

POEMS BY EMINENT LADIES:
A STUDY OF AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ANTHOLOGY

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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University of Toronto

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This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Robert Mason.

Abstract

Poems by Eminent Ladies:
A Study of an Eighteenth-Century Anthology

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This is a study of *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, the first anthology devoted exclusively to English poetry by women, edited by George Colman and Bonnell Thornton, and published by Richard Baldwin in 1755. The eighteen poets in this collection range socially and chronologically from Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1624?-1674) to Mary Leapor, kitchen maid (1722-46). The intersection between bibliography, biography, and versification which occurs in all poetic anthologies is in this case complicated by a project that seeks to package female poets (some well known, others obscure) for the reading public.

Chapter One gives an overview of the literary environment that shaped the anthology. Here, I discuss the influences behind this collection. I also explore changing tastes and the marketplace at mid-century, as well as the ways in which women writers fit into the evolving milieu. Chapter Two discusses the background of the two editors, as well as the history of printed verse anthologies. I also address issues of publication that impact on the collection in this chapter, in particular the innovative use of alphabetical order in a verse anthology that seems to participate in an encyclopedic movement at mid-century. Chapter Three provides the reader with a table of the contents of the anthology together with basic information such as the dates of the poets, and the sources of the poems.

Chapters Four through Seven deal with the authors, arranged roughly chronologically in groups of four or more poets. In each of these chapters I address broader issues relating to that group. Whereas essential biographical and bibliographical facts about each poet are noted, the focus is a discussion of the poems that appear in *PEL*, and the impact of each woman's appearance in the anthology.

Chapter Four deals with seventeenth-century writers in the collection, as essential models of female writing within the tradition that Colman and Thornton map out: Cavendish, Philips, Behn, Killigrew, and Chudleigh. Chapter Five speaks to writers at the turn of the century, and ways in which they dealt with appearing in print: Finch, Monck, Cockburn, Rowe. Chapter Six discusses the change in social status among female poets in the 1730s and 40s. In Chapter Seven, I explore the verses of poets who were still living at mid-century, when *PEL* appeared: Montagu, Masters, Jones, Cowper (Madan), and Carter.

In Chapter Eight I consider later editions of the collection, and some of the memoirs and anthologies that followed *PEL* which testify to its influence. In my conclusion I address poetic resonance within *PEL* itself. Whether or not the editors intended it, themes such as love, marriage, writing, illness and death appear in various guises throughout the anthology. Here a variety of voices echo and dispute one another, and participate in a specific literary moment at mid-century.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CBEL</i>	<i>Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature</i>
<i>NCBEL</i>	<i>New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature</i>
<i>DNB</i>	L. Stephen, ed., <i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>ECWP</i>	R. Lonsdale, ed., <i>Eighteenth-Century Women Poets</i>
<i>ESTC</i>	<i>English Short-title Catalogue</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>
<i>LM</i>	<i>London Magazine</i>
<i>PEL</i>	G. Colman and B. Thornton, eds. <i>Poems by Eminent Ladies</i>
<i>WWLH</i>	M. Ezell, <i>Writing Women's Literary History</i>

Full details of publication are given in "Works Consulted." In my third chapter, I list the title of each poem as it appears in the body of the text, italicized and capitalized as in *PEL*, rather than in the often shortened or otherwise altered form that appears in the Table of Contents. Elsewhere in the thesis, titles are standardized according to modern convention. The text of the poems, and passages quoted from manuscripts, follow the originals as closely as computer fonts allow (i.e. long s appears as s.) Where I transcribe materials, I do so as nearly as possible to the original.

INTRODUCTION

This study considers *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, a two-volume anthology of eighteen poets that was compiled by George Colman and Bonnell Thornton in 1755. No printed collection of verse had been devoted exclusively to poetry by women before this, and my aim is to explore the significance to literary history of this phenomenon. In addressing *PEL* both as a physical object and as a unique reading experience --the first attempt to determine and justify a canon of women's writings-- I discuss other books and genres that influenced the make-up of the anthology, both the texts which served as sources of verse, and those which stood already as models of writing about women.

Recent scholarship has transformed our knowledge and understanding of women's writing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. I have drawn from works that deal with various aspects of canonicity in this thesis. Roger Lonsdale's fruitful anthology, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*, points the way toward a fuller discussion of women writers, their work, and their impact on the literary marketplace of the period. Margaret Ezell's *Writing Women's Literary History* and Germaine Greer's *Slipshod Sybils: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* address the need to examine the intersection between biography and bibliography, and to interrogate the ways in which this intersection has been negotiated in scholarship over the centuries. As well, recent investigation into the nature of the book, in particular, anthological inquiries like Michael Suarez's detailed edition of Robert Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, and Barbara Benedict's *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies*, argue that eighteenth-century anthologies both reflected and prescribed literary taste. In *Making the English Canon*, Jonathan Brody Kramnick argues that "The English literary canon achieved its definitive shape during the middle decades of the eighteenth century."¹ *PEL* testifies to the importance of locating women writers in this area of study. The unprecedented historical introductions to each poet's verse in *PEL*, for example, provide biographical information about the poets, and testify to the editorial desire to package writing women as curiosities, heroines, or both. These bibliographical preambles instruct the reader, and intrude upon the text. They suggest a meeting place between literature, literary history, women's studies, and the singular nature of the anthology as a genre.

¹ *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 1.

In my first chapter I concentrate on the print history of women poets prior to *PEL* and the literary environment into which *PEL* appeared at mid-century. Here, I examine the texts by which Colman and Thornton were guided in their choice of poets and of poems. In my second chapter, I discuss the backgrounds of Colman and Thornton and their role as editors. I address a number of issues relating to print and the publication of *PEL*, such as the use of italics and capitalizing. I also explore the organizing principle behind the construction of the two volumes. Rather than presenting the poets in random or chronological order, the editors instead introduced them alphabetically. The sequence is both democratic and curiously malleable, and speaks to the many encyclopaedic projects that were undertaken at mid-century.

Chapter Three, titled “Contents and Sources,” provides basic bibliographical information about the anthology, the order of the poems, page allotment, and the sources that the editors used in compiling the verses for their collection. Due to the nature of this project, a degree of repetition of bibliographical facts is inevitable in the chapters that follow. The reader should refer to relevant sections of Chapter Three for the placement, length, and full titles of the poems when reading my discussion of authors in the later sections.

In chapters four through seven I discuss the eighteen authors whose works make up *PEL*. Although introduced alphabetically in the anthology, the poets range from the middle of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth, and I consider them in roughly chronological order to deal with groups of women for whom similar issues of publication history and reputation are relevant. A great deal of biographical scholarship has been done on most of the women in *PEL*. Whereas I do give brief overviews of each writer’s life at the beginning of each section, my focus remains on the poet’s work as it appears in the anthology, as well as the impact of the anthology on each writer’s place in, or on the margins of, the canon.

The eighteen authors in *PEL* run the gamut from the extremely well-known and widely read dramatist and novelist Aphra Behn, to the obscure Irish poet, Constantia Grierson. The space allotted each varies drastically, from four pages for Elizabeth Carter’s poetry, to the 117 pages allowed Mary Leapor. There are significant gaps, too, in terms of social status and economic well-being; Lance Bertelsen does not indulge in hyperbole in describing *PEL* as a collection that includes writers “from hacks to heiresses.”²

²Lance Bertelsen, *The Nonsense Club: Literature and Popular Culture, 1749-1764* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986) 59.

In Chapter Eight I briefly discuss later editions of *PEL*, as well as the influence it had on subsequent attempts at canon formation, both in biographies and anthologies of early women writers. In my Conclusion, I turn to issues of poetic resonance within the anthology itself. Whether or not editorial intention was behind the many thematic echoes that occur in these two volumes, such topics as love and marriage, mortality, friendship, a woman's place, and the anxiety of writing and of publishing do repeat and reflect on one another. When *PEL* is considered as a whole, poems and poets that had not previously appeared alongside one another in print engage in a variety of dialogues, and the anthology resonates with voices contributing to a specific literary moment.

CHAPTER ONE
Arbiters of Wit: Anthologizing Women Writers

On May 1, 1755, *The Public Advertiser* informed readers that another verse anthology had been printed in London and was now for sale:

This Day are publish'd, / In two neat Pocket Volumes, Price 6 s. / POEMS
by eminent LADIES, particularly / Mrs. Barber, Mrs. Behn, Miss Carter,
Lady Chudleigh, Mrs. Cockburn, Mrs. Grierson, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Killigrew,
Mrs. Leapor, Mrs. Madan, Mrs. Masters, Lady M. W. Montague, Mrs. Monck,
Dutchess of Newcastle, Mrs. K. Philips, Mrs. Pilkington, Mrs. Rowe, Lady
Winchelsea. . . . Printed for R. Baldwin at the Rose in Pater-noster-Rowe;
and sold by all the Booksellers in Town and Country.¹

Two weeks later, the pseudonymous Mr. Town, “critic and censor-general” of the *Connoisseur*, described a dream sequence prompted by a visit to the home of “a lady of great sense and taste.” Here he discovers “two little volumes. . . lately published under the title of “Poems by Eminent Ladies.” Mr. Town agrees with the author of the Preface to these volumes, who claims them as “the most solid compliment that can possibly be paid to the fair sex.”² Upon returning home, he falls asleep, is transported to Parnassus, and finds himself in the Court of Apollo, “surrounded by a great number of our most eminent poets.” In their midst, Mr. Town has the privileged position of earthly observer in a case under earnest dispute:

whether the English ladies, who had distinguished themselves in poetry,
should be allowed to hold the same rank, and have the same honours
paid them, with the men. As the moderns were not permitted to plead in
their own suit, Juvenal was retained on the side of the male poets, and
Sappho undertook the defence of the other sex. The Roman Satirist, in his
speech at the bar, inveighed bitterly against women in general, and particularly
exclaimed against their dabbling in literature: but when Sappho came to set
forth the pretensions which the ladies justly had to poetry, and especially in

¹*The Public Advertiser* (1 May, 1755). The same advertisement appeared several times throughout the month of May and into June. A similar notice also appeared, beginning May 6, in the *Daily Advertiser*. The phrase “This day are published” did not necessarily indicate the first day of publication.

²*Connoisseur* #69, 22 May, 1755, 2 vols. (London: printed for Richard Baldwin, 1754-1756) I: 409-14. All subsequent references to the *Connoisseur* are taken from this edition.

love affairs, Apollo could no longer resist the importunity of the Muses in favour of their own sex. He therefore decreed that all those females, who thought themselves able to manage Pegasus, should immediately show their skill and dexterity in riding him.³

Presently a number of women attempt the task, and succeed in proving their ability to ride the mythical beast. Most of them also require assistance from the men in attendance, either to mount or dismount Pegasus. Anne Killigrew, for example, is helped into the saddle by John Dryden, and Jonathan Swift holds the stirrup for Dublin poet Mary Barber. This assisted ascent into the saddle again mirrors the Preface to *Poems by Eminent Ladies* (also quoted in the *Public Advertiser* notice), which states that the ladies have been “celebrated by . . . cotemporary poets, and . . . particularly distinguished by the most lavish encomiums either from *Cowley, Dryden, Creech, Pope, or Swift.*”⁴

For all the enthusiasm Mr. Town expresses about *PEL*, there are nevertheless difficulties inherent in reading the anthology in light of Town’s recommendation. Sappho’s opposition to Juvenal, for example, places women writers firmly outside the genre of satire, except as subjects, and Town’s vision reaffirms the clichéd notion that women excel chiefly at composing verse on “love affairs.” By contrast, one of the prefatory texts in the anthology itself is a letter from the poet Mary Jones, praising Mary Barber for refraining from composing verse about romantic love. Jones wishes that this subject “had been exhausted seventeen hundred years ago,” for it is a “pity, that this passion alone should set us to rhyming.”⁵ Truly eminent ladies, her letter intimates, do not write about love affairs, yet the amorous Sappho is their advocate on Mr. Town’s Parnassus.

The tension between passion and control is central to the rhetorical trope that drives Town’s vision. His sardonic manipulation of the well-worn horse and rider

³*Connoisseur* #69, 410.

⁴*Poems by Eminent Ladies*, 2 vols. (London: for R. Baldwin, 1755) I: iii.

⁵“Extract of a Letter from Mrs. Jones to The Hon. Miss Lovelace,” *PEL*, I: 6. Elizabeth Carter praised Elizabeth Rowe in similar terms: “Long did romance o’er female wits prevail, / Th’intriguing novel and the wanton tale. / What different subjects in thy pages shine!”, “On the Death of Mrs. Rowe,” *GM* (1737) 247, //10-12.

metaphor for the creation of poetry not only comments on the awkward position of female writers in general, but is applied variously to the poets present at the trial. Along with his insinuation of the need for male guidance in intellectual matters, he relishes both the sexual suggestiveness of horse and rider, and the questionable exhibition that results from publication. Each equestrienne reveals by her riding style the personality behind her poetry; Aphra Behn causes the muses to blush when she insists on riding astride, only to “shew[] her legs at every motion of the horse,” and Laetitia Pilkington, the last to mount, thrashes about violently to thwart her husband’s attempt to prevent her ride, then takes the horse through “the most filthy places.”⁶ Finally, she strikes the dreaming narrator awake when he ventures to help her dismount (or to get a closer look).

The farcical nature of the essay, and Mr. Town’s observation of the female body, tend to divert attention away from the issue of poetry itself, but do not eclipse it. The reader is left with an inchoate impression that female poets do deserve recognition and praise for their writings: Milton, who along with Shakespeare helps the Duchess of Newcastle from the saddle, is also discomfited by her reciting some of her lines on melancholy, for “it was whispered by some, that he was obliged for many of the thoughts in his *L’Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* to this lady’s *Dialogue between Mirth and Melancholy*.”⁷ Satirical and indubitably patronizing, Mr. Town’s vision nevertheless provides testimony to the poetic strength of women, and functions as a resounding advertisement for the newly published *Poems by Eminent Ladies*.

The kind of approbation for the women in the anthology that we find in Mr. Town’s essay is not characteristic of the *Connoisseur*. In a number of issues, Town echoes the complicated misogyny of his day with the type of mock-chivalry we witness in essay #69, but without its same saving grace. Women are generally depicted in the periodical as creatures who favour the ridiculous in dress and behaviour. As in Alexander Pope’s piece on “the Characters of Women,” the fair sex is unlikely to be the

⁶*Connoisseur* #69, 413, 414.

⁷*Connoisseur* #69, 412.

source of intelligent or original thought.⁸ The *Connoisseur* is ripe with jibes such as the need for a “female thermometer” to gauge the wide variety of women’s temperaments. In his fourth essay, Mr. Town described a class of women called “Demi-reps; a word not to be found in any of our dictionaries” as an order founded “by some ladies eminent for their public spirit, with a view of raising their half of the species to a level with the other in the unbounded license of their enjoyments. By this artifice,” he explained, “the most open violation of modesty takes the name of innocent freedom and gayety; and as long as the last failing remains a secret, the lady’s honour is spotless and untainted.”⁹

Preceding the *Connoisseur* by almost two decades, the sixth issue of Mary Wortley Montagu’s short-lived periodical *The Nonsense of Common Sense* warns women against writers who “with a Sneer of affected Admiration, would throw you below the Dignity of the human Species.” Those who profess themselves admirers of the fair sex, she argues, often treat women with a contemptuous flattery that expects nothing of them, and encourages them to ask nothing of themselves, which in turn “renders them useless members of the commonwealth.”¹⁰ It is this sneer of which we must be wary in every text, including perhaps the epigraph on the title-page of *PEL*, taken from Abraham Cowley’s “Ode” to Katherine Philips, “We allow’d you Beauty, and we did submit / To

⁸“How many pictures of one Nymph we view, / All how unlike each other, all how true!” “Epistle II. To a Lady: Of the Characters of Women,” *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. 1 vol. Twickenham edition, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale UP 1963) 559-69, ll.-6. Subsequent quotations from Pope are from this edition.

⁹*Connoisseur* #4, Feb. 21, 1754, I: 19-24. This essay condemns those women for whom marriage hides all sin, reiterating the sentiments expressed by Henry Fielding in a number of the poems in his 1743 *Miscellanies*. Fielding’s “Part of Juvenal’s Sixth Satire, modernized in Burlesque Verse” is especially apropos, in its suggestion that all husbands are cuckolds:

And who would lose the precious Joy
Of a fine thumping darling Boy?
Who, while you dance him, calls you Daddy,
(So he’s instructed by my Lady.)

Miscellanies, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) Ed. Henry Knight Miller, I: 85-117, ll.55-58. The same anxiety about illegitimate birth appears frequently throughout the period, as in “Three Hours After Marriage” by Gay, Pope, and Arbuthnot. (London, 1717).

¹⁰Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Nonsense of Common-Sense*, #6 (London, Tuesday, Jan. 24, 1738). Nine issues were published in 1737-1738. The series was designed to counter the weekly anti-Walpole publication, *Common Sense*.

all the Tyrannies of it. / Ah, cruel Sex! will you depose us too in Wit?"¹¹ Germaine Greer (who calls Cowley "exceptionally unsympathetic to women, even for an Englishman") suggests that during the first half of the eighteenth century, at least, much of the writing by men about women writers proffered praise so extravagant as to be ridiculous, therefore mocking the female poet, and simultaneously highlighting how extraordinary she was.¹²

Female weaknesses are seldom the focus in Mr. Town's writings. Rather, they provide opportunity for wry asides: "The fair sex," for example, is held to be "too thoughtless to concern itself in deep inquiries into matters of religion."¹³ Other than the trial on Parnassus, there is almost no mention elsewhere in the periodical of women writing. When the topic does arise, it is dealt with shortly: "Our ladies are, indeed, very well qualified to publish recitals of amours. . ."¹⁴ Again, the reader is informed that love is not a subject worthy of really exceptional verse. Passion, it seems, limits what women are "qualified" to produce.

At such moments, Mr. Town is participating in a tradition that required little justification. Countless critics (not all of them male) evaluated women's writings by illustrating a necessary link between talent and modesty, and by mocking and discouraging the hack female writer in personal terms. The result was satire aimed at the pseudo-erudite woman who proved that a little learning was, in literature, a dangerous thing. Pope, Gay and Arbuthnot illustrate this point with the notorious Phoebe Clinket, priestess of doggerel and bombast in *Three Hours after Marriage*, who harmed her reputation without knowing she did so. When Clinket and Sir Tremendous have a chat about writing, they indulge in a terminology that calls into doubt the purity of literary

¹¹Countless writers had identified women as easy targets, and divided the female population into good and wicked—Rochester, Swift, and Young, to name only three. For the most comprehensive discussion of these portrayals, see Felicity Nussbaum, *The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women 1660-1750* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1984).

¹²Germaine Greer, *Slipshod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* (London: Viking, 1995) 135; 36-64, *passim*.

¹³*Connoisseur* #9, March 28, 1754, I: 49-54.

¹⁴*Connoisseur*, #24, July 11, 1754, I: 139-144. Tobias Smollett touched on the same preoccupation in 1748: "But what was very extraordinary in a female poet, there was not the least mention of love in any of her performances." *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979) 221.

expression: “I am so much charm’d with your manly penetration,” she gushes. “I with your profound capacity,” he replies.¹⁵ If it was not actually immoral for women to be overcome by the desire to produce literature, it was often amusing. The four lines in *The Rape of the Lock* that so offended Pope’s friend Anne Finch, depict women’s writing as a symptom of mental or hormonal disorder in the Cave of Spleen:

Parent of Vapours and of Female Wit,
Who give th’*Hysteric* or *Poetic* Fit,
On various Tempers act in various Ways
Make some take Physic, others scribble Plays.¹⁶

There was something ridiculous, apparently, either in women’s writings, or in the act of women writing, an attitude often expressed under the guise of a concern for the English language, which could, in a woman’s world, turn chaotic and troubling. In Edward Moore’s periodical, *The World*, Philip Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield, congratulated Samuel Johnson on the forthcoming *Dictionary of the English Language*, stating “it must be owned that our language is at present in a state of anarchy.”¹⁷ He vows to let the dictionary dictate usage to him, but also suggests that Johnson temper his impartiality with gallantry when it comes to the ladies, who have created a new, polite lexicon which confuses grammar and jumbles syllables. “Language is indisputably the more immediate province of the fair sex,” he jeers, “there they shine, there they excel. The torrents of their eloquence. . . bear away, in one promiscuous heap, nouns, pronouns, verbs, moods, and tenses.”¹⁸ What Chesterfield describes is a feminine English,

¹⁵Act I. “Three Hours After Marriage.” It is worth remembering, however, that Clinket is the only female member of the household untroubled by the prospect of a “touchstone of virginity” by which the women are to be tested.

¹⁶“The Rape of the Lock,” *Poems*, 234, vi: ll.58-61.

¹⁷Chesterfield, #100, Nov. 28, 1754, *The World... by Adam Fitz-Adam* (usually Edward Moore), 2 vols. (London: pr. for R. Dodsley, 1753-1756) 599-604.

¹⁸Chesterfield, *World*, #101, Dec. 5, 1754. 605-606. Chesterfield was participating in a long-standing tradition in which dictionaries in the vernacular were specified as being “for the benefit and helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other unskilled persons.” Juliet Fleming demonstrates a far-reaching emphasis on “female difference” in the early history of English lexicography, in “Dictionary English and the Female

untempered by tradition, logic, or the proper sort of education. Johnson, himself suspicious of the new “Amazons of the pen,” was equally offended by male writers who embraced “female phrases and fashionable barbarisms.”¹⁹

These depictions, though, were themselves as variegated as the streaks of the tulip, and justified by the certainty that “Woman’s at best a Contradiction still.”²⁰ Just as the connoisseur’s tone of amused condescension is an evolved, diluted inheritance from literary forefathers, the specific inspiration for Mr. Town indulging in encomium in essay #69 “his breezy suggestion of poetic equality between the sexes” is not difficult to trace. Women were writing, and readers were buying their books. As Roger Lonsdale demonstrates, publications by women multiplied steadily over the decades of the eighteenth century. From the 1730s women were finding it increasingly acceptable, as well as lucrative, to publish their verse, particularly by subscription, and by mid-century there was a noticeable change in the attitude to women who evinced either an untutored, “natural” eloquence, or who were more educated (within reason) than the rest of the female population.²¹ Certainly the subscription collected in a particular region for a widow with a skill for rhyming, or any otherwise respectable, financially constrained woman, often constituted a reputable charitable effort. That women as a group had achieved an excellence in poetry equal to that of male poets is now and then asserted, often facetiously. The *Connoisseur* article, then, does two things at once. It elevates

Tongue,” *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. Jean R. Brink (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1993) 175-204: 176.

¹⁹Johnson, *Idler*, #77, 6 October, 1759. *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*. 16 vols. Ed. W. J. Bate et al. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1963) II: 240. Johnson also had a number of female writers as friends, including Elizabeth Carter, Mary Jones and Mary Masters.

²⁰Pope, “Epistle II. To a Lady,” *Poems*, 559-569, ll. 269-270. *Connoisseur* #4 (Feb. 21, 1754) argues that “the difference between the several species [of women] in the scale of being is just sufficient to preserve their distinction; the highest of one order approaching so near to the lowest of the other, that the gradation is hard to be determined; as the colours of the rainbow, through an infinite variety of shades, die away into each other imperceptibly.” Town’s pronouncement echoes both the variety, and the ethereal quality, of Pope’s “Dip in the Rainbow, trick her off in Air.” (“To a Lady,” l.18).

²¹Roger Lonsdale, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (Oxford; NY: Oxford UP, 1989). “Introduction,” i-xlvii: xxvii. Cheryl Turner has demonstrated the rise in women’s fictional prose in tandem with the increasing commercialization of literature in the eighteenth century in *Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century* (London and NY: Routledge, 1992).

women to a place of honour by giving Mr. Town's stamp of approval to the new collection of verse, and it puts them in their place with humour.

The Parnassian vision is more than the recommendation of another new book by one woman. It functions as an actual advertisement for *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, a collection unlike any other in the period in its exclusive focus on women. Not only were the *Connoisseur* and *PEL* brought out by the same bookseller, Richard Baldwin, but the same two men who gave life to the persona of the amusing Mr. Town also compiled *PEL*. These were George Colman (1732-1794) and Bonnell Thornton (1725-1768), friends at Oxford and then in London during the 1750s.²² Mr. Town's vision, which complements the Preface to the anthology, is therefore a recommendation by the same men who wrote that Preface. Town's narrative is funnier, more enthusiastic, and more ambiguous than the assertion in *PEL* that "There is indeed no reason to be assigned why the poetical attempts of females should not be well received, unless it can be demonstrated that fancy and judgment are wholly confined to one half of our species."²³ The "critic and censor-general" is the aggregate alter ego of Colman and Thornton; in Town's ephemeral essay he is at work simultaneously building up, and deconstructing, his own serious anthology. While the rides on Pegasus seem to answer in the affirmative the query about a place for women on Parnassus, it is not at all clear from *Connoisseur* #69 whether the anthology that it puffs is indeed "the most solid compliment that can possibly be paid the fair sex," or whether women's poetry can do no more than complement the writings of men.

I. A Mid-Century Impulse

In the late seventeenth century it was the popularity of writings by Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda, and Aphra Behn, the English Sappho, which suggested the possibility for women writers to see their work in print. Others, like playwrights

²²*DNB* lists Thornton's birth date as 1724, *Alumni Westminsteriensis*, 1726, but Lance Bertelsen has found the date of his Christening, 28 September, 1725, recorded in the register of St. Paul Covent Garden. Bertelsen, *Nonsense Club*, 13.

²³*PEL*, I: iii.

Delarivière Manley and Catharine Trotter (later Cockburn), and religious poet Elizabeth Singer (later Rowe), became familiar to the reading public in the last decade of the century. By the early decades of the eighteenth century, Jeslyn Medoff notes, “booksellers of the time were quite willing to attach a female designation to a romance, play or love lyric, preferably a young woman’s full name,” though most appeared as written by “A young Lady” or “A Lady of quality.”²⁴ With the changing attitude in English literary and theatrical taste, however, a movement away from the license of the age and towards an increasingly “moral” and sentimental outlook impeded the relative freedom women had enjoyed to write and print. Behn’s reputation is well-documented as having taken a drastic downward spiral toward the end of the seventeenth century, and critics in the eighteenth heaped opprobrium upon her memory and her works.

Resourceful women were often able to adapt to these changing attitudes and rework the female writer into a new entity. This was the case with Catharine Trotter Cockburn, who enjoyed success writing drama in the 1690s, then fell into disfavour, partly due to criticism leveled at her by her former friend Delarivière Manley. Cockburn resurrected herself as a minor poet who, through marriage, came to prioritize family, home, and religion over social comedy. She constructed herself as a modest matron, while excising several of the more interesting products of her youth, and was anointed with more respectability still two years after her death when the Reverend Thomas Birch brought out the *Works of Mrs. Catharine Cockburn* in 1751.²⁵

Female writers were not a recent phenomenon, therefore, but their potential was also not yet fully tapped, and the 1750s marked a watershed for interest in, and the proliferation of, books that highlighted women’s writings. It is this sort of interest of which Colman and Thornton took notice. As they had taken their cue in creating the *Connoisseur* from periodical essayists before them --Addison, Hawkesworth, Moore, and Johnson-- while making their efforts new, Colman and Thornton were following a trend among men of letters in producing their unusual anthology. Periodicals such as *The*

²⁴Jeslyn Medoff, “The daughters of Behn and the problems of reputation,” *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Athens: U of Georgia Press, 1992) 33-54: 33.

²⁵*The Works of Mrs. Catharine Cockburn, Theological, Moral, Dramatic, and Poetical* (London, 1751).

Lady's Weekly Magazine in 1747, and *The Ladies Magazine; or, the Universal Entertainer* (1749 through 1753) still featured mostly male writers, but evidenced an increasing awareness both of women reading and women writing. Thomas Seward, father of the poet and novelist Anna Seward, wrote "The Female Right to Literature," an impassioned poem replete with Amazonian imagery, which appeared in Robert Dodsley's 1748 *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*. In the same month that saw publication of *PEL*, a satire on *Female Taste* by "a Barrister of the Middle Temple" was advertised in the same periodicals.²⁶ Several of the women whose work appears in *PEL* were still writing at mid-century; Mary Jones at Oxford had produced a volume of verse and letters in 1750, Mary Masters did the same in 1755, and Elizabeth Carter had yet to do her best work.

It was also a period of great encyclopaedic endeavours through which Colman and Thornton were introduced to female writers of the past. The editors were acquainted, for example, with Theophilus Cibber's and Robert Shiells' five-volume *Lives of the Poets*, produced in 1752, where they encountered more or less detailed descriptions of the lives of eleven of the poets they later included in *PEL*.²⁷ The day before *PEL* was first advertised, moreover, the *Public Advertiser* noted the appearance of *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain. Interspersed with Literary Reflections, and Accounts of Antiquities and curious Things, in several Letters*.²⁸ Biographical collections sometimes included a few poems or excerpts alongside the brief lives of authors, which Cibber and

²⁶*Female Taste: a satire. In two epistles* (London, 1755). The writer drags out all the clichés, here, about women who do not attend church, but "never miss" midnight dances, and wear high heels because they would rather "break a leg or two / Then[sic] not regard what others do."

²⁷*Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland, to the Time of Dean Swift* (London: pr. for R. Griffiths, 1753). These are Philips, Cavendish, Killigrew, Behn, Chudleigh, Monck, Finch, Rowe, Cockburn, Grierson, and Pilkington. Colman and Thornton acknowledge in particular their indebtedness to Cibber and Shiells for the biographical material on Behn (at six pages, the longest introduction in the anthology). Despite the title page, which credits Cibber "and several other hands," the compilation of *Lives of the Poets* is now mostly attributed to Robert Shiells. See James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 6 vols., ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953) III: 130n: "Mr. Shiells was the author of the 'Lives of the Poets' to which the name of "Cibber" is affixed."

