long before she had finished writing was her usual method in publishing volumes one and two (Memoirs xxiii). It was her son Jack who eventually published volume three in 1754. We don't know how much of a hand Jack had in the completion of the volume. According to Elias, "[i]nternal evidence suggests it was almost wholly written towards the end of his mother's life in Dublin, where he shared her lodgings" (xxii). But, as Elias suggests, it is a "safe bet" that he helped finish writing it. Therefore, we don't know to what degree Jack may have altered or even added to his mother's writings in volume three. In the case of this satire against Sheridan, for example, Jack certainly had as

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of this story.

much motive for revenge--perhaps more, since Sheridan embarrassed him in particular--as did his mother.

In any event, satires like this one against Sheridan probably didn't win Pilkington many friends. Elias suggests that by the time volume three appeared after her death she was actually losing some of the support she had garnered in volume one and two.[50] But while such satires soured her image for some, the Memoirs were still a tasty attraction to others. The success of the Memoirs is often attributed to the Swift factor (the public had an insatiable appetite for stories about the Dean), but not enough credit is given to the wit and scandal elements. By satirizing her enemies and exposing by name those who refused to subscribe to her poems, Pilkington makes the Memoirs a spectacle not to be missed. Even though she had died three years before, the threat of exposure was still real. We can imagine the speculation as volume three hit the market: Who would she name? Who would she attack? What witty, mean things would she say? Even Elizabeth Montagu, despite her reservations about the author, says she can hardly wait for the next volume (Memoirs iii). As Diana Relke reminds us, the eighteenth century had a voracious appetite for scandal and scurrility (117). The satire in the Memoirs, no matter how nasty, could only add to its attraction to readers.

While satire in the Memoirs was a selling point, Pilkington also realized the value of outside satire as advertising and public relations for the books. For instance, the appearance of the first two volumes touched off a satiric pamphlet war between Laetitia and

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[50] As evidence Elias points to the case of the country schoolmaster, Bernard Clarke. Clarke and Pilkington never met, but Clarke was so charmed by the first volume of the Memoirs that he sent her a celebratory poem which she printed at the beginning of volume two (125-28). However, his admiration for her work seems to have cooled after the publication of the next volume. In the introduction to his Collection of Poems on Various Occasions (Dublin, 1751), he says of volume two that he "must confess I cou'd wish she had dealt less in Invectives, many whereof were injuriously apply'd" (qtd. in Memoirs xxxii).

her husband (Relke 117). This flurry of poetic name-calling and repartee helped ensure the popularity of the Memoirs; it served as a kind of publicity stunt for the books. Some of her dramatic satire had the same effect. After her return to Dublin in 1747, Pilkington turned to this form of satire for making money. She had had a long-running association with writing for the stage, dating back to the days before her divorce in 1737, in Dublin, and continuing through her years in London. During this period, she wrote the occasional prologue, a handful of ballad operas for James Worsdale (275), part of a comedy for Benjamin Victor (148-50), and an unfinished blank verse tragedy, The Roman Father (included in the Memoirs [237-44]).

But her greatest exploitation of her dramatic satiric talents came in 1747-48 when she and her son Jack leased out the Capel Street theatre in Dublin to present pieces of her satirical writing, including a series of skits of satirical mimicry (performed by young Jack), and her comedy The Turkish Court: or, The London 'Prentice. A Burlesque Satirical Piece (never published). As Elias notes, the timing of this enterprise seems to have been calculated. The performances took place at precisely the time of the publication of the first volume of the Memoirs. In fact, the Dublin Weekly Journal was serializing portions of the Memoirs at the same time it was running advertisements for the Pilkington's theatre shows. As Elias says, "interest in the Memoirs and its author would have been at its height" (xl). The appearance of the Memoirs helped promote the satiric theatre shows and vice versa.