²⁸*Memoirs, containing the Lives of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (London, 1755; reissued with cancel title-page, 1769); *Public Advertiser* 30 April, 1755; rpt. May 27. These *Memoirs*, by the eccentric Thomas

Shiells did, as did Thomas Birch in his section on the Countess of Winchilsea in his ten-volume expansion of Pierre Bayle's *Dictionaire Generale*.²⁹ A new creation, too, was a much-expanded version of this, the *Biographia Britannica*, which also recorded the lives of various authors.³⁰ That said, the conflation of verse miscellany and encyclopedia or memoir was almost unheard of. By providing biographical introductions, Colman and Thornton seem to have been applying to each of their authors the precepts set down by Eliza Haywood (1693?-1756) in the first *Female Spectator*: "In order to be as little deceiv'd as possible, I, for my own part, love to get as well acquainted as I can with an Author, before I run the risque of losing my Time in perusing his Work. . . I doubt not but most People are of this way of thinking."³¹

Colman and Thornton acknowledge their debt for a good deal of their biographical material to George Ballard's crucial work, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain who have been Celebrated for their Writings or Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences* (1752). Ballard (1706-1755) was one of eight clerks at Magdalen College, and he was acquainted at least with Bonnell Thornton at Oxford: "Bonnell Thornton, M. A. Student of Ch. Ch. Oxon" is listed as one of the subscribers to the *Memoirs*.³² Ballard's focus extended back to women of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Anne Boleyn, Mary, Queen of Scots), but the collection also contains memoirs of seven of the women later chosen by Colman and Thornton for *PEL*. Praising his own age for its profusion of excellent biographies, Ballard expresses wonder in his 'Preface', "how it hath happened, that very many ingenious women of this nation, who were really

Amory (1691?-1788) are a perplexing sermon on Christianity, and contain very little about women. In any case, the title suggests that certain catchwords (particularly "Ladies") were considered good marketing.

²⁹Thomas Birch, et al. eds. *A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical*, 10 vols. (London, 1734-41).

³⁰*Biographia Britannica*, 10 vols. (London, 1747-66).

³¹"The Editor Introduces herself," *The Female Spectator: Being Selections from Mrs. Eliza Haywood's Periodical First Published in Monthly Parts (1744-46)*, ed. and intro. Gabrielle M. Firmager (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993) 17.

³²John Nichols gives an account of Ballard in *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 9 vols. (1812-16) II: 466-470. Ballard, who went to Magdalen College as a clerk at the age of forty-four, was "a most extraordinary person. . . bred in low life, a stay-maker, or woman's habit-maker" with "a turn for letters." He died the month after the publication of *PEL*.

possess'd of a great share of learning, and have no doubt, in their time been famous for it, are not only unknown to the publick in general, but have been passed by in silence by our great biographers."³³ Included in Ballard's study are Philips, Killigrew, Chudleigh, Cavendish, Monck, Winchilsea (Finch), and Grierson – all also in Cibber. Colman and Thornton were aware that the *Memoirs* had proved popular, and lucrative for Ballard. The cursory introduction to Chudleigh provided in *PEL* ends with a sentence that reads like an advertisement for the antiquary's book: "This short account of Lady Chudleigh is extracted from a much larger of the ingenious Mr. Ballard, published in his entertaining *Memoirs of Learned Ladies*."³⁴

Margaret Ezell notes that it was "Ballard's practice to send out copies of the works of the women he was studying to receive comments from academic friends at Oxford and various antiquarian contacts."³⁵ In a letter expressing his own discouragement at the task before him, Ballard wrote to a friend Charles Littleton, anticipating the rhetoric of justification that he (and later Colman and Thornton), would put into place in the published works:

But the Censure pass'd upon the Learned Ladies of great Britain gave me no small concern. . . . For if we have not above one or two Ladys worthy to be taken notice of I must consequently be a very stupid Blockhead to put my self to so much Expence, as to lavish away so much Time + Pains, to so little Purpose. It was no small satisfaction + Pleasure to me to recollect that most of the Ladys whose Memoirs I am Collecting have been applauded or

³³George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain, who have been celebrated for their writings or Skills in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences* (Oxford, 1752) vi. Mary (Granville) Delany (1700-1788), who subscribed for six copies, and acted as patron to Ballard, recorded: "Thursday we spent quietly at home alone, working and reading Mr. Ballard's 'Learned Ladies', which is just come to me. I think the performance, as far as I have gone, very well; he does not pretend so much to be an author as a compiler. . . the style is full as good as could be expected from the man, and void of affectation." *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, 3 vols. ed. Lady Llanover (London: R. Bentley, 1861) I: 230 May 12, 1753, to Mrs. Dewes.

³⁴*PEL*, I: 80. Ballard includes some poems by the women in his *Memoirs*, but reprinting verse is not his main goal.

³⁵Margaret Ezell, intro. *The Poems and Prose of Mary, Lady Chudleigh*. *Women Writers in English 1350-1850* (NY and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993) xi-xxxvi: xxxiii. This accounts for the notes like that sent to Ballard by Thomas Rawlins, who appraised Mary Chudleigh as "ye Author of severall Admirable Poems & other useful Discourses & for rare Wit & Learning & Eloquence. . ." BOD Ballard 42, ff.29, n.d.

extoll'd by the Pens of some of the greatest and most learned Men that they or any other Nation can boast of.³⁶

Ballard's sharing out of texts among his friends demonstrates a cautiously enthusiastic reliance on positive reinforcement from other learned men.³⁷ The practice also indicates that Bonnell Thornton, at Oxford in 1752 and a subscriber to Ballard's book, not only read Ballard's biographies of Chudleigh and others, but may also have encountered the poems of many of these poets at least three years before compiling *PEL*.

Another important text was John Duncombe's latter-day progress poem, *The Feminiad*, first printed in 1754. Duncombe (1729-86), a regular contributor to the *Connoisseur*, created in *The Feminiad* what Jocelyn Harris aptly calls "an epic roll-call of modern female genius" that pays homage to the celebratory exemplary list, long a favorite genre of didactic writing about women.³⁸ The author's intention in writing the poem, according to the advertisement at the beginning, was to raise "the public Curiosity," particularly toward women whose works were not yet in print. Here, Duncombe praises a number of women either by name: "The warbled notes of ROWE's ecstatic song. / Old Avon pleas'd his reedy forehead rears,"³⁹ or by their *noms de plume*, usually giving some identification in a footnote: "The chaste ORINDA rose; with purer light, / Like modest Cynthia, beaming thro' the night."⁴⁰ Most of these women are praiseworthy: "Who can

³⁶BOD Ballard 42, ff.29. This reliance on others was common (and human). In 1688 Aphra Behn wrote that a miscellany she had edited was "a Garland whose Flowers are cull'd by several Judgments in which I claim the least part." *Lycidus: Or the Lover in Fashion... Together with a Miscellany of New Poems* (London: pr. for Joseph Knight and Francis Saunders, 1688) B.

³⁷It also speaks to his thoroughness. Ruth Perry argues that "Little escaped the wide net he pulled through the deep waters of antiquarian scholarship during the sixteen years his book was in preparation." See "George Ballard's Biographies of Learned Ladies," *Biography in the 18th Century*, ed. J. D. Browning. McMaster University Association for 18th-century Studies, 8 (NY; London: Garland, 1980) 85-111: 86.

³⁸*The Feminiad: A Poem* (London: for M Cooper, 1754), facsimile edition: Jocelyn Harris, ed. and intro. (Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library, UCLA, 1981) v. The poem was reprinted in 1755 in the fourth edition of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*. Duncombe brought out a second edition (spelled *Feminead*) in 1757.

³⁹*Feminiad*, ll. 158-8

unmov'd hear WINCHELSEA reveal / Thy horrors, Spleen?" Others, like Restoration poet Aphra Behn, accused of being "modern," and Laetitia Pilkington, who in her memoirs eschewed "spotless virtue," are taxed with engaging in "the dang'rous sallies of a wanton Muse."⁴¹ The poem may have helped raise the curiosity of Colman and Thornton; eight of the poets who appear in *The Femi niad* were later included in *PEL*: Philips, Behn, Cockburn, Rowe, Leapor, Carter, Pilkington, and Winchilsea.

Harris reads Duncombe's poem as a response to "a sympathetic impulse felt mid-century towards creative and learned women," in support of which she cites Ballard's *Memoirs*, as well as the influence of Samuel Richardson, "who drew up his own list of clever women that he knew."⁴² Richardson's friendships with and focus on women in his writing raised the awareness of a wide readership as to what constituted "and what was praiseworthy about" "feminine sensibility." The characters of Pamela Andrews and Clarissa Harlowe both served as mid-century models of women who attempted to articulate virtue in writing.⁴³ Both novels underscore the fact that this "sympathetic impulse" was informed by moral didacticism, to which Duncombe's treatment of Behn and Pilkington also testifies. Thomas Amory managed to focus on women long enough in his *Memoirs* to state with demanding hyperbole and no hint of irony: "Beauties especially, with the heads of philosophers, the knowledge of divines, and hearts of primitive Christians, are characters in our days that cannot be enough admired."⁴⁴ The flattery directed toward women's writings was never entirely free from censure, either in biographical prose or in poetry. Like Duncombe's selective praise, prescriptions such as Amory's could be a form of control; when it came to women in print, the exceptional virtuous writer seems to prove the rule.

⁴⁰*Femi niad*, ll. 110-11. "Mrs. Catherine[sic] Phillips. . . was distinguish'd by most of the wits of King Charles' reign, and died young; lamented by many of them in commendatory verses prefix'd to her poems. Her pieces on Friendship are particularly admir'd." (Duncombe, 12n.)

⁴¹*Femi niad*, ll. 152, 148.

⁴²Harris, "Intro," vii. Richardson's list is in a letter to Miss Grainger, 8 Sept. 1750 (now at Harvard).

⁴³Indeed, the poem titled "Wisdom," included as if by Clarissa in the novel, was composed by Elizabeth Carter, one of the eminent ladies in the anthology. A variant version of the same poem appears in *PEL*. See Chapter Three.

The expansion of the slight canon of women writers to include more contemporary poets may also be linked to the deaths of Swift and Pope in the previous decade. The passing of these literary giants, who had ridiculed mediocre writers, may have relieved the satirical pressure in which the “art of sinking” was often conflated with a focus on femaleness. At the same time, ironically, the writings of women with whom the Scriblerians had corresponded, or otherwise interacted – women like Mary Wortley Montagu, Mary Barber, Judith Cowper (later Madan), Laetitia Pilkington, and Anne Finch – reminded the reading audience of these men. Even peripheral connections with Swift and Pope had proven profitable to some of these women before, and could be profitable again for compilers who included and contextualized them in a print miscellany. As hinted at in the vision of *Connoisseur* #69, the influence of Swift and Pope, as well as that of Dryden, is made much of in *PEL*. The description in the anthology of Mary Leapor’s modest library is an example of these lateral associations. Her collection consisted of “sixteen or seventeen odd volumes, among which were part of the works of Mr. Pope, her greatest favourite, Dryden’s fables, some volumes of plays, &c.”⁴⁵

Another way of adding value to women poets was located in the rising interest in primitivism, a trend of which Leapor again is a model. Dryden had praised Anne Killigrew by arguing that “Art she had none, yet wanted none: / For Nature did that Want supply.”⁴⁶ Stephen Duck (1705-1756) had put the labourer’s voice to paper; Mary Collier (d. 1762) responded to this with empathy, annoyance at Duck’s belittling of women’s work, and one-upmanship.⁴⁷ Behind the polemics on behalf of untutored genius was the belief that a marginal voice could be an interesting one.⁴⁸ In the case of poets such as

⁴⁴Amory, *Memoirs*, I: xxiv.

⁴⁵*PEL*, II: 16.

⁴⁶“To the Pious Memory Of the Accomplisht Young Lady Mrs. Anne Killigrew,” *Poems by Mrs. Anne Killigrew*, facsimile reproduction, intro. Richard Morton (Gainesville: Scholars, 1967) II. 71-72.

⁴⁷Stephen Duck, *The Thresher's Labour* (1730; rpt. in *Duck's Poems on Several Occasions*, 1736); Mary Collier, *The Woman's Labour* (1739).

Leapor, whose father was a gardener in Brackley, the notion of the “natural” genius explained and at times justified her lack of education. As Richard Greene notes, “theories of primitivism. . . allowed writers, thinkers, and artists to deal with the problems of disorder without seriously questioning their society.”⁴⁹ One reviewer of the second, posthumous volume of Leapor’s poetry wrote kindly (and not untruthfully) of “some letters of this extraordinary young woman, which have a solidity in them far beyond what could be expected from one of her years, and so destitute of the advantages of education, for she had no opportunities of improvement.”⁵⁰ This is not an excuse, but rather a statement of approval.

Throughout the anthology, Colman and Thornton emphasize in their biographical interpolations the lack of education enjoyed by most of the poets. On occasion they suggest the “remarkable” nature of verses composed in spite of this “want of learning,” which might itself account for the poetry’s charm. We are informed that most of these women are “natural” geniuses, like Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, who “had from her infancy an inclination to learning; and it is plain, from the uncommon turn of her compositions, that she possessed a wild native genius, which, if duly cultivated, might probably have shewn itself to advantage in the higher sorts of poetry.”⁵¹

It is also this lack of formal education that the editors cite as an explanation for having done what anthologists do: exclude poems of lesser quality. Colman and Thornton “thought better to omit those pieces, which too plainly betrayed the want of learning, than to insert them merely to disgrace those others, which a writer, with all the advantages of it, could not have surpassed.” The anthology is presented as superior to the

⁴⁸Shakespeare had long been seen as a untutored genius. See Milton’s contrast of “Jonson’s learned sock” and “Shakespeare, fancy’s child” in the “L’ Allegro.” *John Milton. The Oxonian Authors*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford; NY: Oxford UP, 1991) 25. ll. 132-33.

⁴⁹Richard Greene, *Mary Leapor: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Women's Poetry* (Oxford and NY: Clarendon, 1993) 159.

⁵⁰*Monthly Review* 5 (1751) 23-32: 23. I am indebted to Carol Percy, whose ongoing database project, which focuses on eighteenth-century reviewers’ attitudes to language, has served as a valuable guide to many of the reviews I mention.

⁵¹*PEL*, II: 198. There are some poets here, like Constantia Grierson and Mary Wortley Montagu, who received better educations than most, and others who received almost none. In either case, they are all to some extent curiosities.

poets' individual volumes of verse, not only because it supplies more poems and greater variety, but because the women's books were published by subscription, "on which account several pieces were thrown in merely to fill up so many pages." The result was the privileging of "bulk" over merit.⁵² The statement is somewhat misleading. While it is true that from the 1730s books of occasional verse multiplied, and that subscription was for a period the method of choice for publishing these volumes, in fact only seven of the eighteen authors had engaged in subscription publication before the appearance of *PEL*.⁵³

Clearly, there were a variety of rhetorical strategies in place by mid-century with which female writers were marketed. Germaine Greer holds that "By the second half of the eighteenth century, women poets were so numerous that their writing had lost all novelty value."⁵⁴ Doubtless, the publicizing and circulation of these writers' efforts during the 1750s furthered the normalization process of women appearing in print. I would argue, however, that the collections of memoirs about and poems by women that appeared at this time were still fuelled by curiosity. Cibber, Ballard, Seward, Duncombe, Colman, and Thornton, among others, both created and took advantage of a historical moment in which a literary novelty was becoming the ordinary.

Even as Colman and Thornton were following a fashion, they were creating a cultural monument for which they had to excavate, as well as construct, and *PEL* encourages not only literary, but also textual scholarship. As common as it now is to anthologize a variety of previously published poems, the kind of historical anthology that Colman and Thornton realized was a new type of creation. Theirs was not an encyclopaedic project like those of Ballard or Cibber and Shiells, nor did the editors of *PEL* attempt to sing the women and their muses, as Duncombe had done. They actually reprinted these poets' works, poems that had in some cases not been reprinted since the poet's lifetime. They did not merely suggest a canon of women writers, but recommended a canon of poems, as well.

⁵² Preface, *PEL*, I: iv.

⁵³ These were Barber, Cockburn, Jones, Leapor, Masters, Pilkington, and Rowe. Carter solicited subscriptions for later works, but had not done so for her 1738 *Poems on Several Occasions*.

⁵⁴ Greer, *Slip-shod*, 53.

II. Women in Anthologies

In addition to the usual print miscellany of the period, touted as being “by several hands,” there were seemingly gender-specific collections that preceded *PEL*, like Edmund Curll’s *The Ladies Miscellany* (1718), which contained verses titled “The Art of Dress,” “The Petticoat,” and “The Rape of the Smock.”⁵⁵ Supposedly these are about women. Evidently they were being directed toward female audiences. But the Curll miscellany, like so many with “Ladies” in the title, contained nothing *by* women.⁵⁶ In comparison, a genuine precedent for women’s writings is a collection titled *The Nine Muses, or, Poems Upon the Death of the Late Famous John Dryden, Esq.*⁵⁷ Published the year of Dryden’s death, this is the only anthology prior to *PEL* devoted exclusively to poems by women. Dryden had written the well-known elegy for Anne Killigrew and corresponded encouragingly with several female writers, and his death provided a most suitable event for this performance by members of a female writing community. The six women who “personate” the nine muses had encountered success in writing drama in the last decade of the century: Delarivière Manley, Sarah Fyge Egerton, Mary Pix, Catharine Trotter (later Cockburn), Sarah, Lady Piers and Susanna Centlivre.⁵⁸

⁵⁵*The Ladies miscellany*. (London, 1720). This is a collection of seven works originally issued separately, from 1716-1717. “The Art of Dress” (1717) is by J. D. de Brevel (1680?-1738), “The Hoop-Petticoat: an heroi-comical poem” (1716) by Francis Chute (d.1745), and “The Rape of the Smock” (1717) by Giles Jacob (1686-1744).

⁵⁶In her study of the early periodical and its construction of femininity, Kathryn Shevelow demonstrates that, as a more narrowed and restrictive model of womanhood was created in and by the literature of the eighteenth century, women simultaneously became increasingly visible as readers and writers. In particular, *The Athenian Mercury*, *The Tatler*, and *The Spectator* laid a groundwork of both enfranchisement and constraint. They variously included women as contributors, while also addressing them as “women in the home.” Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The construction of femininity in the early periodical* (London and NY: Routledge, 1989).

⁵⁷*The Nine Muses, or Poems Upon the Death of the Late Famous John Dryden, Esq.* (London: Richard Basset, 1700). This collection appeared at roughly the same time as *Luctus Britannici: or The Tears of the British Muses, for the death of John Dryden* (London, 1700).

⁵⁸ The poets’ identities are thinly veiled: ‘Mrs. M-----’ writes in the voice of “Melpone”[sic], the tragick muse; ‘the Honourable the Lady P-----’ poses as Urania, the divine muse, and so on. It is generally assumed

The poems in homage to Dryden reflect the difficulty that female writers faced in talking about themselves; they are fascinating in their revelation of the tensions for women attempting to be both muse and poet at once. Kate Lilley argues that the conflation of female elegists with female muses shows rhetorical daring in this particularly male territory, the public memorial volume: "By occupying the site of the muses, these women trope themselves not only as the source of their own power and voice, but as the source of all poetic power."⁵⁹ While this is true, the identification of woman as "source" complicates her role as poet. As "Melpone"[sic], Manley does begin on a note of confidence and strength, stating that Dryden was "Inspir'd by Me, for me, he cou'd Command." One of the difficulties in appropriating the voice of the muse, however, is the suggestion of any type of power relationship between Dryden and the poet's albeit impersonated "I." It is difficult, it seems, to admit that the man honoured in the poem could have been beholden to the muse who is now "writing." Manley describes moments of inspiration passionately: "When on the Tragick Theme my Hero wrote, / I lent him all my Fire, and every Thought." But she cannot sustain the heroic voice without returning to reflect on herself, the humble poet: "Ev'n I, a Maid, of so untouch'd a Fame."⁶⁰

By contrast, Sarah Fyge (later Egerton), whose responsibility is the amorous muse, Erato, chooses to frame her piece with her own, human voice, and only then to invoke this muse. She inserts Erato's passionate speech in a complicated blend of pride and humility, describing a mutually beneficial relationship:

*Dryden, who with such ardour did invoke,
That I through him my greatest Raptures spoke,
Whisper'd a thousand tender melting things,
Till he write Lays moving as Orpheu's[sic] Strings.*⁶¹

that Delarivière Manley was the moving spirit behind the creation of this collection. See Kate Lilley, "True State Within: Women's elegy 1640-1700," *Women, Writing, History*, 72-92: 75.

⁵⁹Lilley, "True State," 75.

⁶⁰"Melpone, the Tragick Muse," *Nine Muses*, 1-2.

Even as the poetic process is enriched by this amorous trope, the muse / poet relationship is restricted by the roles of female and male lovers: "I was Love's Muse, but he himself the God." The need to frame the poet as a god creates an inversion that corresponds to the female poet's anxiety *vis-à-vis* the male poet, rather than the intellectual embrace between poet and muse. Mrs. D. E., who writes "Polimnia:[sic] Of Rhetorick," describes her position in terms of *eros*, as well, with the confession that "With Lovers hands, I lavisht all my charms, / Gave up my self, to his more Lovely Arms." The poem, and the book, end fittingly, but not simply, with the suggestion of *thanatos*: "O mighty Father, hear a Daughter's Pray'r, / Cure me by Death, from deathless sad Dispair."⁶²

In *Nine Muses* the women have been set a specific task: a given muse, a poetic tone which hinges upon this appropriation. There is genuine mourning for the loss of Dryden in this text, as well as some skillful versification. There are also the voices of six poets who seem to be suffering from a fear of their own hubristic instincts in relation to a male poet. As different as the compilation of the two collections are, this slim volume raises many of the same issues as the more extensive *Poems By Eminent Ladies*. Not only do verses throughout *PEL* testify to an anxiety about male predecessors and contemporaries, but Colman's and Thornton's editorial insertions bear witness to a similar uneasiness with contextualizing women as poets.

Colman and Thornton were aware of *The Nine Muses*, although they probably did not consult it. They mention it in a footnote to the first poem in their selection by Cockburn, "Calliope's Directions how to deserve and distinguish the Muses inspiration." This poem, and its footnote, suggest that *PEL* offers some form of continuity after earlier collections, not just repetition of the already known, as this "Calliope" poem is a sequel to the first: "Mrs. Cockburn having join'd with eight other Ladies to write on Mr. Dryden's death, under the several names of the *Nine Muses*; she was some time after addressed from Ireland, as to a Muse, desiring her Inspiration: To which these Verses were sent in answer."⁶³ Colman and Thornton, who doubled the number of poetic voices

⁶¹"Erato," *Nine Muses*, 5-7.

⁶²"Polimnia," *Nine Muses*, 19.

claimed in *Nine Muses*, were plainly confronted with the same potential for anxiety in dealing with women who must be supported by, and share the gender of the muses. In Mr. Town's Parnassian vision, where Juvenal is retained "on the side of the male poets," Apollo is convinced not only by the arguments of Sappho, but also by "the importunity of the Muses in favour of their own sex."⁶⁴

Nine Muses also speaks to the challenge of putting a book together, and to the poet's relative passivity within that activity (or apparent passivity, given Manley's probable role). In the dedication to Lord Halifax, bookseller Richard Basset awkwardly states his hope that "the sex, which the Authors are of, is an excuse for their performance, and a Recommendation to Your Acceptance."⁶⁵ Basset raises questions of representation and appropriation in oily tones in his dedication, where he concedes:

The Ladies, indeed themselves, might have had a better Plea for your Reception; but since the modesty which is Natural to the Sex they are of, will not suffer 'em to do that Violence to their Tempers, I think my self Oblig'd to make a Present of what is Written in Honour of the most Consummate POET amongst our English Dead, to the most Distinguishing amongst the Living.⁶⁶

Basset is not quite sure how to deal with the "Sex they are of." He can only indicate that the female poets mean well, as they are honouring an indisputable literary hero.

At nineteen pages of verse, *The Nine Muses* represents an homage and a small venture, whereas the eighteenth century commercialized the poetic miscellany in ways that writers in the seventeenth could not have imagined. Bernard Lintot's various *Miscellanies* propelled Dryden's reputation into the new century, and Robert Dodsley (1703-1764), the most renowned anthologizer of the eighteenth century, brought out the first edition of his *Collection of Poems by Several Hands* in three volumes in 1748.

⁶³*PEL*, I: 229n. The information and the poem, however, come via Birch's edition of Cockburn's works, which is nowhere mentioned by the editors.

⁶⁴*Connoisseur* #69, 119.

⁶⁵*Nine Muses*, dedicatory letter, [i].

⁶⁶*Nine Muses*, [ii].

Dodsley's anthology offered a wide variety of contemporary poetry and poets, including a large number of older poems by both living and deceased writers. Criticized for poor printing and errors in attribution, Dodsley's continually-revised collection swelled eventually to six volumes in 1758. The publisher always seemed to be in the process of soliciting new material from friends and acquaintances to make up the next volume, not unlike the efforts behind most periodicals of the time.

In contrast, the less ambitious and more finite *PEL* exhibits the integrity of a well-printed text, and each poet's work is correctly attributed to her.⁶⁷ The contents of each woman's own *Poems on Several Occasions* (or some similar title) or her verses as they appear in a friend's book, have been evaluated and appropriated, and the result is a collection whose title emphasizes not the occasional nature of the poetry, as *The Nine Muses* had done, but the poets. Moreover, unlike Dodsley's title, which indicates only a variety of writers, these are not several (theoretically) unsexed "hands." Rather, the focus in *PEL*, where female poets are themselves the primary attraction of the two volumes, is unprecedented. Dodsley, for example, listed the titles of poems in indexes (usually without names) whereas *PEL* offers a table of contents at the beginning of each volume, providing titles under each author's name. The identities and poems work together in ways that preclude the possibility of including verses of unknown origin, pieces attributed simply to "a lady."

The group of poets in *PEL* is one for which the category "eminent," the usual jargon of puffery, is made to answer a variety of functions. Despite social and economic disparity, and different degrees of celebrity, for the purpose of this book the writers all fall under this somewhat nebulous category. The adjective "eminent" can, and does, announce either or any combination of three possibilities: talent, status, virtue. Presumably, talent is a given for all of these women. If this were the editors' only criterion for "eminence," we would have in the anthology a text both progressive (which it is) and uncomplicated (which it is not). Terminology, always significant, is particularly at issue in 1755, the year that introduced Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*. The *Dictionary*, which reached booksellers' shelves in May, the same month as *PEL*,

defines “eminent” unsurprisingly as “High; lofty,” “Dignified; exalted” and “Conspicuous, remarkable.” The *OED* offers a more comprehensive explanation: “Distinguished in character or attainments, or by success in any walk of life (The use in a bad sense is now ironical).” But the term was not ironical, or not often so, in 1755.

The attitude toward female poets was often ironical, however, and I have argued that Colman and Thornton were not especially sympathetic to women in their periodical essays: “As it is my chief ambition to please and instruct the ladies,” Mr. Town states in his first address, “I shall embrace every opportunity of devoting my labours to their service: and I may with justice congratulate myself upon the happiness of living in an age, when the female part of the world are so studious to find employment for a censor.”⁶⁸ Elsewhere, Colman and Thornton express concern for the deterioration of language as Chesterfield had done, by linking the gap between signifier and signified to “The Female World,” which they complain is now “made up almost entirely of Ladies.” The censor-general took a survey, and discovered that only the lowest of the vulgar is called “a woman.” As a result, he offers to oblige said female world by devoting the issue to ranking all ladies into categories. Mr. Town proceeds in the “distribution of them into Married Ladies, Maiden or Young Ladies-- Ladies of quality, Fine Ladies-- and Ladies of Pleasure.”⁶⁹ As in the issue which pokes fun at “demi-reps,” this essay seems determined to impose a system of classification. Nevertheless, in *PEL* the editors prove as capable as any of manipulating vocabulary. Of the poets included in *PEL*, there are only three titled “Ladies” and one “Duchess” listed in the Table of Contents, but for purposes of the anthology’s distribution, every poet included is a lady, as well as eminent. High talent crosses social barriers. There is an impetus to be both categorical and leveling when Colman and Thornton wear all their hats: as critics, censors-general, and editors.

Still almost entirely separate from the existing male canon, this peripheral body of verse in *PEL* both highlights and subverts; it emphasizes the contribution of women writers and marginalizes their poetry. When the editors claim equality for women’s

⁶⁷With the notable exception of three pieces erroneously attributed to Behn. See Chapter Three, p. 83.

⁶⁸*Connoisseur* #1, Jan. 31, 1754, [I]-6; #3, Feb. 14, 1754, I: 13-18.

⁶⁹*Connoisseur* #44, Nov. 28, 1754, I: 259-268.

poetry, for instance, they are not being entirely honest, because it is an explicitly specialized poetics. No anthology of poetry by men would contain a preface with the kinds of qualification that Colman and Thornton find necessary: “It will not be thought partiality to say that the reader will here meet with many pieces on a great variety of subjects excellent in their way; and that this collection is not inferior to any miscellany compiled from the works of men.”⁷⁰ It is, nevertheless, a strong claim. By willingly entering their choices into competition with (recognizable) male writers, the editors promote their text; they also signal an awareness of the challenge of manufacturing cultural capital.

i. A Place in the Market

As early as 1675 Edward Phillips had included accounts of “Women among the Modern Eminent for Poetry” in his *Theatrum Poetarum, Or a Compleat Collection of the Poets*. Margaret Ezell suggests that “the practice of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century editors such as Phillips of placing entries on women writers in separate sections than those of their male contemporaries suggests that women writers were already viewed as a group or class of writers.”⁷¹ Colman and Thornton were not creating a new ethos; rather they were amplifying one that already existed, and there are few mysterious choices made in the anthology, which would have been different, but not remarkably so, under another editor’s direction. Ezell argues that *PEL*, like Ballard’s *Memoirs*, displays “the ironic result of a celebration of female achievement which preserves texts and names for future generations, but at the same time narrows the focus with which the materials are viewed and blocks entirely those texts and authors who do not fit within the parameters. Colman and Thornton’s volumes prepare the way for the later nineteenth-century critics’ and anthologists’ demarcation of a “feminine” literary

⁷⁰Preface, *PEL*, I: iv.

⁷¹ Margaret J. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993) 70.

sphere, characterized by decorous delicacy.”⁷² This is not to say that recent scholars allow themselves to be limited by the canon of women’s writings that people like Colman and Thornton helped shape; indeed, what we have come to think a modern taste for personal, rather than the broader, political, and more specifically allusive poetry, is evident in the 1755 anthology.

What Colman and Thornton were proposing was an evolutionary model of female poetry: whereas Cavendish was too fanciful, for example, and Behn too licentious, the ladies of “the present age” have improved on them.⁷³ Ezell believes that such a model has led to a false sense of the progress that seventeenth- and eighteenth- century women writers were making as a community: “the preface to the anthology volume offers the first extended narrative overview of women’s writing as a separate tradition and gives some indication to the grounds on which subsequent anthologists will approach their task.”⁷⁴ The evolutionary model was a standard eighteenth-century view of all prior literary history, however, as is evident in Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets*. In any case, the contributions toward women’s literary history at mid-century were significant because “Cibber, Colman, and Thornton point the way toward a discussion of the connections between gender and poetic genius and between a woman’s life and her art within the larger scheme of the evolution of English poetry.”⁷⁵ In their Preface, Colman and Thornton argue that the two volumes “are standing proof that great abilities are not confined to the men, and that genius often glows with equal warmth, and perhaps with more delicacy, in the breast of a female.”⁷⁶ It is an important thing to say that women’s writings are different, but equal to those of men, and only an anthology devoted exclusively to women’s writings could do so.

⁷²Ezell, *WWLH*, 117.

⁷³This paradigm is complicated by the notion that Katherine Philips was “matchless,” but in general women writing in the eighteenth century had a clear idea that they must not repeat the mistakes of earlier writers.

⁷⁴Ezell, *WWLH*, 91.

⁷⁵Ezell, *WWLH*, 78.

⁷⁶*PEL*, I: A2.

Obviously, the impulse to promote the writings of women was informed not only by benevolence and didacticism. It was the adoption of a new and potentially profitable cultural trend. James Raven, discussing the evolution of publishing in the latter half of the eighteenth century, argues that, as support for consumer-oriented, fashion and leisure industries increased, “London booksellers experimented with new forms of entertaining and instructional literature. . . . Everywhere the emphasis was upon attractive design and faster, higher quality production-- in novels, plays, music books, prints, magazines, newspapers, pocket-books, guides, primers, children’s books, and a host of new-style miscellanies.”⁷⁷ These miscellanies were justified as being larger than the rights of any individual poet. Dodsley’s living contributors were not remunerated for their verse, nor were the poets who contributed verses to the *Gentleman’s Magazine*. The assertion in the Preface of *PEL* that the anthology is “the most solid compliment” paid to these poets unwittingly highlights the absence of patronage, subscriptions, or any other source of monetary reward for the contributors resulting from the collection. Those poets who were still alive when *PEL* appeared, such as Mary Jones and Elizabeth Carter, had to be content not with claims to copyright for their individual poems, but with the compliment paid them by this appearance in print.⁷⁸

We are frequently reminded of Aphra Behn’s distinction as the first Englishwoman to earn her living by her pen. The other seventeenth-century women in the collection wrote for their friends, and at times (or always) for fame, but seldom for fortune. Neither Margaret Cavendish nor Katherine Philips, for example, published in the hopes of monetary gain. Their motives for appearing in print were often phrased in terms of the harmless employment of time with thoughtful scribbling, as opposed to more

⁷⁷James Raven, *Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England, 1750-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 13. Walter Graham points to the *Magazine of Magazines*, a monthly publication initiated in July, 1750, that “skimmed the cream from the cream” from the *GM* and *LM*, as an indication of “the increasingly predatory nature of the new magazines.” *English Literary Periodicals* (NY: Thomas Nelson, 1933) 170-71.

⁷⁸Ezell notes that Peter Anthony Motteux tapped into coterie circles for circulated pieces to include in the first English “magazine” —*The Gentleman’s Journal*— where Motteux made it clear that “honour” would be the only payment received by contributors. Ezell, “*The Gentleman’s Journal* and the Commercialization of Restoration Coterie Literary Practices,” *Modern Philology*, 89, #3 (Feb. 1992) 323-340: 333.

frivolous activities associated with women of leisure, such as indulging in gossip and card-playing.

For women in the next generation of writers, like Elizabeth Rowe and Anne Finch, who lived and wrote in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Restoration notions of the coterie continued to govern most publication practices. Mary Monck certainly did not write for money, nor, most comfortable of all, did Anne Finch. Yet this group of writers also witnessed important changes. As we progress chronologically through the poets contained in *PEL*, the relationship between versification and profit becomes more significant. In his discussion of George Ballard's selection process, Robert Halsband comments that "all of [Ballard's] ladies have one trait in common besides their respectability: they did not write for money. Could there have been any connection between respectability and profit?"⁷⁹ There was, but I would argue that this connection was changing, becoming less inverse. By mid-century, monetary need was more openly recognized as a valid reason for appearing in print. Ballard's choices are equally attributable to timing. He was especially interested in the dames of antiquity, and many women of his own century who wrote for profit were still living, making them ineligible for inclusion in the memoirs. He omitted Behn, but her subject matter was as questionable as her profits *vis-à-vis* the reputation of Philips, and Ballard seems to have respected Barber enough that, had she not been living at the time of publication, she too would have been honoured in the *Memoirs*.

There were essentially four ways in which a poet could make money during this period, and the women in *PEL* exemplify all of them – often profiting from more than one at a time. Patronage, the most respectable institution, was usually extended by a peer, bishop, or person active in political life. In this system, money is given to the author, usually for poetry or scholarly writing, in recognition of a dedication. Early in the period Elizabeth Rowe obtained the patronage of Lord Weymouth through family circles.⁸⁰ In

⁷⁹Halsband, "The Lady of Letters in the Eighteenth Century," *Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar* ed. Irvin Ehrenpreis and Robert Halsband (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1969) 1-30: 27.

⁸⁰ Rowe's father, Walter Singer, was a friend of Henry Thynne, second Viscount Weymouth, in Frome. "A small copy of verses which Elizabeth had commenced when she was twelve years old came into the possession of the noble family in 1694, and, in a sense, sir Thomas Thynne became her patron until his

the case of Mary Jones, who published by subscription, her unusually lofty acquaintances also enabled her to dedicate her volume of poems to the Princess of Orange, who would in turn have contributed generously after receiving the authorized dedication. Laetitia Pilkington unfortunately insulted a patron, Lord Baron Kingsborough, and lost his favour.

Pilkington also worked on occasion as a hireling pen. In this case, payment precedes writing, usually coming from a person active in political life. Money is given to a hack who will write a paper or pamphlets in favour of a party or position. The result is often anonymous, and it is not considered an honourable relationship for either party. In Pilkington's case, she wrote poems for lovers, especially on behalf of the beaux at White's Chocolate house. She also composed verse that another writer, James Worsdale, claimed as his own, in order to earn her bread.

In commercial writing (the most likely arrangement between Colman and Thornton and Baldwin) payments were typically made by booksellers to authors for works of any kind deemed potentially profitable. Payment could be made before the writing occurred, which was often considered dishonourable, or after a manuscript was completed, which was regarded as a more respectable method (though this distinction was less important in purely commercial work, such as compilations). The latter form of payment would have been the case with Katherine Philips's verses, which were published officially only after her death, and Anne Finch's *Poems*, which appeared anonymously in the first edition, then pseudonymously, and finally were printed under her name. There are no records of the publication agreement between Finch and her publisher, but she may have allowed him to retain the profits from the sales.⁸¹ Again, Laetitia Pilkington was engaged in this kind of writing, as well. In her *Memoirs* Pilkington fearlessly acknowledged economic reasons for publishing, anticipating Johnson's statement that only a blockhead wrote for reasons other than money: "If the Reader thinks this little Narrative is not quite in Point. . . he may blot it out of his Book if he pleases, but he shall

death in 1714." Henry F. Stecher, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe, the Poetess of Frome. A Study in Eighteenth-Century English Pietism*, Anglo-Saxon language and literature series (Bern and Frankfurt: Herbert and Peter Lang, 1973) 35.

⁸¹ See Chapter Three for the bibliographical details of these books.

not blot it out of my Manuscript, for that would be to deprive me of a Page, that is worth a Crown to me."⁸²

In the case of publication by subscription, the author or someone acting on her behalf takes on the role of publisher, raising money by pledges of subscriptions, contracting with a printer to produce the books, and then distributing them to subscribers. The poet would then receive her subscriptions less the costs of printing the book. This arrangement being outside the commercial framework, and conducted at least notionally as a private arrangement among author and persons connected to her, was more socially respectable than commercial writing; it could also be more profitable, as Pope proved with the huge success of his translation of the *Iliad*.⁸³ There was a distinction, too, between subscriptions based on prestige, as was the case with the publications of Pope and Prior, and charitable subscription, a later innovation. Mary Barber had no English reputation as a poet, so her work had little commercial value. With the powerful assistance of Swift and his English friends she arranged her own subscription list and earned far more than she would have done by commercial writing. Mary Leapor was too lowly to arrange her own subscription, so generous persons acted on her behalf. In many of these cases, subscribers were named as charitable persons, and may have gained some reflected distinction if the poems were good, as Leapor's were.

The maverick Laetitia Pilkington undermined this entire process by using the idea of "subscription" to her *Memoirs* to extort money from persons whose names would be withheld only if they paid up.⁸⁴ Like Barber, Pilkington succeeded in acquiring enough subscriptions to publish at least the first two volumes of her work, although not as profitably as the older woman had done. The fact that Barber was able to print her list of over 900 subscribers at the beginning of her *Poems*, whereas Pilkington assured her own

⁸²Laetitia Pilkington, *Memoirs*, 3 vols. (London and Dublin, 1745-1750) III: 73.

⁸³Pat Rogers has demonstrated that, successful as the *Iliad* subscription proved, it was also a process fraught with anxiety and, in many cases, dashed expectations. See "Pope and his Subscribers," *Essays on Pope* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 190-227. See also Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge and NY: Cambridge UP, 1996).

subscribers that their names would *not* appear, signals the greatest difference between the effects of publication on the two women, as well as the different genres in which they wrote.⁸⁵ Swift's Mrs. Barber was talented and virtuous. The ecclesiastically divorced Mrs. Pilkington was witty and scandalous. Both were in need of money, but the older woman had a protector who introduced her to yet more protectors, whereas no gentle words introduced Pilkington into the houses of the great.⁸⁶

Of course, there were problems inherent in subscription publication, as well. Pope's "Epistle to Arbuthnot" contains the well-known indictment of minor writers:

One dedicates, in high Heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes;
One from all Grubstreet will my fame defend,
And, more abusive, calls himself my friend.
This prints my Letters, that expects a Bribe,
And others roar aloud, 'Subscribe, subscribe.'⁸⁷

In criticizing the "bulk" of their source-texts in the Preface, Colman and Thornton also suggested that publication by subscription resulted in sub-standard writings. Private interests were weighed against the public good in the compilation of an anthology (a process which also tended to result in the rejection of occasional verse in favour of more general topics). As editors, Colman and Thornton are placed, like Pope and their own connoisseur, above the common writer, in a position to judge.

⁸⁴Pilkington, *Memoirs*, III: 6. "And if every married Man, who has ever attacked me, does not subscribe to my Memoirs, I will, without the least Ceremony, insert their Names, be their Rank ever so high, or their Profession ever so lofty."

⁸⁵Bitter about Barber's request that her name be omitted from the *Memoirs* (and likely, too, at the attention Swift had paid the older woman) Pilkington speculated that some of Barber's poems "I fancy might, at this Day, be seen in the Cheesemongers, Chandlers, Pastry-cooks, and Second-hand Book-sellers Shops." *Memoirs*, III: 65.

⁸⁶Samuel Richardson helped her with money and linen when her pregnant daughter arrived penniless in London, and Colley Cibber was a great friend finding money to extract her from debtor's prison. Whatever she may have told herself, and the readers of the *Memoirs*, about writing poems of gratitude to Richardson, and as favours to Cibber for which he rewarded her, the aid these men provided were acts of charity rather than patronage.

⁸⁷Pope, "An Epistle from Mr. Pope, to Dr. Arbuthnot," *Poems*, 597-612, ll.109-114.

ii. The Anthology as Signifier

It is worth noting that Colman's biographer, Eugene R. Page, styles the *Connoisseur* the "most successful collaborative effort" undertaken between Thornton and Colman, who remained close friends and brought their unique synergy to various, although progressively fewer, projects until Thornton's death on 9 May, 1768.⁸⁸ The periodical was certainly their most continuous partnership, a sustained and fairly profitable effort. By contrast, *PEL*, another notable collaboration, receives only two coy paragraphs in Page's book, and is dismissed as "a curious anthology, for which there seems little excuse. . . . It probably was a bit of hack work," he suggests, "undertaken to earn a little spending money, and inspired by one of the poets represented, who was at that time resident in the town of Oxford. . . . That there is little original effort expended is shown by the fact that even the biographical notices "brief as they are" are taken mainly from Ballard's *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* and Theophilus Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*." Page concludes his note on *PEL* by speculating that "Perhaps the profits from these volumes allowed Colman to pay off a few debts before leaving Oxford in May, 1755."⁸⁹ As there is no evidence to suggest the type of agreement that Colman and Thornton had struck with Richard Baldwin, there is no reason to suppose that there would have been profits before Colman left Oxford (that is, previous to the volumes being ready for sale). The biographer's comments on the limited and probable sources for background material in the anthology are well-founded; likely his speculations regarding the financial motivation for compiling the two volumes are as well. Page's reluctance to explore this "curious anthology" further, however, is itself curious. There was nothing quite like *PEL* before these two Oxonians decided to compile "not unskillfully" so many literary products of the "fair sex," and the resulting two volumes

⁸⁸Eugene R. Page, *George Colman, the Elder; Essayist, Dramatist, and Theatrical Manager, 1732-1794* (NY: Columbia UP, 1985) 26.

⁸⁹Page, *Colman*, 39.

signal a small but remarkable move toward the serious representation and evaluation of female poets.

If, as Pierre Macherey posited, every text has its own ideology,⁹⁰ the anthology contains not only a plethora of philosophies, but an editorial agenda that acts as umbrella to the rest. Taken together, the poems and editorial addenda in *PEL* make a number of claims about mid-eighteenth century taste. One of the impressions created by the anthology, for example, is that in 1755 the age of sensibility was still in the distant future, rather than an already evolving movement. In large part this is due, of course, to the contributions being those of seventeenth- and very early eighteenth-century poets. While the neo-classic, satiric influence of Pope and Swift was still very much alive at mid-century, there were other movements underway that, for a variety of reasons, are barely suggested in this text. Although a number of the women included were friends of Richardson, for example, the rise of sensibility, what Terry Eagleton calls the “feminization of discourse,” is not nearly as apparent in the collection as is satire.⁹¹ *PEL* is representative of what passed for acceptable ladies’ verse, but Colman and Thornton have also omitted sub-genres of poetry in which women writers were active. For example, while there are some elegiac and contemplative pieces, the editors tend to privilege light and amusing verse over that which is religious and more serious. In addition to the dominant closed couplet, in *PEL* that which constitutes good poetry encompasses poetic forms that had become somewhat outdated by mid-century, such as the sonnet and the pastoral song. Further, epistolary verse, which William C. Dowling identifies as an “attempt to solve in literature the philosophical problems of solipsism that arose after Locke’s *Essay on Human Understanding*,”⁹² takes on different responsibilities in the women’s writings we find here. It is not solipsism but the appearance of being *too*

⁹⁰Pierre Macherey, *The Object of Literature [A quoi pense la littérature? (1990)]* trans. David Macey (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

⁹¹Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982) 13.

⁹²William C. Dowling, *The Epistolary Moment: The Poetics of the Eighteenth-Century Verse Epistle* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991) 3, 21.

willing to share her thoughts openly that the female poet is saved from by the epistle to a friend a genre which reinforces the emphasis on modesty in *PEL*.

PEL suggests a resting point that was the present moment within a tradition of female poets leading up to 1755. Like other texts that place a claim to cultural authority, the poetic anthology implies a contract between compilers and readers. Addressing book reviews of the period, Frank Donoghue argues that “the expansion of book production and what one might call the reading trade created a complementary market for uniform standards, norms, guidelines—in short, for a means of discerning order in what was perceived to be an overwhelming proliferation of printed matter.”⁹³ There will always be gaps, but the myth that the reader buys into is that of implicit authority: these are the *most* eminent ladies, and these their most eminent poems. Some get lucky; others fall away.⁹⁴

In his *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) Edward Young characterized “the mind of a man of genius” as a “fertile and pleasant field,” and original compositions as the mind’s “fairest flowers.”⁹⁵ There is a striking similarity in the vocabulary Young employs here, and the linguistic roots of any “anthology”—a gathering of flowers. A collection of original compositions is larger than the sum of its parts, in that the themes on which these poets wrote, the tropes and mythologies they employ, begin to resonate in a new way when printed together. The text is a cultural artifact informed by codes from which it cannot successfully be separated. In the act of collation, anthologizers also create something of a palimpsest. While the removal of a poem from its earlier context results in the loss of evidence, it is also true that the text is invested with a host of new meanings when it becomes part of a new configuration of works. To anthologize is not

⁹³Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996) 17.

⁹⁴There are too many other writers to mention, here. A glance at Lonsdale’s *ECWP, The Feminist Companion* (ed. Blain, Clements, and Grundy; London: Batsford, 1990) or the *DNB Missing Persons* (ed. C.S. Nichol, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993), reveals some of the women publishing verse at the time. Many of these (such as Elizabeth Thomas [1675-1731], Elizabeth Tollet [1694-1754], Charlotte Lennox [1729?-1804], and Mary Chandler [1867-1745]) had not been mentioned by Ballard, Duncombe, or Cibber and Shiells.

⁹⁵Edward Young, “Conjectures on Original Composition” (1759) *The Complete Works*, ed. James Nichols. 2 vols. (London: William Tegg, 1854; facsimile: Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968) II, 547-86: 551.

only to gather choice literary flowers, but to *press* them together; the poems are relocated onto new pages, in new configurations.⁹⁶

The anxiety evidenced in the prefaces to many novels and volumes of poetry by women themselves has been explored of late.⁹⁷ In the Preface to *PEL*, it is implicit that the reputations of the eighteen poets are safer in the anthology than in their individual books, because they appear in the collection by the courtesy of their editors. Courtesy is here an apt word, as the editors express their own motivation for compiling the miscellany in chivalric terms at the outset of their own Preface, where they equate *PEL* with a “solid compliment.” Following this, Colman and Thornton introduce Mary Barber’s poems with a letter from Jonathan Swift to Lord Orrery that appeared in her *Poems*. Here Swift recommends his protégé’s virtue and her talent, which is “better cultivated than could well be expected, either from her sex, or the scene she hath acted in, as the wife of a citizen.” Swift bestows praise especially on “one qualification, that I wish all good poets had a share of; I mean, that she is ready to take advice, and submit to have her verses corrected, by those who are generally allow’d to be the best judges.”⁹⁸ Swift’s wish for openness to correction is not limited to female poets, but to all poets who wish to excel, yet within the context of the anthology the comment takes on gendered connotations. Colman and Thornton have already established who these best judges might be: Cowley, Dryden, Roscommon, Creech, Pope, Swift.⁹⁹ Neatly, the editors of *PEL*, who have separated grain from chaff, reduced ‘bulk’ while rewarding ‘merit’, become the next best judges.

⁹⁶It is worth noting that Colman and Thornton did not themselves refer to *PEL* as an anthology “a word little used during the period” in favor of ‘collection’ and ‘miscellany’. In a recent book of estate poetry, Alistair Fowler called attention to the importance of discretionary usage of the term “anthology,” for every poem is not a choice flower. He refers to his book as a “collection (for no book with poems by Richard Flecknoe in it can be called an anthology)” *The Country House Poem: A Cabinet of Seventeenth-Century Estate Poems and Related Items* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1994) 1. See my note in Chapter Two.

⁹⁷See Rebecca Gould Gibson, “‘My Want of Skill’: Apologias of British Women Poets, 1660-1800,” *Eighteenth-Century Women and the Arts*, ed. Frederick M. Keener and Susan E. Lorsch (NY: Greenwood, 1988) 79-86.

⁹⁸*PEL*, I: 5.

⁹⁹*PEL*, I: A2.

Their friend John Duncombe began *The Femiuiad* with a rhetorical question:

Shall lordly man, the theme of evr'y lay,
 Usurp the muse's tributary bay;
 In kingly state on *Pindus*' summit sit,
 Tyrant of verse, and arbiter of wit?¹⁰⁰

The argument throughout the poem is that man should not remain tyrant of verse, that is, sole producer and provider of poetry to the world. But the critiques contained within *The Femiuiad* designate the poem's own creator arbiter of wit, as Ballard and Shiells and Cibber were, as Dodsley was, and as Colman and Thornton styled themselves, with some subtlety in the Preface to *PEL*, if less so in their role as Mr. Town, connoisseur and censor-general. Like Ballard, and other compilers, Colman and Thornton were in the business of selective preservation. Their mid-century editorial project was informed by an aesthetic the likes of which George Crabbe, later in the century, would describe by juxtaposing the mystical and the pragmatic: "all the powers that to the Muse belong; / words aptly cull'd, and meanings well expres't."¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰*Femiuiad*, ll.1-4.

¹⁰¹Crabbe, *The Village II* (1783) *George Crabbe: The Complete Poetical Works*. 3 vols. Ed. Norma Dalrymple-Champneys and Arthur Pollard (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) I: 168-174, ll.158-59.

CHAPTER TWO

The Editors and their Work

I. Colman and Thornton

George Colman and Bonnell Thornton were students of law and of medicine respectively, at Christ Church, Oxford, when they devised the scheme for a new essay periodical. They had attended Westminster School in the early 1740s, Thornton being a few years ahead of the younger Colman, and both had belonged to the select group of King's Scholars. After leaving Oxford, together with several other Old Westminsters and London wits, they constituted the Nonsense Club, which met regularly through the late 1750s and early 1760s to collaborate on satiric poetry, dramatic, and journalistic endeavours, all of which pursuits tended to overlap and enrich one another. Among those in the club were the poets Robert Lloyd (1733-1764), William Cowper (1731-1800), and Charles Churchill (1731-1764).¹ Lance Bertelsen describes their collective energy throughout the years 1749 to 1764 as multifarious:

These five friends, singly and in varying combinations, conducted one of the more popular essay series of the century, edited several literary magazines and journals, produced two of the finest examples of mid-century 'laughing comedy', fought a virulent paper war over contemporary drama and acting, burlesqued subjects ranging from Gray's odes to the Society of the Arts Exhibition, produced a large and fitfully brilliant body of satiric poetry, and joined with John Wilkes in fomenting the most important domestic political debate of their time.²

¹Lloyd contributed to Colman's and Thornton's periodical, was editor for a time of *St. James' Magazine*, wrote plays and eventually printed his collected *Poems* (1762). The posthumously published *Poetical Works* appeared in 1774. Cowper also contributed to the *Connoisseur* while a law student. The prolific Churchill was best known for such works as *Night, an epistle to Robert Lloyd* (1761), *The Rosciad* (1761), as well as *The Author* (1763), and the posthumously published *Sermons* (1765). The *DNB* notes that after Churchill's death, "Wilkes destroyed a partly finished satire among Churchill's papers against Colman and Thornton." The conclusion is that Churchill was annoyed by his long-time friends' neglect of Lloyd before his death. IV: 312.

²Bertelsen, *Nonsense Club*, 2.

Thornton left Westminster for Christ Church in 1743 while the others were still in the Under School. He received three degrees at Oxford, including his Bachelor of Physic at the wish of his father, a Maiden Lane apothecary. When James Boswell met him in 1753 Thornton “had about £15,000 left him by his father, was bred to physic, but was fond of writing.”³ Boswell’s astute use of the word “but” speaks volumes; Thornton would never practice medicine. His first periodical, *Have at You All: or, The Drury-Lane Journal*, ran for twelve issues beginning January 1752, and was devoted to satirizing London’s other periodical writers, particularly Fielding. Thornton was one of the principal contributors to Christopher Smart’s monthly mixture of verse and prose, *The Student, or Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany* (January 1750 to July 1751), and went on to become an experienced journalist and eccentric wit about town. He was a major shareholder of the tri-weekly *St. James’ Chronicle* (September 1762 to February 1764), along with Colman, David Garrick, and the printer Henry Baldwin, as well as chief advisor to Henry Sampson Woodfall’s *Public Advertiser*, through which he enjoyed remarkable influence over the press. Thornton was also an excellent Latinist and translator, as well as a master of burlesque.⁴

As diverse as Bonnell Thornton’s projects were, his talents were directed primarily toward journalism, whereas George Colman’s interests lay chiefly in drama. Born in April 1732, Colman was a year old when his father, Francis, died.⁵ Francis left his wife financially secure, but not comfortable enough to finance her son’s education. Shortly before *PEL* appeared, Colman had left Christ Church to study for the bar at Lincoln’s Inn. As with Thornton, Colman’s true desire was in contrast to the wishes of a father-figure, his uncle William Pulteney, the Earl of Bath (1684-1764) whose plans for his nephew as a lawyer were specific and demanding.

³Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, I: 395.

⁴Boswell was delighted by Thornton’s burlesque *Ode on St. Caecilia’s Day, Adapted to the Ancient British Musick*, performed at Ranelagh Gardens on 10 June 1763, on such rustic instruments as the salt-box and the hurdy-gurdy. *Life of Johnson*, I: 420.

⁵Francis Colman had been a diplomat, an envoy to Tuscany possessed of an avid interest in opera. His correspondence shows that he was active as an agent for Handel, and he wrote the libretto for Handel’s music in the opera *Ariadne in Crete*. Page, *Colman*, 5.

Correspondence between Colman and his uncle indicates that the young man was never fully engaged with the law. The Earl constantly cautioned Colman against wasting money and time on play-going. By turns he cajoled and threatened his nephew about the difficulty and rewards of the legal profession, and warned him against allowing his attention to stray from the law:

You must not think of trifling away any of your time in vain and idle amusements, such as those can afford who are born to estates. Your subsistence must be got by toil and drudgery in the profession you have chosen. . . . When you are there [at Lincoln's Inn] I tell you beforehand, that I will have you closely watch'd, and be constantly inform'd of how you employ your time; I must have no running to Playhouses or other Places of publick diversion.⁶

Instead of drudgery in the law, Colman would choose among dramatic endeavours worthy of both creative and financial investment. Colman's biographer suggests that the success of the *Connoisseur* "started Colman's career at an earlier age than that of any of his contemporaries and made him a man of some repute in the literary world."⁷ Colman's first play, "Polly Honeycomb," was acted at Drury Lane in 1760. "The Jealous Wife," the following year, Johnson thought "not written with much genius. . . yet so well adapted to the stage and so well exhibited by the actors that it was crowded for more than twenty nights."⁸ Colman later bought a considerable share in Covent Garden Theatre, acting as manager for seven years. Upon the death of his uncle in 1764, he abandoned the bar completely, and in 1776 purchased the Haymarket Theatre. He was author of more than thirty plays, as well as occasional verse, parodies, and prose writings.⁹ His son, George

⁶Qtd. in George Colman, the younger's *Posthumous Letters, from various celebrated men: addressed to Francis Colman and George Colman the elder: with annotations and occasional remarks, &c.* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1829) 54-55.

⁷Page, *Colman*, 26.

⁸Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, I: 364. The *DNB* records that "Polly Honeycombe" was anonymously penned, to avoid censure from the Earl of Bath. It was widely attributed to Garrick, who denied authorship, and only "The conspicuous success of 'The Jealous Wife' rendered impossible the further concealment of Colman's dramatic proclivities."

Colman the younger, himself a playwright, would boast in 1830 that “almost everybody who is conversant with the state of English literature, in the last half of the eighteenth century, knows who my father was.”¹⁰ As a playwright and producer of plays, the elder Colman formed close associations with David Garrick, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Sheridan, and Joseph Warton. As Bertelsen notes, “The habit of establishing working friendships was one the King’s Scholars had mastered at Westminster.”

Some of the helpful contributors to the *Connoisseur* were listed in the last issue, including the Earl of Cork, Robert Lloyd, William Cowper, the Reverend John Duncombe, “Orator Henley,” and “a friend engaged in the law.”¹¹ Colman’s writing style is usually indistinguishable from that of Thornton, and in the final issue of the periodical they acknowledge that the letters T O W N stand for TWO authors, and that “almost every single paper is the joint product of both.”¹² Thornton was an initiator of schemes, including the plan for the *Connoisseur*, but he was noted for having difficulty in meeting deadlines, and Colman appears to deserve more credit for bringing each installment to press. Colman’s son records a typical editorial meeting of the *Connoisseur*: “not a word of it was written; nor even a subject thought on, and the Press waiting. . . nothing to be done but to scribble helter-skelter.” Bonnell Thornton, between drinks of strong liquor, paced around the room, as usual “pushing his partner to save both their credits at a minute’s warning.” Thornton is accused of laziness, and of imposing “much more than a proportionate share of drudgery upon his literary colleague.”¹³ The younger Colman supports this account by quoting *Biographia Dramatica*, where it is lamented that

⁹A translation of the comedies of Terence won him acclaim in 1765, as did his translation, with commentary, of Horace’s *Ars Poetica* (1783). A fourteen-line poem of 10-12 June, 1766 in *The St. James’ Chronicle; or, The British Evening-Post* is titled “Upon Colman’s Terence, and Mr. Thornton’s intended translation of Plautus.” The anonymous verses praise and equate the two works, and end with the assertion that “Genius sanctifies *Translation!*” #823, p. 4, l.14. Thornton’s comedies of Plautus appeared in 1767.