As Pilkington gets more and more comfortable with the role of satirist she creates for herself, she seems to begin to relish the kind of public display of her wit that satire offers. Satire was a tool for Pilkington, and she knew, like Pope, how to use it to show off her wit, to punish her enemies, to create publicity and a reputation for herself, and indirectly, to make money. When necessary, she could be a bolder, fiercer, and shrewder user of

satire than Elizabeth Thomas ever was, and she was able to use the genre to help her maintain more of a sense of independence (however shaky at times) than Thomas. Nothing illustrates this difference between the two women satirists better than the story of Pilkington meeting Edmund Curll, that figure who hovers so ominously over the reputation and writings of Thomas. According to Pilkington, Curll approached her in London and tried to trick her into selling him some letters from Swift. She sees through his "fine Scheme" (193) and refuses his offer, comforting herself that "Mr. Curl [sic] had not made a Fool of me, as he has done of many a better Writer, and secured me a Prisoner in his poetical Garret" (193-94). Thomas was certainly no fool, but in the late 1720s she may well have been, out of dire necessity, one of those very "prisoners" (literally) of Curll's "poetical Garret." Though Pilkington did her share of writing for hire as well, she was shrewd enough and lucky enough to avoid the fate of Thomas. Pilkington embraced this professional-writing identity in a way that Thomas never did. Thomas remained a gentlewoman who wrote but wouldn't publish except reluctantly, as a last resort. Pilkington was also desperate, but she exhibited an actual pleasure in publishing; for her, publication was not a necessary disgrace, as it was for Thomas, but a liberating act which helped her cultivate a romantic self-image as an unconventional, independent, female wit living on "nothing but poetry" until the end of her life. More than any other woman satirist I've considered, she was an instance of that creature that Medon considers an anomaly: a female satirist by profession.

However, one result of cultivating this romantic image of herself was to be made into a social outcast, to be lumped in the public mind with Teresia Constantia Phillips, who actually had worked as a prostitute. Pilkington's wit was seen by many of her contemporaries as too bold, too aggressive, and too dangerous for a woman. She stands out as an outspoken, feisty, witty woman at a time when, as Elizabeth Montagu reminds us, wit was no longer a desirable quality in a woman. These increased pressures of

respectability for women after Pilkington's day explain why she had no literary descendants. The model she offered--independent witty woman who embraced and even exploited her 'bad reputation'--did not fit with the times.

But if wit did help bring about Pilkington's downfall, it was also her saving grace. After losing the 'good' reputation that every woman was thought to be born with, her flair for writing and her sharp wit enabled her to forge a new reputation, one with its own rewards: revenge, notoriety, and financial gain. She lived out an unusual mythic existence for an eighteenth-century woman writer: a female wit who got the last laugh.

Although a generation apart, from different countries, and with vastly different views on women's issues, Thomas and Pilkington, and the Pope of the Dunciad, for that matter, had one overriding talent in common when it came to satire: they knew--or learned--how to use it. The stories of Pilkington and Thomas, in particular, tell us a good deal about the ways Augustan women used verse satire and how those ways changed over the course of the first half of the eighteenth century. Women used the genre not just for displaying their wit, but also for articulating reformist ideas, getting revenge on enemies, and making money. But while the first of these uses, reform, is prominent in Queen Anne-style women's satire such as Elizabeth Thomas's early work, it is the second and third uses, revenge and remuneration, which dominate Thomas's later work and the satire of Laetitia Pilkington in the 1730s and 40s. Pope's Dunciad signals the turning point for the way these women used the genre. His poem ushered in a new age of personal satire in which the genre was used less for the noble purposes of reform and more for the practical purposes of revenge, intimidation, and blackmail. Thomas's post-Dunciad satire and all of Pilkington's satire reflects this profound shift.

In a sense, too, this shift reflects the broader trend in the eighteenth century away from satire altogether. Following The

Dunciad, satire in general becomes increasingly more personal and more revenge-oriented, in the process diverging further and further from the reformist model of the genre represented by Queen Anne-style women's verse satire. The late satire of Thomas and the work of Pilkington illustrate how at least some women's verse satire was not immune to this trend.