¹⁰George Colman the younger, *Random Records*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburns and Richard Bentley, 1830) I: 21.

¹¹*Connoisseur* #140, Sept. 30, 175, II: 841-846. For discussions on the authorship of the individual *Connoisseur* essays, see Bertelsen, 58-61, also Eugene Page, 27; cf. Peake, I: 347-8.

¹²*Connoisseur* #140, Sept. 30, 1756, II: 841-846.

¹³*Random Records*, II: 140-141.

Thornton ruined his constitution in the last part of his life by “indulg[ing] in the bottle.”¹⁴

Despite these drawbacks, Colman and Thornton were in the process of becoming professional men of letters and the *Connoisseur* was their training ground. The periodical ran from January, 1754, to September, 1756, with a total of 140 issues. The writers were also forging connections in the literary marketplace; their publishers were Richard Baldwin (who would later publish *PEL*) in London, and Richard Jackson in Oxford. The *Connoisseur* received high praise, and as the essays appeared they were frequently reprinted in various monthly magazines.¹⁵ At its demise Oliver Goldsmith wrote that Mr. Town was “the first writer since Bickerstaff who has been perfectly satirical yet perfectly good-natured. . . . Every admirer of good taste and good-humor must regret his departure.”¹⁶ Produced in the same spirit of camaraderie that prompted Colman and Thornton at the close of the *Connoisseur* to write that they were so united in purpose that they “both smelled from the same nose-gay,”¹⁷ *PEL* was compiled during a period between leftover Westminster jocularities and the more sophisticated forms their irreverence took on the stage, in periodicals and political pamphlets.

i. Sources

The course that brought these two ambitious friends to compile “two pocket-sized volumes” (over 600 pages) of women’s verse is not untraceable. They seem to have been willing to try anything once, and as I demonstrated in Chapter One, they were not alone in paying attention to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century female authors. Nor were they without bibliographical resources, secondary as well as primary texts that provided them with the verse and / or biographical information they needed.

¹⁴*Biographia Dramatica; or, a Companion to the Playhouse*, 3 vols. comp. David Erskine Baker, et al. (London, 1812) I: 712, qtd. in *Random Records*, 141.

¹⁵*GM* reprinted at least a dozen of the *Connoisseur* papers, and *LM* forty-four. This reprint rate is comparable to that of its chief rival, Edward Moore’s *The World*. Bertelsen, 285 n.42. The essays were reproduced and bound in volumes by Baldwin in 1755 and 1756.

¹⁶*The Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal* (London: pr. for R. Griffiths) XVI, 443 (May, 1757).

Although the sources for the poems in *PEL* are not difficult to determine (see the following chapter), the location of the copies actually used by Colman and Thornton is still a matter of speculation. Some may have been available in libraries at Oxford – particularly older volumes like those of Cavendish, Philips, and Behn. The Bodleian library (as well as Cambridge and the King’s Library) had a legal right to a copy of every book printed in England dated from 1662.¹⁸ The right to see these materials was not guaranteed the students, however. Isobel Grundy explains the restricted access that men at Oxford and Cambridge had to books at the colleges: “In competition or collaboration with the university libraries, those of the constituent colleges were run as shared gentleman-and-scholars’ libraries. With exceptions (undergraduates who were noblemen, or who got their tutors to borrow books for them, or obtained some special favour like leave to borrow the butler’s keys), these libraries were for the use of *faculty only*.”¹⁹ Although not of noble birth, Colman and Thornton were resourceful, and could well have gained access to the volumes needed.²⁰ The fact that Colman’s uncle was Earl of Bath may have helped him gain certain reading privileges. Another possibility I have mentioned is that George Ballard lent one or both of them books that he read himself.

There were also personal libraries from which to borrow, as well as an extensive trade in older books, and in second-hand books generally.²¹ Richard Baldwin, with his

¹⁷*Connoisseur* #140.

¹⁸Margaret Cavendish (whose books were all printed in London) sent copies to the colleges. Christ Church, Oxford, which Colman and Thornton attended, has an *ex dono auctoris* copy, but not of the 1668 edition of her *Poems* which the editors used as their source (perhaps because Colman or Thornton removed it for their own use?) See James Fitzmaurice, “Margaret Cavendish on Her Own Writing: Evidence from Revision and Handmade Correction,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 85: 3 (Sept. 1991) 297-307.

¹⁹Grundy, “Books and the Woman: An eighteenth-century Owner and her Libraries,” *English Studies in Canada*, 20 (March, 1994) 1-22.

²⁰In most cases they would have hired a scribe to copy out the poems that they were interested in reprinting from libraries, rather than bringing valuable older texts to the printers.

²¹Such accessibility is evident in a scriblerian effort: although Aphra Behn’s poem “The Golden Age” had not been reprinted in the eighteenth century, Pope and his fellow satirists cited part of the first stanza of the poem in *Peri Bathous* as an example of “the Florid Style.” Here Pope quotes lines 9-14 of Behn’s “Golden Age,” and gives his source as “Behn’s *Poems*. P 2.” Pope, “Martinus Scriblerus His Treatise of The Art of Sinking in Poetry,” *Miscellanies. The Last Volume*. (London, 1727) 63. Janet Todd notes that “by cutting Behn off in mid-sentence” in this quotation, Pope “makes her thought appear more pointlessly fanciful than it really is.” Todd, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, 7 vols. (Columbus: Ohio State UP 1992) I: 385.

shop full of books both old and new, was doubtless an important resource (we know that he was selling Pilkington's *Memoirs*, for example) and would have had volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, from which the editors culled a few poems. Thornton, who was living in London before Colman moved to Lincoln's Inn in May, 1755, could have pored over the tomes on the bookseller's shelves. Mary Jones, who seems to have been a friend of Thornton's, owned Barber's *Poems* and could have lent the book to him at Oxford (given the enormous subscription list that accompanies Barber's first two editions, it is also possible that the editors had seen her books elsewhere). Thornton himself subscribed to Mary Jones's *Miscellanies*, from which they borrowed poems. Not all of the works came from print sources, which Colman and Thornton indicate in a few instances in the biographical introductions they provide.²²

The majority of the poems in *PEL* did originate in earlier printed texts, however, which raises the question of copyright. In the case of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*, Michael Suarez argues that the scope of the collection was constricted by the copyright held by other booksellers: "the realities of the Statute of Anne (1710) governing copyright and the profit motive that legitimately drove Tully's Head as a commercial enterprise meant that 'Dodsley's Poems' could include neither Andrew Millar's poems, nor Thomas Longman's poems. . . . This is why Swift and Smart, for example, are not part of the *Collection*. It also helps to explain why one quarter of the poets featured in Dodsley's miscellany were deceased when their verses were printed in the *Collection*."²³ A more dramatic statistic occurs in *PEL*. Fully three-quarters of the eminent ladies were deceased when their verses were printed in the Colman and Thornton miscellany. Suarez is referring to the world's first copyright act, passed in 1710, "for the Encouragement of Learning by Vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or Purchasers of Such Copies."²⁴ The act signaled what has been called "a systematic attempt in Parliament to

²²This is the case with the poems of Judith Cowper Madan. See Chapter Three and Appendix B.

²³Michael Suarez, ed., *Dodsley's Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, 6 vols. (London: Routledge, 1997) Introduction, I:1-230: 100.

²⁴This replaced the Licensing Act, which had been allowed to lapse in 1695, primarily because it was perceived as a restraint on trade.

further the interest of the writer as distinguished from that of the bookseller.”²⁵ Under the statute the term of copyright was limited to fourteen years, with a possible second term if the author was still living. For books already in print the statute provided a twenty-one year term. Many of the source-texts for *PEL* were older than this, which meant that their copyrights had expired in 1731. While all this is true, however, what Suarez fails to recognize is that copyright rested in books, not in individual poems. Culling a poem or poems from a volume did not constitute copyright violation.

Dodsley’s choices may simply reflect a preference for the new, whereas Colman’s and Thornton’s demonstrate the desire for a chronological spectrum. While the encyclopaedic and panegyric writings about women in the 1740s and ‘50s doubtless motivated the young men, and gaining access to copies of books by women was fairly straightforward, the specifically compilatory nature of the genre in which Colman and Thornton chose to foreground these writers can be traced to older influences. The source of their authority in undergoing such a project, and the skills required to carry it off, were something they acquired gradually, and systematically, as part of their formal education.

ii. Traditions of Compilation

Ralph Griffiths’ brief acknowledgment of *PEL* in *The Monthly Review* of June, 1755, is also an editorial dismissal:

As the materials that compose these volumes are collected from books, &c, formerly printed, and most of them very common, we need say nothing more of them.²⁶

²⁵Harry Ransom, *The First Copyright Statute: An Essay on An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, 1710* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1956) 97. John Feather argues that in reality “authors had little more than a nod to acknowledge their existence” in the new Act, and “what might have been a stronger law to protect their interests was actually watered down in Committee under pressure from the trade.” The relationship between author and publisher was being formalized, yet within these arrangements an author’s rights “were still seen as being transferred to a bookseller and then of no further concern to the author.” Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain* (NY: Mansell, 1994) 69.

²⁶*Monthly Review*, series I, vol. 12: 512.

In this, the complete review, Griffiths indicates that the editors of the collection have displayed no more acumen than what the Earl of Shaftesbury had long before concluded was the minimal skill required for the production of a poetic miscellany: “a little Invention, and Common-place-Book Learning.”²⁷ The prescription may not be inaccurate, but it does play down the importance of these prerequisites for successful compilation. Invention was not the primary concern of those who hoped to realize a printed collection of verse, but it did help if a broad reading experience were to be shaped into a collection that evinced both variety and cohesion. In the *Dictionary* Samuel Johnson defines ‘compile’ as a verb signifying “to draw up from various authors, to collect into one body.” Johnson also offers a second, broader definition for the term “one he notes as no longer in common usage” but which seems to accommodate both of Shaftesbury’s requirements. This is “to write, to compose” and “to contain; to comprise.” The latter definition blurs the line between editorial work, compilation, and composition, and seems a more fitting interpretation of what occurred in eighteenth-century print miscellanies. The men who compiled *PEL* possessed both of the attributes that Shaftesbury thought necessary to such an enterprise “invention, and commonplace-book learning.

As Shaftesbury’s epigrammatic gibe suggests, the printed poetic anthology had its roots in the late sixteenth and seventeenth-century practice of keeping commonplace-books. Part hobby, part memory tool, these books in progress are in many instances manifestations of the “scribal publication” that Harold Love describes as encompassing, but not limited to, works circulated within a coterie comprised of family and acquaintances.²⁸ The development of a commonplace-book constituted a private activity, but was also a social engagement with other texts and authors. Such a book allowed for juxtaposition of the well-known and the obscure, or of the self and others, combining, as

²⁷Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cowper, First Earl of, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 3 vols. (London, 1711) 3: 6-7, qtd. by Barbara M. Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996) 5.

²⁸Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amherst: U. Mass. Press, 1998).

Victoria Burke argues in her recent thesis, “the acts of both reading and writing” and, at times, “the opportunity for alteration and response.”²⁹ According to Peter Beal, the many surviving commonplace-books from the mid-seventeenth century represent only a fraction of those once in existence, because the practice “was one of the most widespread activities of the educated classes in contemporary England.”³⁰

As an essential component of a boy’s grammar school education throughout the eighteenth century, his commonplace-book would contain pages of Latin and Greek, along with French and the King’s English. Ann Moss testifies that this pedagogical tradition was abiding, and its legacy far-reaching:

Pupils were required to make themselves commonplace-books, and to collect excerpts from their reading under the appropriate heads. When they came to construct compositions of their own, they were encouraged to use their commonplace-books as a resource, culling from them quotations, examples, and other illustrative materials. . . Children educated in this way brought into adult life certain mental attitudes, certain habits of reading and writing which characterized literate culture in Western Europe over a remarkably long period.³¹

For well over a century, both the composition of original verse and selective verse-collecting were fostered in particular at Westminster school, where “collecting poems was not simply a fashionable hobby, but a means of acquiring and displaying the cultural capital which established their identities as learned wits.”³²

Colman and Thornton had been for years immersed in the custom of selection and hand-written reproduction that formed an essential part of the Westminster education. As

²⁹Victoria Elizabeth Burke, “Women and Seventeenth-Century Manuscript Culture: Miscellanies, Commonplace Books and Song Books Compiled by English and Scottish Women, 1600-1660,” diss. Oxford U, 1996.

³⁰Peter Beal, “Notions in Garrison: The Seventeenth-Century Commonplace Book,” *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985-1991* (Binghamton and NY: Renaissance English Text Society, 1993) 134-147.

³¹Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) v.

³²John Gouws, “Nicholas Oldisworth and the poetic community of Caroline Oxford” unpublished paper (Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, 1996) 14. This paper speaks to a period at Oxford long

an exercise that combined the acquisition of literature (the extracts were also memorized) and of judgment, the practice now seems like training in editorial aptitude. Nuggets of wisdom and wit were identified and excerpted from the texts they read, increasing their acumen in an activity that Burke refers to as “extracting the pith.”³³ Although the commonplace book was initially a private collection, “not so much for the sake of faithfully transmitting literary texts as for the use of the compiler,”³⁴ at Westminster the books would have been seen by the boys’ schoolmaster, and might well have been shared among the students themselves. They would have judged carefully what they read and included in their books, lest they be judged.³⁵

Current scholarship continues to debate the connection between common-place books and printed miscellanies. Shaftesbury’s point about the influence of the former on the latter testifies to a formidable link between the two. Although prescriptions printed throughout the latter sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries stressed the classroom context of the activity, the varieties of compilation evinced by manuscript and print collections shared the same acquisitive impulse.³⁶ Just as early type had mimicked a scribal hand, manuscript compilations had, in turn, suggested how printed collections

before that of Colman and Thornton, yet as noted above, the traditions remained in place. Winchester school was also known both for the composition and compilation of poetry.

³³Victoria Burke, “Women and Manuscript Culture, 1600-1770,” paper given at the University of Toronto, 6 Dec. 1996.

³⁴Beal, “Notions,” 133.

³⁵Further, knowledge of classical writings was united with personal performance at Westminster, where yearly performances of Latin plays were well attended, and students were elevated annually by examinations held in public. These “consisted principally of the recitation in Latin and Greek on themes given to the candidates by the examiners,” and were “designed to demonstrate the candidate’s self-confidence and quick-wittedness.” E. G. W. Bill, *Education at Christ Church Oxford 1660-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) 90-1. William Cowper recalled his boyhood at Westminster “where little poets strive / To set a distich upon six and five. . . I was a poet too,” “Table Talk,” *The Poems of William Cowper*, ed. John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980) I: 254-5, II. 506-7, 510.

³⁶A notable example of the connection between the commonplace-book and the printed miscellany, is the commonplace-book that Mary Ann O’Donnell discovered at the Bodleian (Bodleian MS Firth c. 16). It is titled *Astrea’s Booke for Songs and Satyrs*, and is in several hands including Aphra Behn’s. Many of these poems later appeared in various printed anthologies, such as the *Muses Farewell[sic] to Poetry* and the various *Poems on Affairs of State*. O’Donnell, “Private jottings, public utterance: Aphra Behn’s published writings and her commonplace books,” *Aphra Behn Studies*, ed. Janet Todd (Cambridge UP, 1996) 285-309.

should look. Both were objects that paid tribute to a cumulative literary effort that is not easily categorized. As *PEL* illustrates, poetry could also be arranged under headings for reference, as commonplace-books had done, in this case determined by the poets' names.

Recent studies have located the main centres for the early production of print miscellanies at Oxford, Cambridge, and the Inns of Court.³⁷ This was particularly true of Christ Church. It is not surprising that it was the Westminster students who went on to Christ Church who formed "the nucleus of a sustained and coherent social group which constituted itself through poetic activity."³⁸ John Gouws foregrounds this activity as being the result of a social network: "A Westminster boy arriving at Christ Church would not find himself amongst strangers. As well as his three or four contemporaries from the school, he would find schoolfellows from three or four previous elections and Westminsters from previous generations."³⁹ Gouws' description relates to the students of the previous century, but little had changed by the time George Colman found himself entering Christ Church in the autumn of 1751 and meeting with the senior Bonnell Thornton, whose "literary friends and accomplishments must have had a compelling effect on Colman, who was always an ambitious writer."⁴⁰ The print miscellany for which university students would combine their own and others' talents shares with the schoolboy's commonplace-book an acquisitive, magpie-like impulse; both signal an alliance between private writings and public consumption.⁴¹

³⁷See Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the Renaissance Lyric* (Cornell UP, 1995); Raymond A. Anselment, "The Oxford University Poets and Caroline Panegyric," *John Donne Journal* 3:2 (1984)181-201; Mary Hobbs, *Verse Miscellany Manuscripts* and "Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellanies and Their Value for Textual Editors," *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700* (1989) 1:192-210.

³⁸Beal, 15.

³⁹Gouws, 13.

⁴⁰Bertelsen, 30. The universities had long provided intersections between a kind of exclusive coterie environment and a larger reading audience. Bernard Lintot brought out *Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany Poems in 1708*, for example, and in 1750 appeared a volume titled *The English poems collected from Oxford and Cambridge verses on the death of His Royal Highness Frederick Prince of Wales*. In 1757, Richard Baldwin, the publisher of *PEL*, also produced a twenty-page collection of occasional verse, *Poems by Several Gentlemen of Oxford*.

⁴¹The early print miscellanies from the colleges had been in Latin, but this changed. *Luctus Britannici*, the collection put together on the occasion of Dryden's death, by "the most eminent hands" in both universities, is in two parts. The first contains poems in English, and the second, in Greek and Latin. The 1736 Oxford

The result of such compilatory training was manifest in a juxtaposition of the present and the past, and a sometimes curious negotiation between the self and the skills and reputations of others. For all his criticism of imitation, for example, Mr. Town's position as critic and censor-general seems to testify to what Matthew Arnold, a century later, would refer to as an epoch of concentration, rather than one of expansion.⁴² Colman's first printed essay is a case in point. In an anonymous contribution to John Hawkesworth's *Adventurer*, titled "The Temple of Fame," the undergraduate complains of the inferior works created by geniuses.⁴³ He desires "that these unworthy stains could be blotted from their works, and leave them perfect and immaculate," and then experiences a wish-fulfilling dream. Authors great and otherwise are imagined sacrificing their less meritorious writings to the flames of Apollo's altar. The complete works of "The French critics" succumb to fire, while Chaucer consigns the more scurrilous sections of his *Canterbury Tales* to the flames under Dryden's tutelage, and Milton purges his own writings of their unfortunate political defects under Addison's watchful eye. The unextraordinary essay is a young man's attempt to define taste, in the sub-genre of the vision-sequence made popular by Addison in *The Spectator*. "The Temple of Fame" reads also as a theory about the canon, and anticipates the justification for separating grain from chaff in *PEL*, where again ancestral voices are cited for critical authority.

The legacy of this sort of institutional training could, of course, prove a double-edged sword; it is an over-developed "Commonplace-book Learning" that threatens to overwhelm "Invention" in Shaftesbury's glance at miscellanies. Some version of this paradigm is behind most reviews of anthological texts from the period. Ralph Griffiths' complaint that *PEL* contained nothing new was made more on theoretical than on

collection *Gratulatio Academiae in Nuptias Auspicatissimas*, written on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' marriage, contains verse in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Welsh, German and English. Others were entirely in the vernacular, which eventually dominated the collections, as they came to resemble more commercial miscellanies -- and to become commercial enterprises themselves.

⁴²Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," *Essays in Criticism* First Series (1865), ed. Sr. Thomas Marion Hoctar (U of Chicago P, 1968) 8-30: 17.

⁴³"The Temple of Fame," *Adventurer* #40, 15 September, 1753.

practical grounds; it contains many poems that he would probably not have read before. “The anonymous author of “original letters and poems” in the slender volume, *The Ladies Cabinet broke Open*, went further than Shaftesbury, accusing even those who made claims to originality of having been corrupted by the passion for imitation. He prefaced his efforts with scorn for men who acquired all their learning from the past, “those that are constantly using their Common-Place Books, those Paroquets of Wit and Eloquence . . . somewhat like those Painters, who can do nothing in the World, but copy.”⁴⁵ Such accusations are not only about parroting, but about participating in a parasitic relationship with history.

It was this uninventive stance that Colman and Thornton were mocking in adopting the title of “Connoisseur,” a word both ironic and loaded by the time their journal came into being. Mr. Town makes this clear from his first installment: “I cannot be insensible of the importance of the capital business of taste.”⁴⁶ Johnson’s *Dictionary* defines “connoisseur” as: “A judge; a critick. It is often used as a pretended critick.” The lucubrations of Mr. Town are generally intended to be read ironically. At other moments, however, the essayist’s position is meant to be taken seriously, and it is those of whom he writes that have the problem with perception and judgment. The appellation “Mr. Town” is equally significant. Whereas the City describes that part of London within the ancient city walls and the parishes immediately outside these walls, the Town signified “the London of coffee-houses, gaming houses, stylish ‘bagnios’ and theatres, the more affluent London, not the world of out-of-work servants, female hacks, and broken prostitutes.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴Barbara Benedict reads the unenthusiastic *Monthly Review* notice of *PEL* as an indication of the “conventionality” of Colman’s and Thornton’s choices. *Making the Modern Reader*, 163. I suggest that the reviewer was protesting the simple act of including only poetry that had previously been printed, versus the mixed bag that Dodsley’s recent collection had offered, filled with a large number of previously unpublished poems by friends and acquaintances. It is possible, given the lack of reprints, that many reader would have seen little, if any, verse by Newcastle or Killigrew, among others, before encountering *PEL*. That said, there are poems by some of these writers that Griffiths could have seen in miscellanies. The newness of *PEL* originated chiefly in the marriage of quantity and exclusivity in its contents.

⁴⁵Anon. *The Ladies Cabinet broke Open: Original Letters and Poems* (London, 1710) 17-19.

⁴⁶*Connoisseur* #2, Feb. 7, 1754, I: 7-12.

⁴⁷Bertelsen, 32.

Mr. Town, then, enjoys a geographical position of cultural authority, that of the jester with an insider's knowledge. With him we journey to the coffee-houses, book-sellers' shops, and Covent-Garden. A perverse messiah of taste, he warns that "whoever becomes my disciple must not refuse to follow me from the Star and Garter to the Goose and Gridiron, and be content to climb after me up to an Author's garret, or give me leave to introduce him to a new route."⁴⁸

iii. Commercial Anthologies

The keeping of commonplace-books and the miscellany print culture that drew on this practice were disparate activities, the latter seeking to create, even as it relied upon, public demand. A level of professionalism in the form of judicious editorial selection was expected, although the criteria that governed such collections were manifold. Verse anthologies printed for profit in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, for instance, had concentrated primarily on groups of writers who shared a similar period and background – another extension of the coterie writing environment. Many such collections centred in a group of courtiers, such as Aphra Behn's 1685 *Miscellany*, which consists of poems by Behn's aristocratic friends.⁴⁹

The printed miscellanies that more closely preceded *PEL* constituted a fluid genre, often including letters or *beau jestes* alongside poetry. Jacob Tonson's six-volume *Miscellany Poems*, or *Dryden's Miscellanies* (1684-1709), comprised not only Dryden's work, which were the highlight of every volume, but promoted that of other Restoration wits like Etherege, Roscommon, and Sedley. T. A. Birrell argues that before the first volume of *Miscellany Poems* was produced in 1684, "there had been miscellanies of songs; miscellanies of so-called 'drolleries', i.e. scabrous and erotic poems; miscellanies

⁴⁸*Connoisseur* #1.

⁴⁹Aphra Behn, ed. *Miscellany, being a Collection of Poems by several hands. Together with Reflections on morality, or Seneca Unmasked* (London: pub. J. Hindmarsh, 1685). Dedicated to Sir William Clifton, this collection includes poems by the Earls of Dorset and Rochester, Sir George Etherege, Anne Wharton, Nahum Tate, Henry Neville Payne, Henry Crispe, Mrs. Taylor, Tom Brown and Thomas Otway. Also included are Behn's eulogy for Rochester and her translations of La Rochefoucauld's maxims.

of political poems; and of course translations from the classics.” Yet as a vehicle primarily for the first authorized version of *MacFlecknoe*, and recent best-sellers *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Medal* Tonson’s “*Miscellany Poems* does not fit any of these categories: it was simply a ragbag, with some very good stuff on the top.”⁵⁰ Whereas Birrell emphasizes the different categories of the titles, in this instance he ignores the miscellaneous quality of the contents of other collections. He also ignores the impact of the manuscript miscellanies that Harold Love has demonstrated served as models for commercial anthologies. Clearly the product of coteries of friends, each early printed collection also contains a variety of genres: the fable, the translation, the song. They were all, indeed, ‘rag-bags’, and Tonson was not being especially innovative in allowing such vagaries in his collections.

Later editors continued to build their tables of contents around a specific group of persons, but along with the greater demand for the written word from consumers in the evolving literary marketplace came a larger pool of scribblers from which to draw. The titles of the anthologies that preceded *PEL* testify to their variety, both of authors and subject matter. Many titles were non-committal, like *The flower-piece: a collection of miscellany poems. By several hands* (1731), which marries the etymology of “anthology” with that of “miscellany,” or the many variations on a title like *Poetical pieces by several hands* (1752). Or again, a title might suggest a thematic aesthetic, such as *The beau’s miscellany. Being a new and curious collection of amorous tales, diverting songs, and entertaining poems* (1731?), which also comprises a variety of poetic forms.⁵¹

⁵⁰T. A. Birrell, “The Influence of Seventeenth-Century Publishers on the Presentation of English Literature,” *Historical & Editorial Studies in Medieval & Early Modern English*, ed. Mary-Jo Arn and Hanneke Wirtjes (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1985)163-173:169

⁵¹ *The flower-piece* (London, 1731); *Poetical pieces by several hands* (London, 1752); *The Beau’s miscellany* (London, 1731[?]). I use “miscellany” and “anthology” interchangeably throughout this thesis, despite the etymological parameters drawn by Alistair Fowler and Michael Suarez around the term “anthology”: “Modern literary critics tend to see the Collection as an anthology (from the Greek, *anthologeîn*, to gather flowers), a gathering of the best and most beautiful poems from the whole field, rather than as a miscellany (from the Latin, *miscellaneus*, from *miscere*, to mix), a grouping of poems of decidedly mixed value from a limited range of what was available.” Suarez, *Dodsley’s Collection*, “Introduction,” 102. I would argue that every collection is limited by available material. A collection devoted solely to women’s poetry has a necessarily “limited range,” but this should not preclude the term “anthology” from being applied to it. Barbara Benedict, who argues that anthologies and miscellanies “constitute the same genre because they share means of material production, audience, and forms that define

Original verses were printed alongside the familiar. Authors of the previous century, like Dryden, were still popular.⁵² Pope, of course, remained a standard throughout the half century following his death. At the same time, the extent to which authorship was acknowledged at all in most miscellanies reflects the eclectic nature of these compilations. Within a single book some poets would be named, while others were pseudonymous (“A Lady” or “Lysander”) and still others appeared anonymously. These pseudonyms were a remnant from coterie culture, where groups of friends *could* identify the writer, but now appeared for a much wider, mystified, paying audience (like the poetry sections in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, the *London Magazine*, and others). Of Dodsley’s *Collection*, Suarez notes that “until the publication of Reed’s annotated edition in 1782, it seems that part of the appeal of the miscellany was the literary pastime of identifying authors with their poems in Dodsley’s miscellany.”⁵³ Although the claim to novelty is not always reliable; the word “new” puffed even the altered title pages of re-issued books, and poems characterized as “never before printed” had often appeared elsewhere. Other poems actually had only circulated in manuscript previously, and had been “lost” to their authors (hence the challenge of identifying them). Jonathan Brody Kramnick argues: “What is a canon, after all, if not a pantheon of older writers and their works? For much of the eighteenth century, however, the English canon consisted of writers valued for their modernity.”⁵⁴

By contrast, *PEL* offered something different again, a text full of certainty. The advertisements for other verse collections might list some of the more important names, followed by “and several other hands” (or eminent hands), but the puffs for *PEL*

their cultural functions,” notes that “anthologies are conventionally defined as volumes containing a historical survey of English literature, and they are thought of as being compiled by editors from canonical material. Miscellanies, in contrast, are understood to be bundled together from contemporary, fashionable material by booksellers.” Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader*, 3,4. Again, I would argue that *PEL* does both.

⁵²This sort of demand led to a number of suspect posthumous “first” printings of poems purportedly written by authors like Behn, especially in the 1690s.

⁵³Suarez, “Introduction,” 90.

⁵⁴Kramnick, *Making the English Canon*, 15.

obviously listed them all. With only one exception, *PEL* is not and does not claim to contain “new” work,⁵⁵ yet the editors claim a higher status for the anthology than that of sub-literary hackwork in other historical miscellanies, like *The Muse in Good Humour: Or, a Collection of Comic Tales* (1745), which was puffed as containing works “From Chaucer, Prior, Swift, La Fontaine, Dr. King, and other eminent Poets. Together with some Originals.”⁵⁶

Kramnick argues that an increase in conscientious canon formation in the middle decades of the eighteenth century was in part a response against women writers:

Modernity generates tradition. The swelling of the book trade, the passing of aristocratic authority, the rise in literacy, the prominence of women writers and readers, the professionalization of criticism, together provoked over the course of the century a recourse to older works as national heritage.⁵⁷

What Colman and Thornton were engaged in, however, was an act of inclusion (and enclosure) that located the “modern” fact English of women writing on a continuum. The Preface identifies the authors in *PEL* as “not only an honour to their sex, but to their native country.”⁵⁸ Again, *PEL* is not titled *Poems on Several Occasions by Female Hands* or something similar because the focus of the collection is on the poets rather than the poems. It is a *memento mori* of sorts because, as I have noted, fully three quarters of the poets therein were deceased when the collection was produced.

Perhaps because of this nostalgic aspect of the genre, the poetic miscellany was a part of an expanding print culture that could not stop talking about itself. Working in such a self-conscious area, editors feared that a book would either be labeled a loathsome child of Dullness, as in *The Dunciad* or, as in *Idler* #85, merely a “useless compilation”:

⁵⁵This exception is the claim that the editors make in regard to a poem by Judith Cowper Madan. See Chapter Three and Appendix B.

⁵⁶Cancel title-page of the reissue of first edition, both 1745.

⁵⁷Kramnick, *English Canon*, 1.

⁵⁸Preface, *PEL*, I: A2.

One of the peculiarities which distinguish the present age is the multiplication of books. Every day brings new advertisements of literary undertakings. . . . They have often no other task than to lay two books before them, out of which they compile a third, without any new materials of their own, and with very little application of judgment to those which former authors have supplied.⁵⁹

While he is specifically addressing books like Goldsmith's *History of the World* in this essay, Johnson's emphasis on sound judgment ultimately offers no hope for any genre characterized by proliferation, since "the great sage, who thought 'a great book is a great evil,' would now think the multitude of books a multitude of evils."⁶⁰ The compiler's task was often a thankless one. Jonathan Swift had complained:

But these are not a thousandth Part
Of Jobbers in the Poets Art,
Attending each his proper Station,
And all in due Subordination;
Thro' ev'ry Alley to be found,
In Garrets high, or under Ground:
And when they join their *Pericranies*,
Out skips a *Book of Miscellanies*.⁶¹

The anticipation of such criticism led editors to develop defensive strategies. While delight and instruction of the public were frequently cited as reasons for compiling an anthology, so too was a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgment of the commodification of literature. In 1727 Edmund Curll, notorious for his opportunistic business practices, brought out a two-volume *Miscellanea* of letters and verse by well-known authors which contains a poem by William Pattison that makes specific reference to Jacob Tonson's early efforts as a model for future enterprise. "To Mr. E. Curll, Bookseller" testifies to a larger shift in the literary marketplace, and recognizes an area of potential growth:

⁵⁹Johnson, *Idler* #85, *Works*, II: 264.

⁶⁰*Idler* #85, 266.

⁶¹Jonathan Swift, "On Poetry: a Rapsody[sic]," *Swift: Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Davis. (London: Oxford UP, 1967) 569-584, II. 311-318. All subsequent references to Swift's verse are to this edition.

While spurious Poems daily vex us,
 And cannot please, but must perplex us;
 While TONSON builds on DRYDEN's Name,
 And flourishes in Wealth and Fame,
 By swelling Volumes *three* to *six*,
 And other *miscellaneous* [sic] tricks,
 By stuffing them with Rhymes on Trust,
 (Well, Things by standing will get Dust.)

Then pr'ythee CURLL, e'er 'tis too late,
 (For Mortals must submit to Fate)
 Collect, correct, and eke produce
 The scatter'd Labours of *thy Muse*. . . ⁶²

No word (with the exception of 'fire') would be as fearsome as 'dust' to a bookseller. It was with caution that Robert Dodsley later espoused the precept "collect, correct, and eke produce" with his highly successful *Collection of Poems by Several Hands* (1748). Dodsley also swelled volumes three to six, and the collection underwent twelve editions over the thirty-four years after it appeared. In spite of the fact that many of the poets in Dodsley's collection were friends, the scope and popularity of the volumes demonstrate that anthology production had distanced itself considerably from coterie publication. Suarez posits that the experienced bookseller saw an area ripe for exploitation at mid-century, and seized the opportunity created.

Dodsley, a bookseller known both for his remarkable sensitivity to the London poetry market and for his impeccable sense of timing, was testing the market for a new multi-volume anthology now that the miscellanies associated with Dryden, Fenton, Steele, Pope, Pemberton, and Lintot no longer occupied a significant place in the London book trade. The former bestsellers had run their course and were now dated. . . . The bookseller had all he needed to float a trial balloon: a large stock of poetry consisting of some pieces that had already won public approbation and other works that had never appeared in print before, a solid reputation as one of London's leading literary establishments, and sufficient capital to support his plan.⁶³

⁶²William Pattison, "To Mr. E. Curll, Bookseller" *Miscellanea. In two volumes*. (London, 1727 [1726]) I:145, ll.1-12. The poem is here dated 1715.

There was obviously a large stock of poetry by women in the same state, as well, but George Colman and Bonnell Thornton were on less steady ground with their own project at Oxford and London, since as yet they enjoyed only minor literary reputations as conductors of the *Connoisseur*.⁶⁴ The literary marketplace of 1755 would have worked both to their advantage, and against it. On one hand, the reading public had not forgotten Ballard's *Memoirs of Learned Ladies* and Duncombe's *Feminiad*, and may have regretted that only poems by two women appeared in Dodsley's first edition.⁶⁵

On the other hand, Dodsley's fourth volume, along with new editions of the first three, also appeared in May of 1755, and was puffed no less than ten times in the *Daily Advertiser*.⁶⁶ Dodsley's accomplishments were lauded by the Edinburgh review as an exclusive enterprise, being "much more valuable than any other of the same kind" and "already known to all persons of taste." As Suarez explains, the collection, which gave rise to two unauthorized 'supplements,' "was generally regarded as the epitome of polite taste during the second half of the eighteenth century."⁶⁷ The lukewarm response to *PEL* in *The Monthly Review* ("most of them very common, we need say nothing more of them") stands in contrast to the warm reception the same magazine had given Dodsley's fourth volume the month before: "the merit of the three former volumes of the Collection is sufficiently known; the contents of this new one are not beneath the good company they

⁶³Michael F. Suarez, "Trafficking in the Muse: Dodsley's Collection of Poems and the Question of Canon," *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*, ed. Alvaro Ribeiro and James G. Basker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 297-313: 301.

⁶⁴Both Colman and Thornton would later have poems published in supplements to Dodsley.

⁶⁵These were Mary Wortley Montagu (Dodsley, I: 91-126; IV, 83-85, 206-209; later in VI. 247) and Elizabeth Carter (III: 217-22; later in V: 330-332; VI. 244-246).

⁶⁶Suarez, "Trafficking," 304. Suarez argues that the proliferation of advertisements may reflect that Dodsley had to work especially hard to sell the *Collection*.

⁶⁷Suarez, "Trafficking," 297.

are introduced into.”⁶⁸ The combined reviews indicate more than approval and indifference, but market saturation.⁶⁹

Suarez distinguishes between what Dodsley accomplished in the *Collection*, and what he calls Colman’s and Thornton’s “history of female writing,” in terms that locate the authority of the younger men in the finite, manageable nature of their editorial project:

Whereas Dodsley used the by now traditional procedure of booksellers by compiling his *Collection of Poems* as an ongoing project that advertised the distinctive quality of his “stable” of writers, and thus his own literary judgment, Colman and Thornton, already proven critics, completed their history of female writing as a single, authoritative venture.⁷⁰

It is true that both were highly educated, unlike Dodsley, who had once been a liveried footman. But Dodsley had appeared only as the publisher of his anthology, and had employed a number of “gentlemen editors” in the construction of his collection, in particular his friend William Shenstone, as well as Colman’s uncle, William Pulteney. Further, Dodsley had published *The Dunciad*, was a patron of Johnson’s *Dictionary*, and had his hand in countless magazines. Colman and Thornton were essentially privileged idlers at this point; theirs were not yet bankable names in 1755. *PEL* appeared at a liminal stage, both in the lives of its editors, who were making the transition from reading at Oxford to writing in London, and at a period during which expectations that attended printed collections of verse were in flux.

⁶⁸*Monthly Review* 12 (May 1755) 382, qtd. in Harry M. Solomon, *The Rise of Robert Dodsley: Creating the New Age of Print* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1996) 116.

⁶⁹Suarez points out that the Bowyer ledgers record a second impression of Dodsley’s fourth volume in 1755 at 1500 copies, and estimates that John Hughes’ initial printing of the volume would have run to at least 1000 copies, and may well have been 1500 (“Trafficking,” 310).

⁷⁰Suarez, “Trafficking,” 311.

iv. Collections of *Beauties*

Even as the historical nature of *PEL* represents a late development in the movement from commonplace-book to commodity print culture, the anthology anticipates another (sub)genre that was already evolving. A variation on the poetic miscellany was the book of *Beauties*, which claimed to isolate those sections that were superior, either from an individual's work or from that of several writers. Barbara Benedict suggests that the genre resulted from changing literary values at mid-century that "facilitated the commodification of beauty in a new, material form."⁷¹ These collections contained passages and snippets of fashionable verse and prose, promising quality rather than the "light, humorous, and fresh works" advertised by miscellanies. *Beauties* were particularly attractive to printers, as extracting poems out of larger collections avoided copyright infringement. Collections such as J. Hinton's *Beauties of Poetry Display'd* (1757) were frequently reprinted, as were texts like *The Beauties of Watts*, which Johnson praised for its accessibility.⁷² The new format was also a kind of socialized commonplace-book, whose short passages were read and often memorized by students and inexperienced readers: "Like commonplace collections, beauties display the cultural education, or at least the values, of the owner. As printed versions of commonplace collections, however, *Beauties* embody the eighteenth-century location of authority in a printed culture which could be purchased and absorbed by anyone with sufficient means."⁷³ Regardless of the distinction that Benedict draws, the distinction she

⁷¹Barbara M. Benedict, "The 'Beauties' of Literature, 1750-1820: Tasteful Prose and Fine Rhyme for Private Consumption," *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, 1 (NY: AMS Press, 1994) 317-346: 318.

⁷²J. Hinton, ed. *The Beauties of Poetry Display'd*, 2 vols. (London, 1757); *The Beauties of the late Revd. Dr. Isaac Watts; to which is added the life of the author* (3rd ed. London: pr. for G. Kearsley, 1782). Of the Watts book Johnson said that "a man will often look and be tempted to go on, when he would have been frightened at books of a larger size and of a more erudite appearance." Johnson's "Miscellanies," qtd. in Benedict, "Beauties" 320. Pope had also used quotation marks to indicate the "beauties" in his 1725 edition of Shakespeare.

⁷³Benedict, "Beauties," 323.

draws between private and public consumption was eroding with this increased emphasis on commodification.

For the most part, Colman and Thornton also chose lighter verse for inclusion in *PEL*, but they emphasized, too, the quality of their product. The fact that they chose the best poems among a large number of possibilities is made clear in the Preface, as is the notion that their choices represent the literary “beauties” among women writers. Although the editors usually include complete poems, on two occasions they also anticipate the book of *Beauties* by reprinting only passages from longer works that they consider inferior to the section they reprint.⁷⁴ The poem that appears as “Wit” by the Duchess of Newcastle in *PEL* is actually the concluding twenty-two lines of a much longer poem: in a footnote, the editors explain that this piece, as well as the one preceding it, are “taken from the part of this lady’s poem which is entitled *Fancies*, and is somewhat extravagant.”⁷⁵ Part context, part prescription, the footnote serves as a guide for reading the eccentric duchess. Similarly, the section of Aphra Behn’s verse contains a fragment; the piece titled “Part of an Ode to Desire” is the second half of Behn’s “On Desire. A Pindarick.” The conscientious title advises the reader that Colman and Thornton have used their editorial prerogative to decide in favor of the faster moving latter half of the pindaric.⁷⁶

Collections of *Beauties* highlighted the options available to editors for displaying and packaging verse. Another way in which *PEL* anticipates the new genre is in the arrangement of poetic material. Although the anthology is divided into sections according to author, rather than according to subject matter as the *Beauties* would do, the authorial divisions in *PEL* are still determined in a way that earlier printed collections of verse were not.

⁷⁴Greer approves of the fact that “it does not occur to [Colman and Thornton] to tailor any poem to fit in with their notions of acceptability,” *Slip-shod*, 254.

⁷⁵*PEL*, II: 206.

⁷⁶Hinton’s 1757 *Beauties* was probably influenced by the contents of the Colman and Thornton anthology. See my conclusion for a note on authors that overlap.

v. Alphabetical Arrangement

The first edition of *Biographia Britannica* (1747) sparked a long-lasting debate about the best way to introduce information to the reader. The breadth of coverage posed problems that spoke to the didactic and moral function of the collection. Related to this, another, less obvious source of concern was alphabetical arrangement, an organizational system which Jean Wood has identified as Such an organizational system created what Jean Wood identifies as the “potential to include the controversial alongside the admirable,” which critics argued “would obscure, if not counteract, the didactic effects of the biographical collection.”⁷⁷ The debate was far-reaching, and not easily resolved. Later, ambivalent reviews of biographical dictionaries suggested that instead of the alphabetical arrangement of names, sections with such titles as “Fortitude”, “Virtue”, and “Education” would better guide the reader’s experience of history: “In the alphabetical arrangement,” the reviewer for the *European Magazine* warned, “the great and the little, the good and the insignificant, not to say the censurable, are linked together, like good and bad neighbours.”⁷⁸

Even Samuel Johnson had a choice to make in ordering his own *Dictionary of the English Language* alphabetically – not all dictionaries had done so. Published the same year, *PEL* speaks to the concerns of the period about the proliferation and the containment of information. George Ballard, for one, had adhered to chronological arrangement for his subjects.⁷⁹ *PEL* reflects the more leveling alphabetical arrangement that characterizes *Biographia Britannica*.⁸⁰ I have noted, however, that this system was

⁷⁷ Jeanne Wood, “‘Alphabetically Arranged’: Mary Hays’s *Female Biography* and the Biographical Dictionary,” *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* XXXI (Summer 1998) 117-142: 122, 123. I am much indebted to this article, and to Jeanne Wood for sharing with me an early draft of her paper.

⁷⁸ *European Magazine*, 43 (1803): 451, qtd. in Jeanne Wood’s “‘Alphabetically Arranged,’” 118.

⁷⁹ “Those, whose Memoirs are here offered to the publick, I have placed in the order of time in which they lived. . .” Ballard, vii.

⁸⁰ Gerard Langbaine had also ordered his *Lives and Characters of the English Dramatic Poets* (1691) alphabetically.

unheard of in a verse miscellany.⁸¹ *The Nine Muses* had not been introduced alphabetically, nor were the poets in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*.

The result of this arrangement in *PEL* is both a sense of order, and of randomness. The sequence implies that all is known by the editors and is reflected in the anthology (again, there is no "by an unknown hand," here). Yet the alphabet is an arbitrary order in every other respect, and it is owing to alphabetical arrangement that Mary Barber's poems appear first in the collection; no other woman in the anthology is introduced by a letter of recommendation, as Barber is by Swift and, more significantly, Jones's opinion on what the female poet should be (good humoured, grateful) and what she should not be (romantic, morose). The alphabet and editorial prerogative come together. Situated at the beginning of *PEL* these epistles, together with Barber's domestic poetry, seem in some definitive way to set the standard for what follows. Barber is also an amusing writer, a good opening act.

It is only an opening, however, and there are seventeen poets to follow --a copious reading experience for which a sequence has been determined. Due to the arrangement of *PEL*, Barber is followed by the ill-reputed Aphra Behn, and the alphabet yields thematic results. When the Restoration professional follows the late Augustan hopeful, Behn is strikingly old-fashioned and embarrassingly sentimental (as well as sexy -- something Barber emphatically is not). Barber, alongside Behn, is domestic almost to the point of triviality, even more occasional, and very much a student of Swift. Other juxtapositions underscore differences. Katherine Philips, the matchless Orinda, is followed by Laetitia Pilkington, the notorious memoirist. Pilkington herself is followed by a poet renowned for her piety, Elizabeth Rowe. Due to the inclusion of a poetic exchange between Anne Finch and Alexander Pope, and Finch's alphabetical placement at the end of the second volume as Lady Winchilsea, her answer to him are the last words we encounter in the collection.

Itamar Even-Zohar has argued that: "The whole process of canonization should . . . be viewed in relation to the process of *standardization* which is itself imbued with an inherent dichotomy: being democratic in one respect and --in stark contrast--

⁸¹ I have not found any earlier anthologies ordered in this way.

discriminatory (autocratic) in another.”⁸² If this is indeed the paradox that fuels canon formation, *PEL* “with its offerings of the notorious and the universally beloved” encapsulates such a process. Throughout *PEL* alphabetical arrangement does allow for placement of “the controversial alongside the meritorious.” The juxtaposition of different poets and their poems conveys a variety of attitudes toward issues such as marriage, writing, or death. To these authors and their writings chapters four through seven will turn. First, issues of publication require discussion, because in addition to editorial agency more concrete issues of print contribute to encode these two pocket-sized volumes with cultural significance.

II. Publication

For Johnson and his contemporaries, the word ‘editor’ was nearly synonymous with a “publisher,” as it is in modern French. The second half of Johnson’s definition, “he that revises or prepares any work for publication,” is the modern English sense. Jerome J. McGann points out that “every work of art is the product of an interaction between the artist, on the one hand, and a variety of social determinants on the other.”⁸³ As with any printed text, the revision and preparation of *PEL* testifies to the efforts of a larger community, including the ambitious young bookseller, Richard Baldwin, who had been selling the *Connoisseur* in Paternoster Row for a year and a half before he collaborated with the creators of Mr. Town in fashioning a new literary commodity.

R. Baldwin is the only name that appears on the title page of *PEL*, and many would have assumed he was the editor as well as the publisher, as Dodsley had officially been. John Nichols notes that “the name of Baldwin has long been, and still continues to be, famous in the annals of Bibliography.”⁸⁴ The Baldwin family was active from late in the seventeenth century; Richard Baldwin senior (1694-1777) was succeeded by his sons

⁸²Itamar Even-Zohar, “Polysystem Studies,” *Poetics Today* 11 (1) 9-26.

⁸³McGann, “The Text, the Poem, and the Problem of Historical Method,” *New Literary History* 12 (1981) 269-288: 274.

⁸⁴Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, 3: 716.

Robert (1717-1748) and Richard Junior (1724-1770) (the name is also problematic because all three are abbreviated “R. Baldwin” on the title-pages of their books).⁸⁵ Baldwin may well have hoped that *PEL* would bring him a measure of the profits that the *Collection of Poems* had garnered for Dodsley, as well as similar professional recognition if successful. The poor quality of Dodsley’s first edition, as well as his own correspondence, point to the likelihood that Dodsley had not seen “the first edition of the *Collection* as anything more than a low-budget publishing experiment.”⁸⁶ The older bookseller had afterward improved upon and invested considerably in the printing of later editions (the second of which he was already planning a week after the first appeared). Baldwin, by contrast, ensured that *PEL* was carefully printed the first time – a finite text in no need of corrected editions, one that had progressed through the female poets of the alphabet and would not be requiring a third volume. Like Dodsley, Baldwin charged the standard trade price of three shillings a volume.

i. Titles

While it was Baldwin who would have financed the project and Colman and Thornton who compiled the anthology, even the titles of poems, apparently the province of the editor, represent an area of wider collaboration. In some cases occasional subtitles were removed, usually because information is omitted that the editors (or a compositor?) considered extraneous, such as Katherine Philips “Against Pleasure. An Ode,” which in their source was “Against Pleasure, set by Dr. Coleman.” No music for songs is provided in *PEL*, and Dr. Coleman, though one of the principal composers and music teachers during the Interregnum, had long been forgotten.⁸⁷ Historical or archival emphasis is

⁸⁵C. [Christine] Y. Ferdinand, “Richard Baldwin Junior, Bookseller,” *Studies in Bibliography*. 42 (1989) 254-264: 257. Richard Jr. was elected to the office of Renter Warden of the Stationer’s Company in 1753, and was accepted into the London booktraders’ established congers – groups of booksellers who bought copies in partnership and as such minimizing the risks of uncertain ventures, and the profits of solid, steady selling titles. There are 750 Baldwin imprints recorded from Richard Baldwin Junior’s lifetime (from 1730 through the 1760s).

⁸⁶Suarez, “Trafficking,” 301.

limited in such cases, and Restoration literary systems are elided in the present values. Changes were also introduced to Philips's poem originally titled "To my Lady Elizabeth Boyle, Singing Since Affairs of the State &c." "Since Affairs of State" here refers to the first line of Act I of Philips's play, "Pompey." In Philips's posthumous 1667 *Poems* the song that this poem refers to appears separately as "Song from Pompey: Act I," and begins "Since affairs of the State are already decreed, / Make room for Affairs of the Court. . . ." The title, addressed to Philips's friend Elizabeth Boyle, signals an ongoing poetic dialogue, reading and response. These Colman and Thornton do not much convey in their new title "To Lady Elizabeth Boyle, singing a song, of which Orinda was the author." The title the editors devised gives what they thought was the necessary information: the song the lady is singing was written by Orinda, whereas the fact that it originally appeared in print in a play by Orinda seems dispensable in an anthology.

By contrast, where earlier literary allusions had once been understood, the need was for Colman and Thornton to develop explanatory titles, again with reference to more present values. Mary Chudleigh's poem, titled "To Eugenia, on her Pastoral" in *PEL*, was originally titled simply "To Eugenia." Apparently, the Eugenia addressed in this piece has written something on the golden age, and Chudleigh's poem itself testifies to a literary correspondence and mutual encouragement. More extreme is the case of Laetitia Pilkington. One of Pilkington's poems is untitled in her *Memoirs*. A school exercise she did for her brother about spoiling paper, it was cleverly titled "Carte Blanche" by Colman and Thornton when they chose to include it in *PEL*. In other instances they expand on the titles that Pilkington gave, in order to provide some of the context that she supplied in prose in the *Memoirs*. Her poem "The Petition of the Birds," becomes in *PEL* "The Petition of the Birds to Mr. Pilkington, on his return from shooting." Pilkington's "The Seventh Ode of the Third Book of Horace Paraphrased" appears in *PEL* with the subtitle "Written in the Absence of her Husband."⁸⁸ And her "Expostulation" appears with a longer title, "Expostulation. Written in Distress," in the anthology.

⁸⁷Patrick Thomas, *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*, Vol. I. The Poems. (Essex: Stump Cross Books, 1990) 355n.

⁸⁸*PEL*, II: 253. The editorial sub-title reinforces the connection to Horace's ode, in which he comforts Asteria's mourning for the absence of her husband. The sub-title also qualifies the ode as one which

As is common in books of the period, the titles as printed on the Contents pages of *PEL* are not always identical to those that precede the poems in the book. These shorter versions were doubtless the responsibility of the compositors, whose chief concern was with the limitation of space. Usually, though, they were generous; for instance they include in full Cockburn's lengthy title "A Poem, Occasioned by The Busts set up in the Queen's Hermitage; Designed to be presented with a Vindication of Mr. Locke, which was to have been inscribed to her Majesty."⁸⁹ Here, mention both of the queen and Locke in one title caters to editorial preoccupation with lending status to the collection.⁹⁰

ii. House Style

Since the sources from which Colman and Thornton borrowed span a hundred years, incidental print practices within *PEL* speak to the anthology's place within the evolving history of print. With few exceptions "most of the conventions of English spelling and punctuation are the creation of printers and compositors, especially in the seventeenth century."⁹¹ *PEL* evinces the mid-eighteenth-century changeover from old style (capitalization of all nouns, italics used for proper names, and rhetorical punctuation) to new style (capitalization only of proper nouns, italics only for emphasis, and grammatical punctuation). For instance, the source of Margaret Cavendish's poems in *PEL*, the third edition of her *Poems and Fancies* (1668), although considerably improved upon since the first edition, is still a text marked by archaic spelling and what would have been to printers in 1755 unconventional punctuation, italicization, and

"preserve[s] the conjugal faith she had plighted him." III. vii. 244-45 (*Works of Horace*, I: 244-45). By including the poem in her *Memoirs*, Pilkington was constructing a reputation. Colman and Thornton, by contrast, having stated in their introduction that Pilkington lacked discretion (II: 234), put a different sort of spin by the sly insertion of this subtitle.

⁸⁹*PEL*, I: 234.

⁹⁰ It may also have been necessary to explain the poem, which had originally appeared in *GM*, with no prose context or supporting poem alongside it. See Chapter Three.

capitalization.⁹² Spelling in *PEL* is often altered in order to modernize archaic words, and other changes are introduced to bring these poems (Cavendish's in particular) into keeping with standard mid-eighteenth-century print practices.

Anne Killigrew's verse serves as a good example of the changes that were introduced by the printers of *PEL*. There is only one possible source for her work — Killigrew's 1686 *Poems* — and the modernization of spellings that occur in *PEL* are characteristic of the process generally. For example, in the first poem by Killigrew, "The Complaint of a Lover," the spelling of 'younder' is changed to 'yonder', and 'Phebus' to 'Phoebus'. Common nouns are no longer capitalized ('Flowrs' is changed to 'flow'rs'). Elsewhere, the adjective 'Poetique' becomes 'poetic'. Spacing at times changes for the convenience of the printer. The original printing of her best-known poem, "Upon the saying that my Verses were made by another," leaves a space between the first couplet and the rest, and divides the remainder of the poem into five stanzas of varied lengths, signaled by similar spaces and by indentations of the first lines of these stanzas. Except for the third line of the poem, *PEL* retains the practice of indentation, but runs the stanzas together without separation. Elsewhere, *PEL* also omits many of the spaces between stanzas that are allowed in the original (this does not occur with quatrains, but poems with longer stanzas, such as between the uneven sections of most of Mary Masters's poems). The numbering of stanzas is preserved in some cases but not in others. In other instances the printers changed the Arabic numerals between sections of a poem to Roman numerals.⁹³

Punctuation, which for the most part follows the original, does undergo local variations in *PEL*.⁹⁴ One of the first popular grammars of the eighteenth century,

⁹¹R. C. Bald, "Editorial Problems— A Preliminary Survey," *Art & Error: Modern Textual Editing*, ed. Ronald Gottesman and Scott Bennett (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1970). 37-53:41. It has not yet been determined what printer Baldwin employed to produce *PEL*.

⁹²Cavendish had numerous hand-written corrections inserted in the copies of books that she donated. She also made (or ordered) hand-marked deletions. "A striking feature of the corrections made by the corrector is that they are produced in such a way as to resemble print." Fitzmaurice, "Cavendish on Her Own Writing," 301.

⁹³Mary Chudleigh's poem "The Resolve," for example, is made up of six stanzas, numbered in both her original text and in *PEL*; the anthologized version gives arabic rather than roman numerals.

Brightland's 1711 *Grammar*, appeared in eight editions by 1759, and there Brightland argues that "the use of the Points, Pauses, or Stops, is not only to give a proper Time for Breathing, but to avoid Obscurity, and confusion of the Sence in joining Words together in a Sentence."⁹⁵ Park Honan notes that what is most strikingly representative of the period in this comment is the two contrasting theories "punctuation based on elocution, and syntactical punctuation, voiced at once."⁹⁶ This confusion did not change appreciably until well into the nineteenth century, and it accounts for the sometimes arbitrary punctuation that occurs in *PEL*. The exclamation mark in the first line of Killigrew's "Upon the Saying that my Verses" ("O sacred *Muse!*") is eliminated, for example, though the others in the poems remain. More drastic is the excision of two commas from the penultimate line of Killigrew's poem, "Love, the Soul of Poetry." The original reads: "Or say, she loves, for my relief," whereas in *PEL* the commas are omitted: "Or say she loves for my relief." It is a small change, but one which suggests the potential for a different reading of the line. In general, *PEL* contains fewer commas than the original versions of poems, which often comes as a relief to the modern reader. In the case of the line quoted above, however, the attempt to streamline the poem makes greater demands on the reader.

The compositors also set their mark on *PEL* in their use of italics, capital letters, and by varying font size. The font that Baldwin's printer used for *PEL* is Caslon, and most of the text is pica 12, with the generous use of different sizes of large and small capitals for different parts of titles. In *The Printer's Grammar* (1755), John Smith notes that italic font "was originally designed. . . to distinguish such parts of a book as may be said not to belong to the Body thereof, as Prefaces, Introductions, Annotations, congratulatory Poems, Summaries, and Contents." However, Smith goes on to explain that "at present that Letter is used more sparingly, since all the adjunct parts of a Work

⁹⁴ Greer states that in Anne Finch's poems in *PEL* "the punctuation is impeccable." *Slipshod*, 253.

⁹⁵ John Brightland, *A Grammar of the English Tongue* (London: for John Brightland, 1711) qtd. in Park Honan, *Authors' Lives: On Literary Biography and the Arts of Language* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 178.

⁹⁶ Honan, *Author's Lives*, 177-189, *passim*.

may now be very properly varied by the different sizes of Roman.”⁹⁷ *PEL* reflects this evolution of font use; parts of the title page are printed in italics, but neither the editorial preface, the table of contents, nor the letters by Swift and Jones that praise Mary Barber at the beginning of the first volume are italicized (this in spite of the fact that Swift’s letter is italicized in their source, Barber’s 1735 *Poems on Several Occasions*).