Conclusion

Augustan Women's Verse Satire and Literary History: Rethinking the Myths

> "The vile taste for satire . . . will not be eradicated, I suppose, while the elements of curiosity and malice remain in human nature; but as a fashion of literature, I think it is passing away;--at all events it is not my forte."
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> "Women, generally speaking, are by nature too much subjected to suffering in many forms--have too much of fancy and sensibility, and too much of that faculty which some call philosophical veneration, to be naturally satirical."
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> --Alda, female voice in the prefatory dialogue to Anna Jameson's Shakespeare's Heroines: Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, and Historical, 1832, pp. 6, 10

Alda, the female voice in Jameson's dialogue, does not contest Medon's myth that women did not write satire; in fact, she affirms it. Women don't write satire, she suggests, because they can't; it does not come 'naturally' to them. This, she implies, is a good thing. For the "spirit of ridicule," in general, is "in direct contradiction to the mild and serious spirit of Christianity" (8), and satire, in particular, is "twice accursed": "evil in those who indulge it--evil to those who are objects of it" (9). Women, she insists, are not suited to a genre "which excites only the lowest and worst of our propensities" (7).

Alda's sentiments are an appropriate place to conclude my investigation of Augustan women's verse satire because they illustrate some important trends in literary and social history which have influenced the critical reception (or lack thereof) of

Augustan women's satire. First, Alda's words reflect a profound shift in what I call genre-status: satire went from being the dominant literary genre in the Augustan age (in practice, if not in theory) to being a marginal, "passing" genre by Jameson's time in the nineteenth century. It was not "eradicated" by any means (and wasn't likely to be since, as Alda reluctantly admits, it reflected part of "human nature"). In fact, a milder version of the genre was practiced by some of the leading writers of the nineteenth century too (Thackeray, Dickens). And in the twentieth century, satire would.experience something of a revival (with Wyndham Lewis, Evelyn Waugh, Virginia Woolf, and Mina Loy, for example). But in the 1830s, vigorous verse satire—at least kind represented by the likes of Laetitia Pilkington—had become unfashionable.

Second, Alda's statements reveal how, despite the existence of numerous women verse satirists in the Augustan age, Medon's myth was further entrenched in the nineteenth century, through shifting ideologies of 'appropriate' women's behavior. If satire was a risky undertaking for a woman in the 1730s when it was in vogue, it was even more so in the 1830s when it wasn't. Nineteenth-century ideologies of appropriate women's activities were, in some ways, even more restrictive than Augustan ones. Satire was certainly not thought becoming in an "Angel in the House," the term Woolf borrowed from Patmore to (ironically) describe the 'ideal' Victorian woman. Alda, representing the gender-ideology of one moment in the nineteenth century, would have been horrified by female satirists such as Sarah Fyge Egerton, Mehetabel Wright, Elizabeth Thomas, and especially Pilkington, who so relished the role of satirist. Perhaps, like Medon, she would have sought to explain them away as frightful anomalies.

But while Alda's musings on women's relationship to satire illustrate these general trends in literary and social history, they also hint at the implications the study of Augustan women's verse satire has for women's literary history in particular. In addition to being ignored by traditional literary history, Augustan

women's verse satire also has been largely overlooked by feminist literary history because it does not quite fit into what Ezell calls the "evolutionary narrative" of women's literary history (Writing 44). Despite its best efforts to be aware of its own underlying assumptions, feminist literary history has tended to "privilege certain genres and periods" over others (15). In terms of genre, women's verse satire is at a double disadvantage: not only has satire not been a privileged genre in women's literary history, neither has poetry.

In this "evolutionary narrative," many feminist critics have tended to privilege the novel as the "true female form" (Ezell Writing 32). This is especially true of eighteenth-century studies. As Rosalind Miles puts it, we all too often assume that 'eighteenth-century woman writer' equals 'eighteenth-century woman novelist' (2). This assumption is easy to understand; the notion of the woman novelist fits the argument which suggests that that form was supposedly suited to women's circumstances: it was a relatively new literary form without a deeply established male tradition, it was an extension of a long-standing female letter-writing tradition, it offered a speaking voice not already identified as male, and it was a good medium for exploring supposedly 'feminine' subject matter such as emotions and romantic relationships (Spender 4). In addition, this view of literary history allows eighteenth-century women novelists to be seen as the literary mothers of highly respected nineteenth and twentieth-century women novelists. In other words, one reason feminist literary history privileges the novel is because an "evolutionary narrative" can be constructed that sees women writers as having a founding a role for that genre, a genre that maintains strong female associations in later literary history.