Smith’s disapproval of the overuse of italics is not entirely reflected in *PEL*, however. He argues that “to plead the necessity of Italic to distinguish proper names of Persons and Places, would be altogether puerile, and argue, that the present age is less capable of apprehension than our forefathers, who knew the sense and meaning of words, before Italic existed, and when no other but one sort of letter served for Title, Body, and all the other parts of a Book.” In this last respect, the composition of *PEL* offers a variety of styles, because the printers for the most part followed the style that they encountered in their copy-texts. For instance, in Barber’s first poem, “A True Tale,” *Addison* and *Pope* and *Rome* are italicized, along with words that were emphasized in the original printing: “Then bless’d the *Drapier*’s happier fate, / Who *sav’d*, and lives to *guard* the state.”⁹⁸ Yet, in Killigrew’s poem, “Upon the Saying that my Verses” the word “Muse” is no longer italicized, though again the remaining italicized nouns (*Aesop*’s, *Apollo*, *Orinda*, *Albions*) remain in that font.⁹⁹ Almost all personal nouns are italicized throughout the anthology, which follows the custom that Smith was trying to abolish.

Smith presented two positions in his *Grammar* regarding the capitalization of nouns: “We put a Capital letter, not only to Substantives, but also. . . to proper names of Men and Women, to names of Kingdoms, Provinces, Cities. . . to names of Arts and Sciences, to names of Dignity and Quality.” This is the more old fashioned method of printing; instead, the printers of *PEL* tended toward the contemporary method of capitalizing that Smith advocated: “On the other hand; if a work is to be done in the modern and neater way,” the printer does not “drown the beauty of Roman Lower-case

⁹⁷John Smith, *The Printer’s Grammar* (London, 1755) 12-13.

⁹⁸Barber, *PEL*, I: 7-10, ll.33-34.

⁹⁹The blackletter that dominates the titles of Killigrews poems in her 1686 text is eliminated.

Sorts by gracing every Substantive with a Capital; but only such as are Proper names, or are words of particular signification and emphasis."¹⁰⁰ In reprinting Killigrew's poems, upper case letters are changed to lower case at the beginning of ordinary nouns in the middle of a sentence. In Aphra Behn's long piece, "The Golden Age," nouns and adjectives in mid-sentence are no longer capitalized: "Purling Stream" becomes "purling stream"; "Blest" becomes "bless'd." (Here, spelling again is modernized, and apparent typographical errors are corrected: in the eighth section of "The Golden Age" the anthology replaces the more archaic "squench" with "quench").

Poems in *PEL* are usually printed in the order that they appeared in their original source, which reflects an editorial decision. On occasion, however, there are exceptions which probably testify to the need to print a shorter poem at the end of section to fill up a page (or to fit two shorter poems on the same page).¹⁰¹ For the most part, Behn's poems appear in the same order that they do in the copy-texts, except for the fact that "The Voyage to the Isle of Love" precedes the minor poems in *PEL*, in all likelihood reflecting an editorial decision to open Behn's section with selections from the longer work.¹⁰²

While the positioning of poems results from editorial decision-making process, more arbitrary are the various ornaments used to separate sections in *PEL*, some woodcuts, others engravings, setting off the name of each poet. These vary in complexity, but none are especially striking for the period, and most consist of lines of flowers. *The Printer's Grammar* notes that "'Flowers' were the first Ornaments which were used at the Head of such pages that either began the mean Work, or else a separate Part of it." These flowers in *PEL* vary from fairly simple, almost cross-like ornaments, as

¹⁰⁰Smith, 202.

¹⁰¹ See Contents and Source in the third chapter, where page numbering demonstrates where this occurred; i.e. the last poem in Catharine Cockburn's section is a short song, "The Vain Advice," which follows a long poem and is out of sequence from its arrangement in her 1751 works. More interesting is the reversal of the order of the first two poems in Mary Chudleigh's selection. It seems likely, here, that Colman and Thornton provided instructions for Chudleigh's poem "To the Ladies" to open her section, which creates a nice symmetry together with the long "Ladies Defence" that concludes her section.

¹⁰²In Chapter Four I discuss two notable omissions from this poem in *PEL*, which cause the length of "The Golden Age" to shrink from 198 lines in the original, to 194 in the anthology. This elision of two couplets is the only unacknowledged abridgement in *PEL*.

in the vertical line that divides the two columns of names on the title page, to the more elaborate, snowflake pattern of the wider flowers used later on. Such variety is often in keeping with Smith's directions:

The use of Flowers is not confined to Ornaments over Head pages only, but they serve also, each Sort by itself, upon several other occasions. Thus they are used in Miscellaneous work. . . it ought to be a rule, that a single row of them should be put over a Head that begins a Page, Chapter, Article, or any other Division, in Work that has its Divisions separated by Flowers.¹⁰³

Smith admits the marriage of the whimsical and the practical in this part of the printing process, "as the construction of Flowers entirely depends upon the fancy of a Compositor, it would be presumptuous in us to direct him in this point."¹⁰⁴ In *PEL*, an elaborate head-piece introduces Mary Barber's work, and then above and below the half-title "Poems by Miss Eliza Carter," for example¹⁰⁵ the compositors placed a single row of flowers. On the page where each poet's work actually begins, the name is repeated, and preceded either by an intricate combination of ornaments, or (where there is less space) another horizontal garland. Each name is again followed by a single line of flowers that separates author and poem.

* * *

The collaborative efforts of George Colman and Bonnell Thornton shaped *PEL*; they chose the eighteen poets and selected the verses that would make up the two volumes. They mused over the subjects that would best entertain their readers. They culled, approved, and rejected according to their personal taste. They wrote the advance billing in the *Connoisseur*. However, between the two rows of poets' names listed on the title page of this *anthologia*, this "gathering of flowers," a row of more visually

¹⁰³Smith, 135-138.

immediate flowers represents the other anonymous hands that collaborated to produce the book as printed.

¹⁰⁴Smith, 138.

CHAPTER THREE
Content and Sources

Bibliographical Description: First London Edition, 1755.

Title: POEMS / By / *EMINENT LADIES.* / PARTICULARLY, / Mrs. BARBER, / Mrs. BEHN, / Miss CARTER, / Lady CHUDLEIGH, / Mrs. COCKBURN, / Mrs. GRIERSON, / Mrs. JONES, / Mrs. KILLIGREW, / Mrs. LEAPOR, / Mrs. MADAN, / Mrs. MASTERS, / Lady M.W. MONTAGUE, / Mrs. MONK, / Dutchess of NEWCASTLE, / Mrs. K. PHILIPS, / Mrs. PILKINGTON, / Mrs. ROWE, / Lady WINCHILSEA. / *—* / *We allow'd you Beauty, and we did submit / To all the Tyrannies of it. / Ah, cruel Sex! will you depose us too in Wit?* / COWLEY. / *—* / VOL. I. / *—* / LONDON, / Printed for R. BALDWIN, at the Rose, in / *Pater-Noster Row.* / *—* / MDCCLV.

Authors are in two columns, with a vertical line of ornaments (simple flowers) between the columns. The title page of the second volume is identical, except for “VOL. II.”

Collation: 12^o in sixes, foliated and paginated.

Vol. I. 312 p. A2-Cc3. Title, p. [I]; blank, p. [2]; Preface, pp. A2-iv; table of contents of the first volume, pp. A3-x.; text, pp. [xi]-312 (text begins on B). A-Z, A-D2. 5, 6, and 7 of each gathering are unsigned (A5, A6, A7 and so on). There are headlines throughout, first “CONTENTS,” then beginning p.8, “Mrs. BARBER” to “ANNE, COUNTESS / OF WINCHELSEA,” except on pages with biographical introductions and where a poet’s section of poems begins. On these pages (usually), and on the pages with letters by Swift and Jones, the page is numbered centrally in arabic numerals enclosed in square brackets; Vol. I: pp. I, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 173, 180, 181, 228, 229, 241, 255. There are catchwords in the prose section (i.e. the letters for Barber, and the long introduction to Behn).

Vol. II. 316 p. Table of contents, p. A2-viii; text, pp. B [1]-316. A-Z, A-E2. Numbers centered pp. 3, 17, 137, 147, 159, 187, 199, 215, 235, 271, 287.

Copies examined: Bodleian, British Library, Toronto, Harvard.

Volume I

[iii]-iv PREFACE.

[v]-x CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Mrs. Barber¹ [Mary Barber (?1690-1757?)]

[pages 1-50]

Source: *Poems on several occasions*. London: printed for C. Rivington, 1735. lxiv, 290, [14]p.; 8^o. (This is the second edition of *Poems on several occasions*. London: printed for C. Rivington, by Samuel Richardson 1734. xlviii, 283, [9] p; 4^o. The second edition was reissued in 1736, with a new title page that gave the author's name, highlighted the "commendatory letter" by Swift, and listed seven booksellers who were selling it). Print variants prove that Colman and Thornton used the 1735 edition (or the 1736 reissue) as their copy-text.

[xi] POEMS By Mrs. MARY BARBER.

[xii] Blank

1-2 Mrs. BARBER, [Editorial introduction to Barber]

biographical source: Barber's own *PSO* (1735 edition).

2-5 To the Right Honourable JOHN, Earl of ORRERY. [Commendatory letter from Jonathan Swift] **source:** *PSO* (1735) iii-vii.

5-6 Extract of a Letter from Mrs. Jones to the Hon. Miss LOVELACE.

This recommends Barber's *Poems*. **source:** Mary Jones's *Miscellany* (1750): 320 (letter of 2 January, 1735).²

7-10 POEMS BY Mrs. MARY BARBER.

A TRUE TALE. [88 lines] **source:** *PSO* (1735) 7. First published anonymously in a slightly different form as a broadside: "A Tale being an addition to Mr. Gay's Fables" (Dublin, 1728). It was reprinted in *Mist's Weekly Journal* (13 April, 1728), then in *The London Journal*, January 1733/4.³

10-12 *Written for my Son, and spoken by him at his first putting on Breeches*. [56 lines] **source:** *PSO* (1735) 13. An earlier version of this poem was printed anonymously

¹Each woman's name is given in this chapter as it is printed in *PEL*; hence Montagu is spelled with an e, and Cavendish is the "Dutchess" of Newcastle with a t.

²See below for bibliographical information on Jones's book.

³These earlier printings were anonymous, and contained a derogatory reference to Congreve that Swift advised her to omit from her *PSO*. See Ernest L. Gay, "Mary Barber's 'A True Tale'," *Notes and Queries*, 11 S. XII. July 10, 1915, 23-24.

in a 1731 anthology, *The Flower-piece*, where it is titled “Spoken by a little boy at his first putting on Breeches” (p. 228). The anthology, printed in London and compiled anonymously by Matthew Concanen, is rich in Irish writers.

- 12-40 *An unanswerable Apology for the Rich*. [40 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 17.
- 14-16 *Widow GORDON's Petition*. To the Right Hon. the Lady CARTARET. [50 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 2. This poem was first published as a broadside: *The Widow's address to the Rt. Hon. the Lady Cartaret*. By M. B. (Dublin, 1725).
- 16 Written in the Conclusion of *A Letter to Mr. Tickel*, entreating him to recommend the *Widow Gordon's Petition*. [12 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 6.
- 17-20 *The PRODIGY*. A Letter to a Friend in the Country. [88 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 22. First published as *The Prodigy: or, the silent woman, in a letter from a Lady in town to a friend in the Country* (Dublin, 1726).
- 20-21 *SINCERITY: A Poem*. Occasioned by a Friend's resenting some Advice I gave. [12 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 28.
- 21-22 *Written for my Son, and spoken by him in School, upon his Master's first bringing in a Rod*. [22 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 36.
- 22 *To his Grace the Duke of Chandos*. [14 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 57.
- 22-25 *Conclusion of a letter to the Rev. Mr. C-----*. [76 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 58.
- 25-26 *Jupiter and Fortune. A Fable*. [26 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 63.
- 26-27 *A Letter to a Friend, on occasion of some Libels written against him*. [34 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 67.
- 28-29 *A Letter for my Son to one of his School-fellows, Son to Henry Rose, Esq;* [32 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 78.
- 29-30 *Apology to Dr. Clayton, Bishop of Killala, and his Lady, who had promised to dine with the Author*. [18 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 94; first published in *Tunbridgialia: Or, Tunbridge Miscellanies, for the year 1730* (London: for T. B., 1730), 11.
- 30-32 *Apollo's Edict* [76 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 107. This was printed first as a broadside (Dublin, 1725?). It also appeared in Swift's *Poetical Works*, 211.
- 33-34 *Occasioned by seeing some Verses written by Mrs. GRIERSON, upon the Death of her Son*. [36 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 38.
- 34-35 *The Oak and its Branches. A Fable*. Occasion'd by seeing a dead *Oak* beautifully encompassed with *Ivy*. [28 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 48.
- 35-36 *On sending my son as a present to Dr. Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, on his Birth-Day*. [22 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 48.

- 36-37 *Stella and Flavia*. [16 lines] source: *PSO* (1735) 128.
 In Robert Dodsley's 1758 *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, this poem is attributed to a Presbyterian minister, Jabez Earle. Subsequent editions repeat the mistake, until the 1782 annotated edition of the *Collection* attributes it to Laetitia Pilkington "on very good authority restored to the real authoress" (vol. v: 118). Michael Suarez seems to accept the latter attribution.⁴ However, given Pilkington's willingness to publicize her own achievements, along with her obvious dislike of Barber in the *Memoirs*, it seems unlikely that she would not have claimed "Stella and Flavia" as her own if she had written it.
- 37-38 *An Apology for the Clergy, who were present when the minister of the parish read prayers preached twice in one day, at Tunbridge. Written at the request of a Layman*. [28 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 148.
- 38-39 *Written upon the rocks at Tunbridge, on seeing the names of several persons written there*. [18 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 152. First printed in *Tunbridgialia*.
- 39 *To the Right Hon. the Earl of Orrery, on his Promise to sup with the Author*. [82 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 177.
- 40-43 *To Mrs. Strangeways Horner, with a Letter from my son; wherein he desires me to accept his first Prize of Learning, conferr'd on him by the University of Dublin*. [82 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 195.
- 43-44 *An Invitation to Edward Walpole, Esq; upon hearing he was landed in Dublin*. [26 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 203.
- 44 *To the Right Honourable John Barber, Esq; Lord Mayor of London, on committing one of my Sons to his Care* [18 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 232.
- 45 *Advice to the Ladies at Bath*. Written by a Lady. [4 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 247.
- 45 *To a Lady, who valued herself on speaking her Mind in a blunt Manner, which she called being sincere*. [8 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 249.
- 46-50 *To a Lady, who commanded me to send her an Account in Verse, how I succeeded in my Subscription*. [134 lines] source: *Poems* (1735) 282.

Mrs. Behn (Aphra Behn (1640-1689))

[pages 51-170]

⁴Michael Suarez, "Who's Who in Robert Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*," *A Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, 6 vols. (London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1997) I, 120-226:192.

Source(s): Behn's *Poems Upon Several Occasions: With a Voyage to the Island of Love*. London: printed for Jacob Tonson, and Richard Tonson, 1684 [32], 144, [2] 128p. 8^o. All but six of the selections of Behn's verse included in *PEL* originate in the 1684 *Poems*. The last six are from *Lycidus*.⁵

Behn's *Lycidus, or The Lover in Fashion. Being an Account from Lycidus to Lysander, Of his Voyage from the Island of Love. From the French By the Same Author of the Voyage to the Isle of Love. Together with a Miscellany of New Poems By Several Hands*. London: printed for Joseph Knight and Francis Saunders, 1688. Dedication signed A. Behn. [14], 64, 176, [4] p.; 8o.⁶

[51] POEMS by Mrs. APHRA BEHN.

52 Blank

53-58 Mrs. BEHN, [Editorial introduction to Behn]

biographical source: The editors acknowledge their indebtedness for "the life of Mrs. Behn" to Cibber and Shiells 1753 *Lives of the Poets*.⁷ They, in turn, adapted their account from the "History of Life and Memoirs of Mrs. Behn. . . . By One of the Fair Sex," commissioned (likely written or at least co-written) by Charles Gildon. The "Life" swelled from 18 pages to 60 in the Samuel Briscoe's 1698 edition of *All the Histories and Novels Written by the Late Ingenious Mrs Behn, Entire in One Volume*.⁸

⁵ In 1697 a reissue of the 1684 *Poems upon Several Occasions* and the 1688 *Lycidus* with its original title page were bound together as the "second edition" of *Poems upon several occasions with a voyage to the island of love: also The lover in fashion, being an account from Lycidus to Lysander of his voyage from the island of love / By Mrs. A. Behn; to which is added a miscellany of new poems and songs, by several hands*. (London: pub. Francis Saunders, 1697). See Mary Ann O'Donnell, *Aphra Behn: An Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources* (NY and London: Garland, 1986). Print variants in the *Poems on Several Occasions* section prove that this spurious "edition" was not the one used by Colman and Thornton.

⁶ Janet Todd has identified these two texts as the source for Colman and Thornton, but she states, wrongly, that they printed "twenty-one poems ascribed to Behn," rather than the seventeen they do print. Todd also writes that five poems were reprinted from the 1688 *Lycidus, Together with a Miscellany of New Poems By Several Hands*. In reality, Colman and Thornton printed six poems from this volume. Todd, *Works of Behn*, I: xlvii.

⁷ *Lives*, III: 17.

⁸ See Germaine Greer's article on the complex relationship between Gildon, Briscoe, and their "spurious" editions of Behn's prose. "Honest Sam. Briscoe," *A Genius for Letters: Booksellers and Bookselling from*

- 59-61** POEMS By *Mrs. APHRA BEHN*. A VOYAGE TO THE ISLE OF LOVE. *An Account from Lisander to Lycidas his friend*. [the title poem comprises lines 1-42] **source:** *Poems* (1684) 1. *Voyage to the Isle of Love* consists of 2196 lines, and comprises thirty-three smaller poems. It is Behn's translation of a work by a French cleric, the Abbé Paul Tallement. Tallement's *Voyage a l'Isle d'Amour* (1675) was, in turn, derived from Madeleine de Scudery's *Carte du Pays de Tendre* (1654). This title poem is followed by:
- 61-66** *The TRUCE*. [lines 43-201] **source:** *Poems*, 4.
- 66-68** LOVE'S POWER. [lines 202-251] **source:** *Poems*, 13.
- 68-73** *The CHARACTER*. [lines 252-387] **source:** *Poems*, 16.
- 73-75** RESPECT. [lines 388-445] **source:** *Poems*, 24.
- 75-76** INQUIETUDE. [lines 446-468] **source:** *Poems*, 27.
- 76-78** *The REFLECTION*. [lines 469-506] **source:** *Poems*, 29.
- 78-81** *Little CARES, or Little Arts to please*. [lines 507-588] **source:** *Poems*, 31.
- 81-83** *The DREAM*. [lines 589-664] **source:** *Poems*, 36.
- 83-84** HOPE [lines 665-674] **source:** *Poems*, 40.
- 84-85** *The River of PRETENSION*. [lines 675-710] **source:** *Poems*, 40.
- 85-89** *The Princess HOPE*. [lines 711-826] **source:** *Poems*, 43.
- 89-91** LOVE's Resentment. [lines 827-883] **source:** *Poems*, 50.
- 92-93** *The City of DISCRETION*. [lines 884-921] **source:** *Poems*, 53.
- 93-94** *The Silent CONESSION*. [lines 922-951] **source:** *Poems*, 55.
- 94-95** *The DEN of CRUELTY*. [lines 952-989] **source:** *Poems*, 57.
- 96-97** *The RIVER of DESPAIR*. [lines 990-1016] **source:** *Poems*, 59.
- 97** *The RESOLVE*. [lines 1017-1039] **source:** *Poems*, 61.
- 98-104** *The QUESTION*. [lines 1040-1209] **source:** *Poems*, 62.
- 104-105** *The TRANSPORT*. [lines 1210-1233] **source:** *Poems*, 72.
- 105-106** CONFIDENCE. [lines 1234-1259] **source:** *Poems*, 74.
- 106-109** *The REFLECTION*. [lines 1260-1361] **source:** *Poems*, 75.
- 109-112** ABSENCE. [lines 1362-1427] **source:** *Poems*, 81.
- 112-114** *To LOVE*. [lines 1428-1475] **source:** *Poems*, 85.
- 114-115** RIVALS. [lines 1476-1512] **source:** *Poems*, 88.
- 115-117** JEALOUSY. [lines 1513-1563] **source:** *Poems*, 90.
- 117-119** *The COMPLAINT*. [lines 1564-1612] **source:** *Poems*, 93.

the 16th to the 20th Century, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris. (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1995) 33-47. Greer argues that "[n]ot content with inventing Behn's text (for this should be assumed to be the case until some less questionable provenance can be found) Gildon was also inventing her." 39.

- 119-121 The PENITENT. [lines 1613-1643] source: *Poems*, 96.
 121-122 The CITY of LOVE. [lines 1644-1670] source: *Poems*, 98.
 122-125 LOVE's TEMPLE. [lines 1671-1778] source: *Poems*, 99.
 126-128 HONOUR. [lines 1779-1843] source: *Poems*, 105.
 128-132 The LOSS. [lines 1844-1969] source: *Poems*, 109.
 133-141 The PROSPECT and BOWER of BLISS. [lines 1970-2196]
 source: *Poems*, 116.

In Behn's 1684 text, there is a separate title page after "Voyage" that reads *Poems on Several Occasions*. The page numbers then begin again at 1. *PEL* reprints this sub-title.
 142-150 POEMS UPON Several Occasions.

The GOLDEN AGE. *A PARAPHRASE on a Translation from the FRENCH*.
 [198 lines] source: *PSO*, I

This is Behn's English version of a French translation of the opening chorus from Italian poet Torquato Tasso's pastoral play, "Aminta" (1573). There are no manuscript copies of the poem, and the 1684 *PSO* remains the sole authority for the piece. Whereas *Voyage to the Isle of Love*, identified as a translation in the original text, is not specified as such in *PEL*, *The Golden Age* is identified in the anthology as "A Paraphrase on a Translation from the French." The French translation from which Behn worked has not been identified, leaving the extent of change that Behn actually initiated difficult to estimate.⁹

- 150 SONG. LOVE ARM'D [16 lines] source: *PSO*, 45.
 150-151 SONG. The INVITATION. [18 lines] source: *PSO*, 47.
 151-152 SCOTS SONG. ("When Jemmy first began to Love" [32 lines] source: *PSO*, 48 ("SONG. To a Scottish tune.") First printed in *The Covent Garden Drolery* (ed. by Behn, London, 1672).
 152-154 *On a Copy of verse made in a dream, and sent to me in a morning, before I was awake*. [44 lines] source: *PSO*, 63.
 154-155 *On a Locket of Hair wove in a True Lover's Knot, given my by Sir R.O*. [29 lines] source: *PSO*, 77.
 155-156 SONG. *On Her Loving Two Equally*. [18 lines] source: *PSO*, 88. This poem first appeared as "How Strangely does my Passion grow" in the play *The False Count* (1682). In Behn's *PSO* the title of the song is qualified: "set

⁹See Chapter Four.

by Capt. Pack.” As noted in Chapter Two, *PEL* tends to omit this type of information.

- 156-157 The COUNSEL. A SONG. [24 lines] (“A Pox upon this needless Scorn”) source: *PSO*, 89 (also “Set by Captain Pack”). The song is from *The Rover* Part II (1681) and was reprinted, probably the following year, as a broadside titled *Beauties Triumph*, without attribution.
- 157-160 SYLVIO’s COMPLAINT. A Song, To a fine Scotch Tune. [64 lines] source: *PSO*, 95.
- 160-161 *In Imitation of* HORACE. [24 lines] source: *PSO*, 98.
- 161-163 To LYSANDER, on some VERSES he writ, and asking more for his heart than t’was worth. [52 lines]. source: *PSO*, 109.

The last six poems by Behn in *PEL*, taken from the 1688 *Lycidus*, are also printed in the same order in which they appear in the original text. Of these, three are of questionable authorship. These are two Songs; unlike others specifically signed by Behn, both are unsigned in *Lycidus*, and Janet Todd doubts the attribution to Behn. A third poem from *Lycidus*, “Cato’s Answer to Labienus. From Lucian,” was more certainly not of Behn’s composition. It was first printed in a very different form in a 1685 volume to which Behn contributed a poem, Higden’s *Translations of the Tenth Satyr of Juvenal*, where it appeared with a notice of the male author’s displeasure, and in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1703) ascribed to William Aylofffe.¹⁰ In Behn’s *Miscellany*, the poem was also printed with a notice about the male author’s annoyance at an earlier published version. Mary Ann O’Donnell has discovered that the poem is also written in the manuscript commonplace book, Bodleian MS Firth c.16, where the correspondence between the printed and manuscript texts “suggests that the MS is the source of the printed text.”¹¹ The poem is attributed to Capt. John Aylofffe in the 1702 *Poems on Affairs of State*. O’Donnell questions this attribution on a number of levels— Behn is unlikely to have included in the 1688 miscellany verse by a Rye House Plotter, and she writes of the author in the present tense when Aylofffe was dead. In any case, this is an instance in which mis-attribution occurs in *PEL*, evidence of either a careless or deliberate disregard for the details provided by Aphra Behn in her 1688 text.

- 163 SONG. (“As wretched, vain, and indiscreet”) [15 lines] source: *Lycidus*, 3.

¹⁰Todd, Textual Introduction, Behn’s *Works*, I: xlvi.

¹¹Mary Ann O’Donnell, “Private Jottings,” 302 n.15.

- 164 SONG. (In vain does *Hymen* with religious vows") [8 lines] source: *Lycidus*, 24.
- 164-166 CATO's Answer to LABIENUS, when he advised him to consult the ORACLE of JUPITER AMMON. *Being a Paraphrastical Translation of Part of the Book of Lucan, beginning at "Quid queori, Labiene, jubes, &c."* [47 lines] source: *Lycidus*, 106.
- 166-167 To ALEXIS, on his saying, *I loved a man that talked much.* [30 lines] source: *Lycidus*, 132.
- 167-169 Part of an ODE to DESIRE. [59 lines] source: *Lycidus*, 145.
This is the last fifty-nine lines of a 116-line poem: "On Desire. A Pindarick."
- 170 SONG. ("As the inamour'd *Thirsis* lay") [12 lines] source: *Lycidus*, 169.

Mrs. Carter [Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806)]

[pages 171-178]

Sources: Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*. 3 vols. London, 1748.

- [171] POEMS By Miss ELIZA CARTER.
- 172 Miss ELIZA CARTER, [Editorial introduction to Carter]
biographical source: word of mouth.
- 173-176 POEMS BY Miss ELIZA CARTER.
ODE to WISDOM. [96 lines] source: Dodsley, III: 324 (rpt. in Dodsley's 1755 edition, II: 203). Samuel Richardson first printed Carter's "Ode to Wisdom" in the first edition of *Clarissa* (1747) from an anonymous manuscript he had seen, as "Wisdom."¹² It was later included in Carter's 1762 *Poems on Several Occasion*, 39.
- 177-178 "To a GENTLEMAN, on his intending to cut down a GROVE to enlarge his Prospect" [36 lines] source: Dodsley, III: 328 (rpt. Dodsley, 1755, III: 207). This first appeared in Carter's 1738 *Poems on Particular Occasions* (of which Colman and Thornton were ignorant), and later reappeared in her 1762 *Poems*, 85.

¹² It was reprinted again in the *GM* (1747), 585, which states that "We have had the following beautiful ODE above a year, under the injunction, which was general on all the copies given out, not to print it." qtd. in Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 524. Richardson later apologized to Carter: Letter 54, *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson: selected from the original manuscripts, bequeathed by him to his family*, ed. Anna Letitia Barbauld (NY: AMS, 1960) VII: 50-54

Lady Chudleigh [Mary Chudleigh, née Lee (1656-1710)]

[pages 179-226]

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions. By the Lady Chudleigh.* The fourth edition, corrected. London: printed for J. Wren, 1750. [12], 269, [7] 12^o.

Chudleigh's *Poems on Several Occasions*, was first published in 1703. To the second edition, in 1709, Bernard Lintot appended "The Ladies Defence"(1701) without her permission. After her death, *Poems* was again issued by Lintot, with a cancellans title page and slight variations in pagination, in 1713. Lintot printed the third edition in duodecimo in 1722. The "fourth edition" for J. Wren in 1750, was in fact a reissue of the third edition with a new title page. This last was most likely the text that George Ballard saw, and that Colman and Thornton used as a source for their selection of her work.

- [179] POEMS By Lady CHUDLEIGH.
 180 Lady CHUDLEIGH [Editorial introduction to Chudleigh]
biographical source: George Ballard, *Memoirs of Learned Ladies* (1752), 409.
 181-182 POEMS BY Lady CHUDLEIGH.
 To the LADIES. [24 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 45.
 182-184 To EUGENIA. On her PASTORAL. [56 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 33.
 184-185 The RESOLVE. [24 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 115.
 185-191 The INQUIRY. A Dialogue *between* CLEANTHE *and* MARISSA. [182 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 118.
 191-196 *One of* LUCIAN's DIALOGUES *of the Dead paraphrased.* [122 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 131.
 196 SONG. ("When *Daphne* first her shepherd saw") [12 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 36.
 197-226 The LADIES DEFENCE: OR, A Dialogue *between* Sir John Brute, Sir William Love-all, Melissa, *and a Parson.* [845 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 235.

Mrs. Cockburn [Catharine Cockburn, née Trotter (1679-1749)]

[pages 227-238]

Source: *The works of Mrs. Catharine Cockburn, Theological, Moral, Dramatic, and Poetical. Several of them now first printed. Revised and published, with an account of the life of the author by Thomas Birch. In two volumes.* London: printed for J. and P. Knapton 1751. 2v. plate: port; 8^o.

- [227] POEMS By Mrs. COCKBURN.

- 228 Mrs. COCKBURN [Editorial introduction to Cockburn]
biographical source: Thomas Birch's "Life" of the author in
 Cockburn's *Works*.
- 229-232 POEMS BY Mrs. COCKBURN.
*CALLIOPE's DIRECTIONS how to deserve and distinguish the
 Muses' Inspiration*. [67 lines] **source:** *Works*, II: 559.
- 232 The CAUTION. [16 lines] **source:** *Works*, II: 568.
- 232-233 The PLATONIC. [16 lines] **source:** *Works*, II: 569.
- 233-234 The NEEDLESS DECEIT. [16 lines] **source:** *Works*, II: 570.
- 234-238 A POEM, Occasioned by the BUSTS set up in the Queen's Hermitage,
 Designed to be presented with a Vindication of Mr. *Locke*, which was to
 have been inscribed to her Majesty. [107 lines] **source:** *Works*, II: 572.
 Birch notes that the poem "was afterwards printed in the *Gentleman's
 Magazine* for May, 1737, though with some alterations which she thought
 to its advantage; but it is now restored. . . to the exactness of the original,
 except in a few of the alterations, which she admitted."¹³
- 238 SONG. The VAIN ADVICE. [8 lines] **source:** *Works*, II: 568.

Mrs. Grierson [Constantia Grierson, née Crawley or Crowley (c.1705-1732)]
 [pages 239-252]

Source: Constantia Grierson did not have a volume of her own poetry published.
 Instead, Colman and Thornton culled their selection of her work from the two existing
 sources of it in the books of her Dublin friends: six poems from Mary Barber's *Poems on
 Several Occasions*, and two from the first volume of Laetitia Pilkington's *Memoirs*.¹⁴

- [239] POEMS By Mrs. GRIERSON.
- 240 Mrs. CONSTANTIA GRIERSON, of *Kilkenny*, in *Ireland*,
 [Editorial introduction to Grierson]
biographical source: Ballard's *Memoirs*, 461 (whose account comes in
 part from Barber's Preface to her *Poems on Several Occasions*).
- 241-243 POEMS BY Mrs. GRIERSON.

¹³The date Birch gives for the poem's composition cannot be accurate, however, as Duck was only appointed librarian, custodian, and guide of the Queen's newly constructed Merlin's Cave at Richmond in 1735. See my discussion of Cockburn's motivation for writing the poem in Chapter Five.

¹⁴See below for bibliographical information on Pilkington's *Memoirs*.

- To Miss LAETITIA VAN LEWEN (*Afterwards Mrs. PILKINGTON*) at a *Country-Assize*. [46 lines] **source:** Pilkington's *Memoirs* I: 29 The sub-title in parenthesis was added in *PEL*.
- 243-244 *To the same on the same Occasion*. [22 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 32. Untitled in the *Memoirs*.
- 244-246 To Mrs. MARY BARBER, *Under the Name of SAPPHIRA*: Occasioned by the encouragement she met with in *England* to publish her POEMS by subscription. [60 lines] **source:** Barber's *PSO* (1735) xlv.
- 246-248 VERSES Occasioned by Mrs. BARBER's Son speaking *Latin* in school to less Advantage than *English*. [40 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 87.
- 248-249 To the Hon. Mrs. PERCIVAL, on her desisting from the *Bermudan Project*. [26 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 138.
- 249 To the Hon. Mrs. PERCIVAL, With *Hutcheson's Treatise on BEAUTY and ORDER*. [6 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 155.
- 249-251 The SPEECH of CUPID, on seeing himself painted by the Honourable Miss CARTERET, (Now Countess of Dysert) on a FAN. [34 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 218.
- 251-253 PROLOGUE to *THEODOSIUS: Spoken by Athenais at the Theatre in Dublin, when Lord and Lady Carteret were in Ireland*. [38 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 243. Nathaniel Lee (1653?-1692) wrote "Theodosius; or, The force of love, a tragedy," which was performed in Dublin and printed by Grierson's husband, George, in 1724 (the poem is not reprinted with the play).

Mrs. Jones [Mary Jones (d.1778)]

[pages 253-312]

Source: *Miscellanies in prose and verse*. By Mary Jones. Oxford: printed; and delivered by Mr. Dodsley [London], Mr. Clements in Oxford, and Mr. Frederick in Bath, 1750. vi, [1], x-lv, [1], 405, [1]p.; 8^o. With a list of subscribers.¹⁵

[253] POEMS By Mrs. MARY JONES.

254 Mrs. MARY JONES [Editorial Introduction to Jones]

biographical source: Thornton seems to have known Jones personally.

¹⁵The *London Magazine* ran a series of excerpts from Jones's *Miscellanies* during 1752, but Colman and Thornton did not take their texts from *LM*.

- 255-259 POEMS By Mrs. MARY JONES.
An EPISTLE to Lady BOWYER. [127 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 1.
- 260-271 *Of PATIENCE.* An EPISTLE to The Right Hon. SAMUEL Lord
 MASHAM [299 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 10.
- 271-277 *Of DESIRE.* An EPISTLE to the Honourable Miss LOVELACE. [179
 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 26.
- 277-282 In MEMORY of the Right Hon. Lord *Aubrey Beauclerk*, who was slain at
 CARTHAGENA. Written in the year 1743, at the request of his LADY.
 [154 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 36. This was first printed
 anonymously on its own in 1741 (Foxon, Catalogue T 393). In her
Miscellanies, Jones provides a footnote to a letter: "Her Ladyship caus'd
 the Verses to the Memory of Lord *Aubrey Beauclerk* to be twice printed, in
 order to disperse among her Acquaintance." (241) Jones also wrote the
 prose-inscription on Beauclerk's monument at Westminster Abbey at his
 widow's request (Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 156).
- 283-284 To Mrs. CLAYTON, with a HARE. [30 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 50.
- 284-286 To Miss CLAYTON, Occasioned by her breaking an appointment to visit
 the AUTHOR. [44 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 52.
- 286-288 ELEGY On a favourite DOG, suppos'd to be poison'd. To Miss MOLLY
 CLAYTON. [79 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 56.
- 289-291 The SPIDER. [60 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 71.
- 291-292 After the SMALL-POX. [33 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 79.
- 292-294 The LASS of the HILL, Humbly inscribed to Her Grace the Dutchess of
 MARLBOROUGH. [36 lines] probable source: significant variants
 testify that Colman and Thornton did not use the *Miscellanies* as their
 source for this poem (although it is printed there, p.88). In April, 1742,
 Jones discovered *The Lass of the Hill* (then called a ballad) on sale in the
 streets of London, and it may be a later broadside publication that they
 used. See Chapter Seven.
- 294-296 CONSOLATORY RHYMES to Mrs. EAST, on the Death of her Canary
 Bird. [56 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 90.
- 296-301 HOLT WATERS. A TALE. Extracted from The NATURAL HISTORY
 of *Berkshire*. [146 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 93.
- 301-303 SOLILOQUY On an EMPTY PURSE. [54 lines] source:
Miscellanies, 100.

- 303-305 To the PRINCE of *ORANGE*, On his MARRIAGE. Written at the time of the OXFORD VERSES. [40 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 106.
- 305-308 EPISTLE from FERN-HILL. [94 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 133.
- 308-310 In Memory of the Right Hon. NEVIL Lord LOVELACE. To Miss LOVELACE. [65 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 139.
- 311-312 ODE To the Right Honourable Lady HENRY BEAUCLERK, on her MARRIAGE. [42 lines] source: *Miscellanies*, 155
- 312 END of the FIRST VOLUME

Volume II

xiii-viii CONTENTS OF The SECOND VOLUME

Mrs. Killigrew [Anne Killigrew (1660-1685)]

[pages 1-14]

Source: *Poems by Mrs. Anne Killigrew*. These poems are licensed to be published, Sept. 30, 1685. Ro. L'Estrange. London: printed for Samuel Lowndes, over against Exeter Exchange in the Strand, 1686. a-[] ([c] verso) [20] 71, 74-100, 4^o.

- [1] POEMS By Mrs. ANNE KILLIGREW.
- 2 Mrs. ANNE KILLIGREW, [Editorial Introduction to Killigrew]
biographical source: Ballard's *Memoirs*, 337.
- 3-5 POEMS BY Mrs. ANNE KILLIGREW
The COMPLAINT of a LOVER. [48 lines] source: *Poems*, 19.
- 5-6 LOVE, The SOUL of POETRY. [18 lines] source: *Poems*, 22.
- 6 St. JOHN BAPTIST, Painted by herself in the WILDERNESS, with ANGELS appearing to him, and with a LAMB by him. [8 lines] source: *Poems*, 27.
- 7 HERODIA's DAUGHTER Presenting to her Mother St. John's Head in a Charger, also painted by herself. [12 lines] source: *Poems*, 27.
- 7-9 Upon saying that my VERSES were made by another. [64 lines]
source: *Poems*, 44.
- 9-14 The DISCONTENT. [119 lines] source: *Poems*, 51.
- 14 An EPITAPH on herself. [2 lines] source: *Poems*, 82.
- 14 EXTEMPORARY COUNSEL To a YOUNG GALLANT in a Frolick. [6 lines]
source: *Poems*, 84.

Mrs. Leapor [Mary Leapor (1722-1746)]

[pages 15-134]

Sources: *Poems upon several occasions. By Mrs. Leapor.* . . London: printed; and sold by J. Roberts. 1748. 15 [5], 282 p. 8^o; *Poems upon several occasions. By the late Mrs. Leapor.* . . *The second and last volume.* London: printed: and sold by J. Roberts [printed by Richardson] 1751. xxxv [1] 324p.; 8^o.

- [15] POEMS By Mrs. LEAPOR.
- 16 Mrs. MARY LEAPOR [Editorial introduction to Leapor]
biographical source: Preface from Leapor's *Poems*.
- 17-22 POEMS By Mrs. LEAPOR.
DORINDA at her GLASS. [135 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 1.
- 22-23 *MIRA*'s WILL. [38 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 8.
- 23-24 A SUMMER'S WISH. [30 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 21.
- 24-27 *COLINETTA*. [94 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 26.
- 27-30 The MONTH of *AUGUST*. *Sylvanus, a Courtier, Phillis, a Country-Maid*. [76 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 34. (Erroneously called "Damon" rather than "Sylvanus" in the Table of Contents. *PEL*, II: A2)
- 30-32 An EPISTLE to a LADY. [66 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 38.
- 33-37 The PROCLAMATION of *APOLLO*. [136 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 41.
- 37-39 The FALL of *LUCIA*. [43 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 48.
- 39-40 *The CRUCIFIXION and RESURRECTION*, An ODE. [37 lines]
source: *Poems* I: 50.
- 40-44 ESSAY on HAPPINESS. [112 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 54.
- 44-48 An ESSAY on HOPE. [102 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 60.
- 48-50 A PRAYER for the YEAR 1745. [56 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 69.
- 50-54 ESSAY on FRIENDSHIP, [125 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 74.
- 54-60 The MISTAKEN LOVER. [180 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 81.
- 60-65 The WAY of the WORLD. [134 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 90.
- 65-67 STREPHON to *CELIA*. *A Modern LOVE- LETTER*. [47 lines] **source:**
Poems I: 104.
- 67-71 The INSPIRED QUILL. *Occasioned by a Present of CROW-PENS*. [119 lines]
source: *Poems* I: 111.
- 72-73 On Mr. POPE's UNIVERSAL PRAYER. [52 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 142.
- 74-80 The LIBYAN HUNTER. A FABLE. *Inscribed to the MEMORY of a late admired AUTHOR*. [177 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 153.

- 80-83 The TEMPLE of LOVE. A DREAM. [92 lines] source: *Poems I*: 162.
 83-85 ADVICE to MYRTILLO. [62 lines] source: *Poems I*: 167.
 85-87 The SACRIFICE. An EPISTLE to CELIA. [60 lines] source: *Poems I*: 226.
 87-89 The POWER of BEAUTY. [40 lines] source: *Poems I*: 229.
 89-92 JOB's CURSE, and his APPEAL. *Taken out of Job, Chap. i, and xxxi.* [103 lines] source: *Poems I*: 238.
 93-94 WINTER. [40 lines] source: *Poems I*: 256 ("On Winter")
 94-96 *To a Gentleman with a Manuscript Play.* [65 lines] source: *Poems I*: 267.
 96-98 SILVIA and the BEE. [48 lines] source: *Poems I*: 270.
 98-102 The CRUEL PARENT. A DREAM. [123 lines] source: *Poems I*: 271.
 103-122 MOPSUS: OR, THE CASTLE-BUILDER. [566 lines] source: *Poems II*: 11.
 122-123 ADVICE to SOPHRONIA. [30 lines] source: *Poems II*: 54.
 123-126 CORYDON. PHILLARIO. Or, MIRA's PICTURE. A PASTORAL. [66 lines] source: *Poems II*: 294.
 126-132 CRUMBLE-HALL. [186 lines] source: *Poems II*: 111.
 133-134 UPON HER PLAY Being returned to her, *Stain'd with CLARET.* [24 lines] source: *Poems II*: 123.

Mrs. Madan [Judith Madan, née Cowper (1702-1781)]

[pages 135-144]

Sources: Commonplace-book kept by Judith's brother, Ashley Cowper; *Cupid Triumphant* (London, 1747) See Appendix B.

- [135] ORIGINAL POEMS By Mrs. MADAN.¹⁶
 136 Mrs. MADAN (Formerly Miss COWPER)
 [Editorial introduction to Madan]
probable biographical source: her nephew, William Cowper.
 137-143 ORIGINAL POEM[sic] BY Mrs. MADAN.
 ABELARD to ELOISA. [178 lines] source: See Appendix B.
 This was printed 31 Oct. 1724 [anon] in *The British Journal*, and 6 March 1725 in *Whitehall Evening Post*, and as if by William Pattison (1706-1727) in his *Poetical Works*, 2 vols. (London, 1728).

¹⁶Note that Madan is the only poet in the collection whose poems are described as "Original." Again in the introduction to Madan the editors praise "the following original pieces" and lament that she "could never yet be prevailed to commit anything to print," which was not in fact the case. (*PEL*, II: 135-6).

- 143-144** VERSES written in her Brother's COKE upon LITTLETON. [14 lines]
 This was first printed in an amended form by Ambrose Philips in the *Free Thinker* (350), July 28, 1721. Judith Cowper complained in "A Satyr upon M^r Ambrose Philips" that he had 'murdered' and 'mangled' her lines. It also appeared in volume IV of Dodsley's *Collection*, where it is titled "By Miss Cowper (Now Mrs. Madan) in her Brother's Coke upon Littleton." (Dodsley, IV: 245-6). This volume had appeared in March, 1755, but Colman and Thornton seem to have been unaware that the poem had appeared in print, and they likely received a copy of the poem from their friend William Cowper, who would have copied it from his uncle Ashley Cowper's *Coke upon Littleton*, or from Ashley Cowper's commonplace Book (British Library ADD ms. 28101) where it appears on f. 152v.

Mrs. Masters [Mary Masters (?1706-1759?)]

[pages 145-156]

Source: *Poems upon several occasions. By Mary Masters.* London: printed for T. Browne, for the author, 1733. [24], 5-267, [1] p.;8^o.¹⁷

- [145] POEMS By Mrs. MARY MASTERS.
 146 Mrs. MARY MASTERS, [Editorial introduction to Masters]
biographical source: Masters's own Preface in her *PSO*.
 147-148 POEMS By Mrs. MARY MASTERS.
 DEFENCE of *MYRTILLO*. [38 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 54.
 149-151 PSALM XXXIX. [58 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 133.
 151-152 To *LUCINDA*. [28 lines] **source:** *PSO*, 151.
 152-156 PSALM XXXVII. *Inscribed to an INJURED FRIEND*. [136 lines]
source: *PSO*, 177.

Lady M. W. Montague [Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, née Pierrepont (1689-1762)]
 [pages 157-185]

Source: Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*. 3 vols. London, 1748, III: 274-312. The first seven of the poems by Montagu in *PEL* were first printed in *Six town eclogs. With some other poems.* By the Rt. Hon. L. W. M. London: printed for M. Cooper, 1747. [48]; 4^o. Horace Walpole was the anonymous editor of this volume.

¹⁷In spring, 1755 Masters brought out *Familiar Letters and Poems on Several Occasions*, all new material.

According to Michael Suarez, Dodsley used Walpole's transcript as a copy-text for his collection.¹⁸

- [157] POEMS By the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montague.
158 Blank
159-161 POEMS By the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montague.
TOWN ECLOGUES. *MONDAY. ROXANA, or, The Drawing-Room.*
[66 lines] source: Dodsley, III: 274; (*Eclogs*, 5).
162-165 *TUESDAY. St. JAMES's COFFEE-HOUSE. SILLIANDER and PATCH.*
[91 lines] source: Dodsley, III: 277; (*Eclogs*, 9).
165-168 *WEDNESDAY. The Tête a Tête. DANCINDA.* [92 lines]
source: Dodsley, III: 281; (*Eclogs*, 15).
169-172 *SATURDAY. The SMALL-POX. FLAVIA.* [96 lines]
source: Dodsley, III: 294; (*Eclogs*, 32).
172-176 EPISTLE From *ARTHUR GREY*, the Footman, After his Condemnation
for attempting a RAPE. [105 lines] source: Dodsley, III: 298; (*Eclogs*, 39).
176-178 The LOVER. A BALLAD. To Mr. C----. [48 lines] source: Dodsley,
III: 302; (*Eclogs*, 44). The inscription "To Mr. C-----." was added by
Walpole, followed by Dodsley (See Chapter Seven).
178 The LADY's RESOLVE. *Written extempore on a Window.* [11 lines]
source: Dodsley, III: 305; (This is the last poem in the *Eclogs*, 47).
178-179 The GENTLEMAN's ANSWER. [11 lines] source: Dodsley, III: 305.
179-182 An EPISTLE to Lord B-----t. [81 lines] source: Dodsley, III: 306.
182-183 EPILOGUE to MARY, Queen of SCOTS. Designed to be spoken by Mrs.
OLDFIELD. [41 lines] source: Dodsley, III: 310.
183-184 RECEIPT for the VAPOURS. *Written to Lady J-----N.* [24 lines]
source: Dodsley, III: 312.

Mrs. Monk [Mary Monk or Monck, née Molesworth (c.1678-1715)]

[pages 185-196]

Source: *Marinda. Poems and translations upon several occasions.* London: printed by J. Tonson, 1716. [52], 156, [4] 8^o (for all but the last item).

¹⁸The print history of each of these pieces is thoroughly documented in *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Essays and Poems and Simplicity, a Comedy*, ed. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977).

- [185] POEMS By The Hon. Mrs. MONK.
 186 Honourable Mrs. MONK [Editorial Introduction to Monk]
biographical source: Ballard's *Memoirs*, 418 (borrowed from the Preface by the poet's father, Lord Molesworth, in *Marinda*).
- 187-188 POEMS By The Honourable Mrs. MONK.
 On PROVIDENCE. *From FILICALA*. [20 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 29.
- 188 On the INVENTION of LETTERS. *From BREBEUF*. [6 lines]
source: *Marinda*, 41.
- 188-189 SONETTO. *From PETRARCH*. [14 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 71.
- 189 SONETTO. *From Monsignor DELLA CASA*. [14 lines]
source: *Marinda*, 87.
- 190 SONETTO. *From MARINI*. [14 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 91.
- 190-191 From TASSO'S JERUSALEM. Lib. XVI. STA. VIV. [20 lines]
source: *Marinda*, 107.
- 191-192 A Tale. [19 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 110.
- 192 Epigram. [4 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 119.
- 192 On a ROMANTICK LADY. [12 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 124.
- 193 An EPITAPH on a GALLANT LADY. [4 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 125.
- 193-194 ORPHEUS and EURYDICE. *From the SPANISH of QUEVEDO*.
 [38 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 135.
- 194-195 SONG. [10 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 94.
- 195 EPIGRAM. *To CLOE*. [6 lines] **source:** *Marinda*, 118.
- 195-196 VERSES *Wrote on her Death-Bed at Bath, to her Husband, in London*.
 [22 lines] **source:** uncertain. Lonsdale notes that "this poem appears anonymously in a MS collection compiled by Gabriel Lepipre in 1749 (Bodleian MS Eng. poet e. 40, f.18.) with a note: 'This copy of verses was gave me by Miss Charbonnel. 1747' The attribution to Mary Monck in 1755, forty years after her death, awaits final confirmation."¹⁹ It is possible that Colman and Thornton used the ms. as their source; however, Lonsdale seems unaware that a shorter form of the poem was printed in 1750 in the *GM* and was there identified as having been composed by "a Lady at Bath, dying with a Consumption." Here Monck (if, indeed, she

¹⁹Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 539.

did write the poem) is wrongly identified as “Daughter to Dr. Wellwood and wife to Capt. Molesworth,” rather than as Molesworth’s daughter.²⁰

Dutchess of Newcastle²¹ [Margaret Cavendish, née Lucas (1623-1673)²²]

[pages 197-212]

Source: *Poems, or Several fancies in verse: with the Animal parliament in prose / written by the thrice noble, illustrious, and excellent princess, the Duchess of Newcastle*. The third edition. London, printed by A. Maxwell, 1668. [37], 352, 2°. This is an amended edition of a text first published as *Poems and fancies* in 1653, followed by a “much altered and corrected” second impression, in 1664.

- [197] POEMS By The Dutchess of *Newcastle*.
 198 MARGARET Dutchess of NEWCASTLE.
 [Editorial introduction to Newcastle]
biographical source: Ballard’s *Memoirs*, 299; Cibber and Shiells, II: 162.
 199-203 POEMS BY The Dutchess of NEWCASTLE.
 MIRTH and MELANCHOLY. [108 lines] **source:** *Poems*, 109.
 203-205 DIALOGUE BETWIXT PEACE and WAR. [46 lines]
source: *Poems*, 130.
 205-206 Wherein POETRY chiefly consists. [20 lines] **source,** *Poems*, 183.
 206-207 NATURE’s COOK. [28 lines] **source:** *Poems*, 186.
 207-208 WIT. [22 lines] **source:** *Poems*, 224.
 208-210 The PASTIME and RECREATION OF THE QUEEN of FAIRIES in
Fairyland, The CENTRE of the EARTH. [62 lines] **source:** *Poems*, 253.
 210-212 The PASTIME OF THE Queen of FAIRIES, When she comes on the
 Earth out of the Centre. [42 lines] **source:** *Poems*, 257.

²⁰“Verses from a Lady at Bath, Dying with a Consumption, to her Husband,” *GM*, 20 (1750) 424 (Noted in *Feminist Companion*, 740). A number of notable changes were introduced to the twenty-two line poem by the time it appeared in Ballard’s book. The diction has changed (for instance, the word “worldly” in the first printing has become “earthly” in Ballard; “fond” now reads “first,” and the phrase “should’st thou moun that death is come” has been transformed to “should’st thou grieve that rest is come”). Perhaps Ballard had access to a better ms. than the one reproduced in the *GM*.

²¹Listed under Cavendish in my Works Consulted.

²²See Chapter Four for a note on Cavendish’s birth date.

Mrs. Philips [Katherine Philips, née Fowler (1632-1664)]

[pages 213-232]

Source: *Poems by the most deservedly admired Mrs. Katherine Philips, the matchless Orinda. To which is added Monsieur Corneille's tragedies of Pompey and Horace, with several other translations out of French.* London: printed for Jacob Tonson, 1710. [46], 562p.; 8^o. The first authorized edition of the *Poems* appeared in folio in 1667, after the poet's death, by her friend Charles Cotterel, supposedly in order to correct the impression of an unauthorized edition of seventy-four poems in 1664. Later editions appeared in 1669, 1678, and then the octavo edition in 1710, sold by Jacob Tonson, which served as Colman and Thornton's source for Philips's poems in *PEL*.²³

- [213] POEMS By Mrs. KATHERINE PHILIPS.
214 Mrs. KATHERINE PHILIPS (The celebrated ORINDA)
[Editorial introduction to Philips]
biographical sources: Ballard, 287, 344; Cibber and Shiells, II: 148.
- 215-218 POEMS BY Mrs. KATHERINE PHILIPS.
CONTENT. To my dearest *LUCASIA*. [72 lines]
source: *Poems* (1710) 29.
- 218-219 TO THE QUEEN of INCONSTANCY, *REGINA COLLIER*, in *Antwerp*.
[24 lines] **source:** *Poems* (1710) 29.
- 219-220 Against PLEASURE. An ODE. [30 lines] **source:** *Poems* (1710) 85.
- 220-221 The ENQUIRY. [48 lines] **source:** *Poems* (1710) 36.
- 222-226 A COUNTRY-LIFE. [88 lines] **source:** *Poems* (1710) 111.
- 226-227 To Lady *ELIZABETH BOYLE*, Singing a SONG, of which *ORINDA* was
the AUTHOR. [28 lines] **source:** *Poems* (1710) 132 (originally titled
"To my Lady Elizabeth Boyle, Singing ~Since affairs of the State &c.")
- 227-229 On the WELCH LANGUAGE. [48 lines] **source:** *Poems* (1710) 161.
- 229-230 The VIRGIN. [22 lines] **source:** *Poems* (1710) 168.
- 230 Against LOVE. [15 lines] **source:** *Poems* (1710) 177.
The earliest known version of this poem is again the 1667 edition,
although it does also appear in two of the seventeenth-century manuscript
books of Orinda's poems in unidentified hands, one being the
commonplace-book compiled by John Dunton, *Originall Poems*

²³For a list of the ms. and printed editions of Philips's *Poems*, see the first volume of Thomas' *Collected Works of Katherine Philips*.

- Collected from the best of our Modern Poets* (Bodleian MS Rawl. poet. 173), which contains eleven poems by Philips.²⁴
- 230-231 To my ANTENOR, *March* 16, 1660-1. [26 lines]
source: *Poems* (1710) 180. First printed in the 1667 *Poems*.
- 232 TENRES DESIRS. *From French Prose*. [6 lines] source: *Poems* (1710) 226. The "french prose" cited here has not been identified. This poem was first printed in the 1667 edition of the *Poems*.

Mrs. Pilkington [Laetitia Pilkington, née van Lewen (1708?-1750)]

[pages 233-268]

Source: *Memoirs of Mrs. Laetitia Pilkington, wife to the Rev. Matthew Pilkington. Written by herself. Wherein are occasionally interspersed, all her poems; with anecdotes of several eminent persons, living and dead. Among others, Dean Swift, Alexander Pope* Dublin printed; London: R. Griffiths, and G. Woodfall, 1748. viii, 302, [2] 12^o.

Memoirs of Mrs. Laetitia Pilkington, Wife to the Rev. Mr. Matthew Pilkington. Written by herself. Wherein are occasionally interspersed her poems, with a Variety of Secret Transactions of some Eminent Persons. Vol. II. [London]: Dublin printed: London reprinted: and sold by R. Griffiths, 1749. vi. 120, [7] 12^o.

The third and last volume of the Memoirs of Mrs. Laetitia Pilkington, written by herself. Wherein are occasionally interspersed, a variety of poems: as also the letters of several persons of distinction, with the conclusive part of the life of the inimitable Dean Swift. London: printed, and Dublin reprinted in the year, 1754. xxiv, 264, [2] 12^o [This last edited by her son, John Cartaret Pilkington, after her death].

Colman and Thornton probably used the London editions of Pilkington's *Memoirs*, rather than the Dublin editions, although bibliographical evidence does not definitely prove this. A.C. Elias has shown that the London editions of volumes I and II of the *Memoirs* "rephrase Hibernicisms and awkward expressions, straighten out grammatical lapses, regularize spelling and punctuation, correct the occasional mis-attribution of quoted verse, and mechanically expand the contractions ("don't," "won't," "'tis") which enliven the spoken dialogue."²⁵ This is true of the prose; however, there are no differences between her verses in the London edition and those in the Dublin edition.

²⁴Thomas, *Collected Works of Katherine Philips*. I: 49.

²⁵A. C. Elias Jr. ed. and intro., *The Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, 2 vols. (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1997), I: xxvi.

- [233] POEMS By Mrs. LAETITIA PILKINGTON.
 234 Mrs. PILKINGTON [Editorial introduction to Pilkington]
biographical sources: her own memoirs; Cibber and Shiells, V: 315.
- 235-236 POEMS BY Mrs. LAETITIA PILKINGTON.
 The PETITION of the BIRDS to Mr. *PILKINGTON*, on his Return from SHOOTING. [32 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 38.
- 236-237 *Delville*, the Seat of the Rev. Dr. DELANY. [30 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 47.
- 238 To the Rev. Dr. *SWIFT*, on his BIRTH-DAY. [20 lines]
source: *Memoirs* I: 50.
- 239-246 The STATUES: OR, The TRIAL of CONSTANCY. A TALE. *For the LADIES*. [224 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 92. First published anonymously in folio by Dodsley (though Thomas Cooper's name appears on the imprint) in April, 1739. A. C. Elias notes that Pilkington based her poem on part of Samuel Humphrey's *Peruvian Tales*, a translation of Thomas-Simon Guellette's *Mille et une heures, contes peruvians*.²⁶
- 247 CARTE BLANCHE. [15 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 109 (untitled).
- 247-248 Sent with a QUILL to Dr. *SWIFT*, Upon hearing he had received a BOOK and STAND-DISH. [16 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 112.
- 248-249 ODE In Imitation of *HORACE*. [20 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 120.
- 249-250 MEMORY. [33 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 137.
- 251 ADVICE To the PEOPLE of *DUBLIN*, In their choice of a RECORDER. [12 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 142.
- 251-252 To *STREPHON*. Written for a LADY to her LOVER. [15 lines]
source: *Memoirs* I: 148.
- 252 QUEEN MAB to POLLIO. [10 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 150.
- 253-254 The SEVENTH ODE OF THE THIRD BOOK of *HORACE* paraphrased. Written in the Absence of her HUSBAND. *Quid fles, Asteria?* [24 lines]
source: *Memoirs* I: 152. The context for this poem is added to the title in *PEL* ("the Absence of her Husband").
- 254-255 CONSOLATORY VERSES to her HUSBAND. [24 lines]
source: *Memoirs* I: 174.
- 255-257 SORROW. [56 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 238.
- 257-258 A SONG. ("Stella, darling of the Muses,") [20 lines]

²⁶Samuel Humphreys, *Peruvian Tales, Related, In One Thousand and One Hours* (London, 1734; 2 vols. rpt. Dublin, 1734) Elias, *Memoirs*, II: 417 n39.19.