But while the novel was admittedly an important genre for Augustan women writers, so much attention has been paid to it that other genres, especially poetry, have been overshadowed. Literary history tends to overemphasize the intimidation and obstacles that

the genre of poetry presented women writers with. We too easily assume, as Virginia Woolf did, that given the social conditions of early women writers (Augustan and pre-Augustan), "no woman could have written poetry" (Room 43). But we now know much more about women's literary history than Woolf could have, and we know that women *did* write poetry at this time. I hope my exploration of one type of this early women's poetry, Augustan satire, shows that we can, and need to, acknowledge women's work in this under-explored genre.

Another reason why Augustan women's verse satire does not fit easily into the "evolutionary narrative" of women's literary history has to do with an unofficial hierarchy of time periods in some circles of feminist literary criticism. Until recently many feminist literary critics concentrated on the nineteenth century as the watershed period in women's writing (Ezell Writing 21). Many of the prominent names in feminist literary criticism established their reputations by studying nineteenth-century women's fiction.[1] As a result, nineteenth-century studies occupy such a large influence on women's literary historiography that they sometimes overshadow or influence the way we see earlier periods such as the Augustan age. The nineteenth-century perception of women's relationship to satire, for instance, represented by Alda's comments, has colored the way we look at women's relationship to the genre in the Augustan age. This nineteenth-century view of gender-genre ideology, articulated by Victorian men and women (such as Jameson's Alda), has been so influential that many twentieth-century critics (feminists included) have swallowed it without question, in a way that they haven't accepted other elements of nineteenth-century gender ideology.

In some ways, then, Medon's myth has actually been consolidated rather than questioned by literary history, both traditional and feminist. Given the satire-as-masculine-genre

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[1] Ezell offers the examples of Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Elaine Showalter, Nina Auerbach, and Annette Kolodny.

mythmaking prior to the Augustan age, its reinforcement by nineteenth-century ideologies, and satire's relative exclusion from the narrative of feminist literary history, we should not be surprised that this myth—that female satirists were anomalies--still circulates today.

Feminist literary historians, in particular, still tend to see Augustan satire as a powerful masculine establishment dominated by major Augustan male literary figures (Dryden, Swift, and Pope) and marked by the proliferation of antifeminist themes. But closer examination of how these male satirists approached the genre hints at its latent possibilities for Augustan women. Swift and Pope, for example, saw themselves as the excluded opposition. They turned to satire when they needed a voice of the literary outsider. It offered a powerful, sometimes even radical, socially authorized strategy for mocking and questioning entrenched social and political systems. What genre, then, could be more useful or better suited to Augustan women, the ultimate literary outsiders?

My purpose has been to show that despite the proliferation of Medon's myth, female satirists were not "deviations from the common order" in the Augustan age. Despite verse satire's mythical associations with masculinity, Augustan women did write a great deal of it, and they did so with flair, innovation, and wit. Among other contributions to the genre, Augustan women participated in and transformed the satiric debate about women, they contributed in both conventional and radical ways to the sub-genre of Augustan marriage satire, and they used satire for a variety of purposes: to display rhetorical skill and wit, to articulate social reform, to get revenge, and to make money. Satire was a genre of possibilities for Augustan women; it offered an ideal vehicle for displaying women's wit, but also for questioning the status quo, articulating reformist ideas, and stimulating critical thought.

Myths are not easy to debunk, but I hope my exploration of the under-examined field of Augustan women's verse satire can be part of the process of rethinking at least one gender-genre issue in

seventeenth and eighteenth-century literature. For if we listen carefully, we can hear and appreciate the vibrant voices of Augustan women verse satirists—mocking, questioning, ridiculing, laughing, and always provoking.

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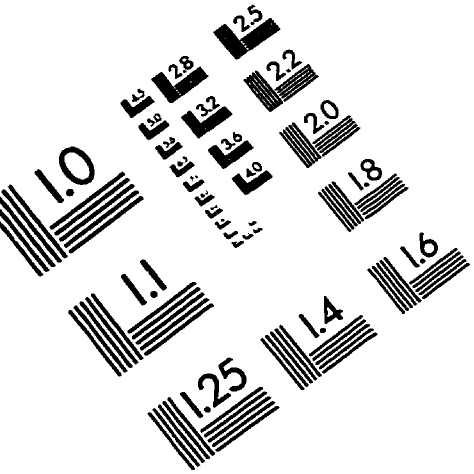

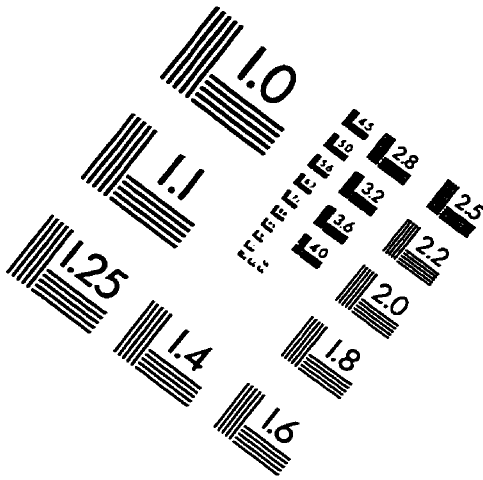

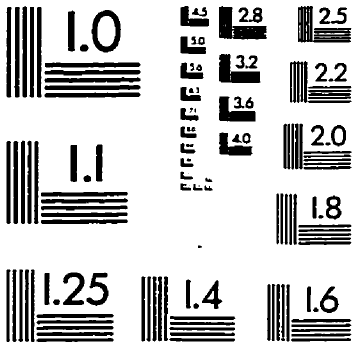

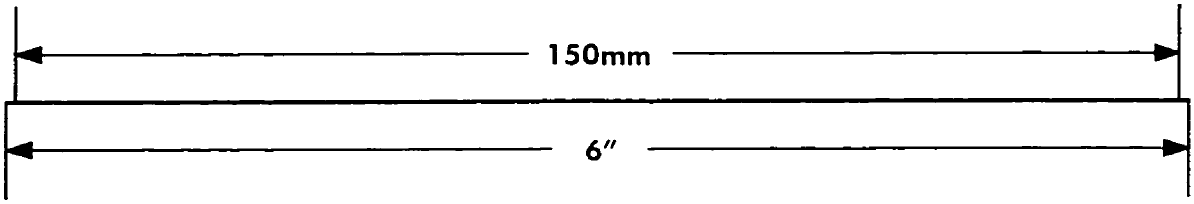

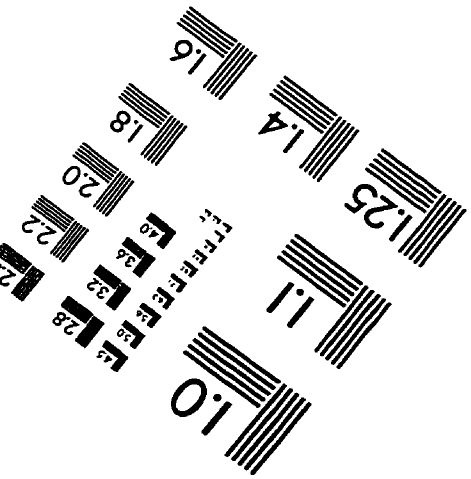

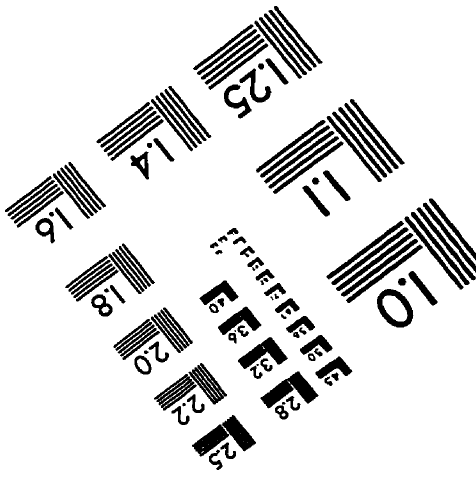

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