- source:** *Memoirs* I: 250.
- 258 A SONG. (“Lying is an occupation”) [12 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* I: 278.
- 258-259 EXPOSTULATION. Written in DISTRESS. [24 lines]
source: *Memoirs* I: 296.
- 260-262 *To the Reverend Dr. HALES.* [58 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* II: 12.
- [262-264] *To Mr. CIBBER.* On his asking for something entirely NEW. [65 lines]
source: *Memoirs* II: 17. First published in Colley Cibber’s pamphlet, *The Egoist, or Colley upon Cibber.*
- 264-265 *To the Hon. Col. D-NC-BE.* [22 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* II: 24.
- 265-267 *To his GRACE The Lord Archbishop of YORK.* [56 lines]
source: *Memoirs* II: 40.
- 267-268 EPILOGUE *To VIRTUE TRIUMPHANT.* [37 lines]
source: *Memoirs* III: 40.
- 268 *Written on her DEATH-BED.* [6 lines] **source:** *Memoirs* III: 236.

Mrs. Rowe [Elizabeth Rowe, née Singer (1674-1737)]

[pages 269-284]

Source: *Miscellaneous Works of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe: Published by her Order, By Mr. Theophilus Rowe.* Second edition, corrected. 2 vols. London: Henry Lintot, 1749.

Variant readings in the first edition point to the fact that Colman and Thornton used this second edition (or the “third edition” of 1750, in fact a reissue, the title-page of which is a cancel). Many of these poems were first printed in *Poems on Several Occasions, written by Philomela*, which John Dunton brought out in 1696, followed by an amended second edition by Curll in 1737.

- [269] POEMS By Mrs. ELIZABETH ROWE.
- 270 Mrs. ELIZABETH ROWE [Editorial introduction to Rowe]
biographical source: Cibber and Shiells, IV: 326.
- 271-272 POEMS BY Mrs. ELIZABETH ROWE.
In PRAISE of MEMORY. Inscribed to the Honourable The Lady WORSELY. [29 lines] **source:** *Works*, I: 15
- 272-273 HYMN to the DEITY. [20 lines] **source:** *Works*, I: 34
- 273-274 HYMN *on the SACRAMENT.* [20 lines] **source:** *Works*, I: 36
- 274-277 DIALOGUE BETWEEN *The Fallen Angels* and a *Human Spirit* Just entered into the other WORLD. [82 lines] **source:** *Works*, I: 46
- 277-278 DESPAIR. [111 lines] **source:** *Works*, I: 71
- 279-280 REVELATION. Chap. xvi. [49 lines] **source:** *Works*, I: 78

- 280-281 HYMNS of THANKS on my Recovery from the SMALL-POX.[16 lines]
 source: *Works*, I: 94
- 281-284 On the DEATH of Mr. *THOMAS ROWE*. [87 lines]
 source: *Works*, I: 112.

Lady Winchilsea²⁷ [Anne Finch, née Kingsmill (1661-1720)]

[pages 285-316]

Sources: *Miscellany Poems, on several occasions*. Written by a lady. London: printed for J. B. and sold by Benj. Tooke, William Taylor, and James Round, 1713. [8], 390p., 8^o.²⁸ The last two poems are not from Finch's *Miscellany*, but from Ballard's *Memoirs*.

- [285] POEMS By ANNE, Countess of *Winchilsea*.
- 286 ANNE, COUNTESS of *Winchilsea*, [Editorial introduction to Winchilsea]
 biographical sources: Ballard's *Memoirs*, 413; Cibber and Shiells' *Lives*, III: 321.
- 287-289 POEMS BY ANNE, Countess of *Winchelsea*.
 The BRASS POET and STONE JUGG. A FABLE. [55 lines]
 source: *Misc.*, 55.
- 289-290 There's No TO-MORROW. A FABLE. Imitated from Sir. *Roger L'Estrange*. [21 lines] **source:** *Misc.*, 32.
- 290-297 The SPLEEN. A *PINDARICK* POEM. [150 lines] **source:** *Misc.*, 88.
- 267-297 The ATHEIST and the ACORN. [30 lines] **source:** *Misc.*, 202.
- 297-300 The YOUNG RAT and his DAM, the COCK and the CAT. [83 lines]
 source: *Misc.*, 126.
- 300-304 To Mr. *Finch*, now Earl of *Winchelsea*, *Who, going abroad, had desired ARDELIA to write some VERSES upon whatever subject she thought fit, against his return in the evening*. Written in the YEAR 1689. [108 lines]
 source: *Misc.*, 272.
- 304-305 The EAGLE, the SOW, and the CAT. [67 lines] **source:** *Misc.*, 212.

²⁷Listed under Finch in my Works Cited.

²⁸This book was issued three more times with variant title-pages, as: 1) *Miscellany Poems, on several occasions*. Written by a lady. (London: printed for John Barber and sold by John Morphew, 1713). 2) *Miscellany Poems, with a Tragedy*. By a Lady, author of the poem on the spleen. London: printed for John Barber; and sold by John Morphew, 1713. 3) *Miscellany Poems, on several occasions*. Written by the Right Honble Anne, Countess of Winchilsea. London: printed for J. B. and sold by Benj. Tooke, William Taylor, James Round, and John Morphew, 1713.

- 307-308 LOVE, DEATH, and REPUTATION. [54 lines] source: *Misc.*, 29.
- 308-311 The DECISION of FORTUNE. A FABLE. [69 lines] source: *Misc.*, 51.
- 311-312 The HOG, the SHEEP, and GOAT, Carrying to a FAIR. [30 lines]
source: *Misc.*, 110.
- 312-313 CUPID and FOLLY. Imitated from the FRENCH. [36 lines]
source: *Misc.*, 135.
- 314 [by Alexander Pope] To Lady WINCHELSEA, occasioned by some
VERSES in the RAPE of the LOCK. By Mr. POPE. [12 lines]
source: Ballard's *Memoirs*, 432.
- 314-316 ANSWER to the foregoing VERSES. [36 lines] source:
Ballard's *Memoirs*, 432-433.²⁹
- 316 FINIS.

²⁹Ballard had this exchange copied from Thomas Birch's *General Dictionary*, X: 178-180. Both Birch and Ballard introduced errors into the concluding stanza of Finch's poem. See Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR
Seventeenth-Century Poets: Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips,
Aphra Behn, Anne Killigrew, and Mary Chudleigh

In ancient *Greece*, where merit still was crown'd,
Some such as these in her records were found.
Rome her *Lucretia*, and her *Porcia* show,
And we to her the fam'd *Cornelia* owe:
A place with them does great *Zenobia* claim;
With these I cou'd some modern ladies name,
Who help to fill the bulky lists of fame:
Women renown'd for knowledge, and for sense,
For sparkling wit, and charming eloquence.

Mary, Lady Chudleigh¹

The Monthly Review's cursory appraisal of *PEL* which states the contents of the anthology are "well-known" testifies to an unquestioned, if also unspecified, familiarity with the names of the poets. In choosing selections from the *oeuvres* of women who lived and wrote in the seventeenth century, Colman and Thornton capitalized on reputations that had been altered "and occasionally twisted" with time, but which still had cachet. The names Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, Anne Killigrew, and Mary, Lady Chudleigh were each to some extent familiar to the reader who would consider purchasing the anthology; even more so than a number of the later writers in the collection. They lingered in the cultural imagination because each name was associated with eccentricity, and was thus the subject of legend.²

These legends were kept alive through sporadic allusions and comparisons, both satiric and reverential, in reviews, plays, and poetry itself to the mythologized "Orinda" (Philips), "English Sappho" or Astrea (Behn) and, depending on one's viewpoint, "Mad Madge" or the "thrice illustrious princess" Cavendish, and others. Philips was the poet with whom every subsequent female writer seems to have been compared, by flatterers

¹"The Ladies Defence: Or, A Dialogue between Sir John Brute, Sir William Loveall, Melissa, and a Parson," *PEL*, I: 197-226, II.679-687.

attempting the awkward task of matching them with the “matchless Orinda.” Numerous printings of Behn’s plays were produced during the first half of the century, reflecting stage adaptations to protect the modesty of the reader. On at least five occasions—in 1700, 1722, twice in 1718, and again in 1751—the two main volumes which make up nearly all of Behn’s corpus of prose were republished (as *All the Histories and Novels*, and *Histories, Novels, Translations*). Dramatic revivals, like that of *The Rover* which began with a production at Drury Lane in 1703, became a regular (albeit bowdlerized) feature on the London stage for the first half of the century.³ Anne Killigrew’s verse seems not to have been reprinted, but her name was retained as part of the tradition of women writers in editions of Dryden’s works which included his “Ode” in her praise. Mary Chudleigh’s rousing verse in favour of better treatment for women, published at the turn of the century, was recalled in the writings of admirers who shared the same goal.

I discuss the sections from these five women in the present chapter. Space does not permit consideration here of every poem and its history, though the contexts for their composition do come under scrutiny. The themes and rhetorical tactics of longer works, as well as the interplay of shorter poems, are explored with an eye to the role of each poet in the anthology. While interrogating the editorial choices evident in *PEL*, we must also question our own strategies for reading these early women writers. Inherent in our own habits of reading is the search for hints of what are now regarded as healthy attitudes toward their own gender. Following the lead of Virginia Woolf, twentieth-century scholars have often lamented the ways in which early women writers fell short of being feminists, as if a manifesto had been written to this effect which they stubbornly refused to follow. Hilda L. Smith, for one, notes discrepancies in the views of Margaret Cavendish, who complained that women were oppressed and maligned, restricted intellectually and subordinated by domesticity, but who also believed that women were generally weak and incompetent. Smith concludes that Cavendish “often faltered on the

²A more sceptical reading is Germaine Greer’s comment on the choices in *PEL*: “Their selections function as a sort of appetizer by way of slightly offhand introductions of eighteen literary freaks.” Greer, *Slipshod*, 253.

³Jane Spencer, “The Rover and the eighteenth century,” *Aphra Behn Studies*, ed. Janet Todd, 84-106.

route to a feminist analysis.”⁴ However Kate Lilley counters, rightly, that it is a mistake to “dehistoricize and isolate the feminist element” in early women’s writings.⁵

A common rhetoric of oppression has also coloured readings of women’s poetry, producing readings sympathetic to the point of being apologist. In spite (or because) of the copious biographical writings that have accompanied critical analyses of early women’s writings, a socio-biographical impulse continues to inform most of the scholarship in this area. This is in part attributable to the correction of errors in earlier biography as new information is uncovered, and in part to more thorough fresh historical explication of the poetry. The approach that seeks answers by analyzing the life of the poet “her family, her husband, her finances, her constraints” is not, however, itself adequate to the discussion of the individual’s fame, or her position within the canon of women’s writings that both continued to expand and began to congeal at mid-century. While I do provide a brief sketch of each poet’s history, it is only to place her within a history of publication, and I refer the reader to the more thorough biographical works that have been written.

Obviously the familial, financial, and political circumstances in which writers like Cavendish found themselves influenced their personal philosophies and their writings, and affected how and where they were published (and whether they appeared in print at all). Whether or not a woman did in fact write with more than a coterie audience in mind is also at times difficult to establish; contrast the fame-hungry Cavendish and the commercially successful Behn, with the more problematic case of Philips. Whereas Harold Love argues that “the stigma of print bore particularly hard on women writers, as they themselves point out,”⁶ he also provides a wider context for this statement by quoting Elaine Hobby’s important insight into the reputation of Katherine Philips:

⁴Hilda L. Smith, *Reason’s Disciples* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1982) 13.

⁵Kate Lilley, “Seventeenth-Century Women’s Utopian Writings,” *Women, Texts, and Histories*, ed. Clare Brent and Diane Purkiss (London; NY: Routledge, 1992) 119-177:170.

⁶Love, *Scribal Publication*, 54.

In part, the image of Orinda that has come down to us is dependent on the belief that her writing was really a secret and private affair, her poems passed around only in manuscript to a few trusted friends. This is an anachronistic distortion of the method of 'publication' that she used: circulation of manuscripts was the normal way to make writing public before the widespread use of printed books, and was the method that continued to be popular in court circles throughout the reign of Charles II, at least.⁷

Margaret Ezell also disagrees with critics who have imposed a nineteenth-century model of writing as a commercial activity on pre-1700 literature. It is misleading to depict women authors as restricted by manuscript circulation, with the implication that this was inferior: manuscript circulation was a form of publication embraced by both male and female authors, especially of gentry and court circles.⁸

When an original audience changes, expands under the coaxing efforts of a publisher who brings a poet's work to light, we move beyond the poem to question the texts and contexts in which it appears. Print is the vehicle by which mortal woman passes into immortality, or fails to do so. Once printed, a poem was largely beyond its creator's control. A case in point is Mary Chudleigh, who confessed in a letter to her friend and fellow poet Elizabeth Thomas (later Wharton, 1675-1731, styled "Corinna") that she was not pleased with the loss of control that had resulted from seeing her work in print. The letter is undated, but clearly was composed after the 1701 publication of her polemical dialogue in verse, "The Ladies Defence," and before her 1703 volume of poems. In the autograph original now at the Bodleian she writes:

Mr. Jervé was not so just to me as he ought to have been, for without my

⁷Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English women's writing 1649-1688* (London: Virago, 1988) 129.

⁸Ezell, *WWLH*, 33-34. Germaine Greer's controversial position in *Slipshod Sibyls* overcompensates for this sympathetic impulse with the claim that women seldom wrote good poetry, and were not equipped or genuinely challenged to do so: "Second-rate, dishonest, fake poetry is worse than no poetry at all. . . we are more likely to find heroines than poets." xxxiii-xxiv, *passim*. Her arguments, while containing elements of truth, do not however sufficiently question Greer's own canon-influenced aesthetic of "good" poetry versus poor versifying. Whereas Greer acknowledges the merit in verse by poets such as Katherine Philips and Anne Finch, she is reluctant to locate worth in work that falters metrically, or that seeks to imitate the conventional writings of men. It is worth remembering that men also wrote poor poetry.

knowing anything of it, he Epitomiz'd the Preface, and by shortning it spoil'd
 te[sic] Connexion, and quite alter'd the sense. Neither further was the Poem
 publisher
 printed with so much care as it should have been, all those I have seen having
 several Errata's in 'em⁹

While part of this epistle appears amongst others by Chudleigh that are printed in Wharton family papers, the lines quoted above were excised when her letters to Thomas were reprinted in the Wharton family papers, *Whartonia*.¹⁰ In this evidently controversial passage we encounter evidence of a woman who was anxious about the appearance and reception of her first printed work, *The Ladies Defence*, and was herself defensive about the mediation of a publisher. The printed text is not precisely as she intended it to be. The “connexion,” either between preface and poem or between “The Ladies Defence” and the anti-feminist sermon that spurred her to write the “Defence,” has been “spoil'd,” and her meaning “alter'd.” The letter as it is printed in *Whartonia* is that of a modest matron, shyly pleased by the “honour” of seeing her “weak Defence” meet with approbation. The complete letter, though, combines pleasure with a proprietary irritation.

Authority was sometimes established, sometimes relinquished in the subsequent editions of these poets' books. Popular works also undertook a journey that involved the print vagaries introduced in unauthorized editions and early poetical miscellanies. The appearance of these poets in an anthology at mid-eighteenth century was the result of a process of evaluation and inclusion that occurred over decades (in the case of Cavendish, more than a century after the publication of her first book). As a poet is anthologized and her writings preserved, she is also pared down, condensed to what become the “essential” works. These poems are either forgotten, or, if their author is retained in the canon,

⁹BOD Ms Rawl. letters 90, ff. 62-63. There is a single, clean line drawn across these sentences, which in no way inhibits legibility, only sets the passage apart, as if for deletion, from the rest of the letter, which is modest and without complaint. Ezell does not mention this in her study of Chudleigh, and “Jervé” has not been identified.

reprinted again and again while generations of editors take for granted their relative superiority, or good humour, or pathos, or whatever the taste of the age requires; compilers tend not to return to the original source. The nature of the literary anthology is its reliance on the readers' contentment with representative pieces, with synecdoche. *PEL* participates in this act of piece-meal representation. In our estimation of their editorial competence Colman and Thornton sometimes falter, but we are not the audience they had in mind.

I. MARGARET CAVENDISH (1623-1673)¹¹

The Dutchess of Newcastle was one who busied herself in the ravishing delights of Poetry; leaving to posterity in print three *ample Volumes* of her studious endeavours. . . *Langbaine* reckons up eight Folio's of her Grace's, which were usually adorned with gilded covers, and had her Coat of Arms upon them.

Alexander Pope¹²

Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, was born the youngest in a family of eight to Sir Thomas Lucas, a wealthy landed gentleman who died while she was an infant, and Elizabeth Leighton, who did not remarry once widowed. The family was very close-knit, and all the children extremely shy. Margaret was educated by her mother and various tutors, in needlework, dancing, music and French, and began writing at an early age. The English civil wars altered her destiny. Margaret took a position as maid of honour to Queen Henrietta Maria in 1643, and when the queen and her entourage fled

¹⁰Five letters written by Chudleigh to Elizabeth Thomas were included among the Wharton family's 1722 collection of poetry and letters, *Whartonia*, and in 1731, in *The Poetical Works of Philip Late Duke of Wharton*.

¹¹The *DNB* lists Cavendish's birth as 1624, but modern biographers "Grant, Mendelson, Jones, and Battigelli" agree on 1623. See Anna Battigelli, *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1998) Appendix A: "Problems in the Dating of Margaret Lucas' Birth."

¹²"The *Dunciad Variorum*: Book 1," *Works*, 361 n.122 to accompany l.122: "There, stamp'd with arms, Newcastle shines compleat. . ." Perhaps the three volumes that Pope saw belonged to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. See Chapter Seven.

England for France, Margaret met the exiled leader of the Royalist army and dashing widower, William Cavendish, in Paris. They married in 1645. During the civil war they lived in Paris, Rotterdam, and Antwerp, since Newcastle, alleged to be the richest man in England, was not allowed to return to his estate or native country. Her husband had *Poems and Fancies* printed at his own expense in 1653, as he did with her subsequent writings.¹³ Most of the poems it contains were likely written during the winter of 1651-2, while Margaret was in London attempting to regain something of her husband's estate (with little success).¹⁴ During the war two of her three brothers were killed fighting for the Royalist cause. Her family home in St. John's, Essex, was destroyed by parliamentarians in the district; when Margaret returned she found even the graves of her mother and sister in the family chapel were desecrated. William spent vast sums of money in support of the king, which were never fully repaid after the Restoration, though his estate was restored.

While at Antwerp and later upon her return to England, the duchess' many eccentricities were commented upon. She wore bizarre clothing of her own design, and often chose to bow rather than curtsy. Samuel Pepys recorded in 1667 that "all the town-talk is nowadays of her extravagancies."¹⁵ The inspiration to jot her thoughts down could strike at any time, and she always had her servants ready with pen and ink should the need arise.¹⁶ At the Cavendish table in Antwerp dined such visitors as John Locke, and she met Hobbes in London. The theories of these great men nurtured her own fantastical scientific notions about the behaviour of atoms of bodily humours. When the couple retired from court life after the Restoration, she devoted her time to reading and

¹³The Duchess' works, too many to mention here, were all published in London. Her last book, *Playes, Never before Printed*, appeared in 1668.

¹⁴The title pages of each edition comment on the very different times in which they were published. The first, printed when her husband had been deprived of his title and estate, names the author: "the Right Honourable, The Lady Newcastle," whereas after the Restoration, "The Second Impression, much Altered and Corrected" titles her "Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and Excellent Princess the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle."

¹⁵ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (London: Bell, 1974) 26 April 1667, VII: 186.

¹⁶Phoebe Clinket has been identified with the Duchess because she writes on a board tied to her servant's back.

writing. In the prefatory remarks to *Poems and Fancies* she calls upon other women to support her endeavours to excel in the male-dominated field of verse, and argues that poetry, belonging to the province of the imaginative and fanciful, suits the emotional nature of women. Certainly Cavendish enjoyed a confidence in her own work. Between 1652 and 1668 she sent copies of all fourteen of her books to both Oxford and Cambridge (the Preface to her *Philosophical and Physical Opinions* (1655) is addressed “to the two most famous universities of England.”) In 1667 she toured the Royal Society. Admired by many, mocked perhaps by more, Margaret Cavendish was never ignored. She died in London on 7 January, 1673-74 and is buried in Westminster Abbey beside her husband, who survived her by three years.

Colman and Thornton chose seven poems (including two fragments) by Cavendish for inclusion in *PEL*. The first of these is “Mirth and Melancholy,” originally titled “A Dialogue between” these two extremes, which are personified as female. In Cavendish’s poem, the male speaker must choose which of the two he will wed, and the choice is clearly Melancholy. Mirth, with her “fat white arms,” promises “amorous delights,” and a retreat from reality in her concluding argument:

Let you and I in Mirth and Pleasure swell,
And drink long draughts from *Bacchus*’ bowl,
Until our brains on vap’rous waves do roll;
Let’s joy ourselves in amorous delights;
There’s none so happy as the carpet knights.¹⁷

As important as Mirth’s favourable depiction of herself is her deprecation of Melancholy: “But Melancholy, she will make you lean, / Your cheeks shall hollow grow, your jaws be seen.”¹⁸ By contrast, when Melancholy has her say, she promises the reader that he “shall

¹⁷*PEL*, II: 199-203, II.48-52. The term “Carpet knight” is proverbial, signifying those who have not earned their titles, who excel in the arts of the ballroom and the parlour rather than the battleground. Cavendish used it several times. In *Sociable Letters* (1664) MC wrote “the chief study of our Sex is Romances, wherein reading, they fall in love with the feign’d Heroes and Carpet-Knights with whom they secretly commit Adultery.” (Letter #21).

¹⁸*PEL*, II: 200, II.23-24.

know / More of [himself], and so much wiser grow.”¹⁹ Simply put, Mirth is denial, and Melancholy, wisdom at a price.²⁰ The poem is everywhere at once --troping the dichotomies of the loose woman and the chaste, worldly giddiness and virtuous retirement. It is this poem which is quoted in *Connoisseur* #69, puffed as an inspiration to Milton’s *L’allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Milton’s companion poems offer a more subtle and appealing rhetoric, but Cavendish makes her point about the cowardice of embracing fleeting pleasures.

The dialogue was a common form for Cavendish, and her “Dialogue betwixt Peace and War,” which follows “Mirth” in *PEL*, is intriguing in that it too explores the space between cowardice and confronting unpleasantness. Peace calls war a “cruel enemy of life,” and defines itself a “the bed of rest, and couch of ease” to which all creatures resort. War, however, claims that the love of Peace perpetuates an unfair society, causing many to “take up voluntary slavery” and “bear like asses” while others “on horse-back ride.”²¹ The conclusion of War’s speech (and the poem) is unequivocal: “Courage still seeks me, cowards only shun.”²² The sentiment speaks perhaps to the courage which the duchess witnessed in family members and friends who fought for their king. In *PEL*, de-contextualized and re-contextualized as it is, the poem seems informed by the editorial preface to the Cavendish section, where Colman and Thornton quote the *Spectator*’s note on her family’s epitaph at Westminster Abbey: “*A noble family! for all the brothers were valiant, and all the sisters virtuous.*”²³ War shaped this family, and meant more to this woman and her generation than a subject for verse.

Considering the violence that her generation witnessed, it is not surprising that the human body figures large in Cavendish’s musings. Her fascination with corporeal decay is demonstrated in *PEL* in “Nature’s Cook.” A grotesque depiction of death, likely

¹⁹ *Il.57-8.*

²⁰There is a long tradition of seeing melancholy as an enhanced self-awareness. See Raymond Klibansky, et al. *Saturn and Melancholy* (London: Nelson, 1964.) 228 *passim*.

²¹*PEL*, II: 204, *Il.31*; 10, 12.

²²*Il.46.*

included by the editors for its capacity to shock, the poem is qualified in a footnote as “somewhat extravagant” —an instruction to the reader on how to interpret the piece. No footnote could properly prepare the reader for the morbid lines. Here, Death boils, bakes, and fricassees his victims: “And some he boils with dropsies in a pot; / Some are consum’d for jelly by degrees.”²⁴ The conceit is troubling, an edible *memento mori*, and becomes, in a text compiled over eighty years after the poet’s death, a more powerful poem than in a book published in the poet’s own lifetime.

More literary is a piece titled “Wherein Poetry chiefly consists,” which shows Cavendish’s interest in the process and the products of writing. The corporeal is integrated into intellectual inquiry. Nature and artifice in writing verses are compared to physical beauty and various means of counterfeiting it:

Words, the complexion, as a white wall;
 Fancy the form is, flesh, blood, skin and bone,
 Words are but shadows, substance they have none:
 But number is the motion, gives the grace,
 And is the count’nance of a well-form’d face.²⁵

Shadow and substance are opposites that Cavendish likes to explore. As with her analogy for the creation of poetry, another on a similar theme, “Wit” (an extract from a larger poem) is prescriptive, and defines something partly in terms of what it is not. It is also a difficult piece to read, and worth quoting at length because Cavendish piles similes one upon another, reiterating the sort of performances realized by the first generation of metaphysical poets, Donne, and Traherne:

Give me a wit, whose fancy’s not confined,
 That buildeth on itself, with no brain joyn’d;
 Nor like two oxen yoked and forc’d to draw,
 Or like two witnesses to one deed in law;
 But like the sun that needs no help to rise,
 Or like a bird i’t’h’air which freely flies;

²³PEL, II: 198, qtd. from Addison’s *Spectator* #99 (Saturday, June 23, 1711).

²⁴PEL, II: 206, ll.4-5.

²⁵PEL, II: 205-6, ll.16-18.

For good wits run like parallels in length,
 Need no triang'lar points to give them strength;
 Or like the sea which runneth round without,
 And grasps the earth with twining arms about:
 Thus true born wits to others strength may give,
 Yet by their own, and not by others live.²⁶

This is scientific enlightenment versified. For Colman and Thornton, who forged their own paths apart from those chosen for them, the call to an independent life of the mind and originality would have been attractive. Taken together, “Wherein Poetry chiefly Consists” and “Wit” are contradictory, recommending both controlled and untamed verse.

The last two Cavendish poems, “The Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of Fairies in Fairyland, the centre of the earth,” and its companion piece, “The Pastime of the Queen of Fairies, when she comes on the earth out of the centre,” emphasize the latter half of the paradigm – the wild, the untamed. These are two in a series of four that Cavendish wrote about Queen Mab, and there are echoes here of Spenser’s allegorical treatment of Queen Elizabeth. There are also echoes of Shakespeare, particularly of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” in this whimsical depiction of “Queen Mab, and all her company.” Here, fairies dance upon the green, taking shelter under mushrooms and flowers. We encounter Hesperus, and Tom Thumb, and a hobgoblin, “The Queen of Fairies fool, / Turning himself to horse, cow, tree, or stool.”²⁷ Reading about Tom Thumb, the queen’s page, in 1755, might have been coloured by Henry’s Fielding’s play, and the many chapbooks of the period that featured Tom Thumb, yet the poems are still magical, and when the queen returns beneath the earth the final couplet afforded Cavendish in *PEL* is not an unsuitable one. The queen departs “Unto her paradise the center deep, / Where she the store-house doth of nature keep.”²⁸ Cavendish was interested in memory, Francis Bacon’s store-house of the mind, and her unabashed efforts

²⁶*PEL*, II: 207, ll.1-10.

²⁷*PEL*, II: 211, ll.23-24.

²⁸*PEL*, II: 212, ll.41-42.

to “preserve” herself after death worked better than did the stone monuments to her mother and sister.

Upon reading Cavendish’s *Life* of her husband, Pepys vented in his journal: “it shows her to be a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman, and he an asse to suffer [her] to write what she writes to him and of him.”²⁹ Margaret Cavendish was a writer who came to later generations to seem at once mad *and* illustrious. Colman and Thornton appreciated the “uncommon turn of her compositions,” though they also stressed that her genius was “uncultivated.”³⁰ The history of the Duchess’ appearance in the anthology charts a capitulation to later authors and to a less fantastic style; her contribution shrank from seven poems in the 1755 first edition, to excerpts from only two pieces, those on the Queen of Fairies, in the 1785(?) edition. Not unlike her own volumes of verse, the Colman and Thornton anthology represents the “extravagant” duchess as a woman who was somewhat lost in her own imaginative world, a curiosity. In *PEL*, especially, Margaret Cavendish stands out as a queen of fairies herself.

II. KATHERINE PHILIPS (1632-1664)

Katherine Philips was born in London to middle class Presbyterian parents, John and Katherine Fowler, and educated at a private girls’ school. Her father died in 1642, her mother remarried, and at sixteen Katherine married 54-year old James Philips, the son of her step-father by a previous marriage. Despite the age difference, and the fact that he was a parliamentarian and she a royalist, they seem to have been happy together. They settled at Cardigan, Wales, where she bore a son, who died in infancy, and a daughter. She traveled several times to London and once to Dublin. One of her poems was prefixed to William Cartright’s *Works* in 1651 and two appeared in Henry Lawes’ *Second Book of Ayres* (1655). She translated into heroic couplets Corneille’s French tragedy “Pompey,”

²⁹Pepys, *Diary*, IX: 123.

³⁰*PEL*, II: 198.

and it was produced in London during 1662-63.³¹ Her death at the age of thirty-two was the result of smallpox.

Philips's reputation was that of an exception -- exceptionally talented, exceptionally modest for shying away from print. As noted above, her apparent reluctance to appear in print was not so extraordinary. Margaret Ezell counters the arguments that have depicted seventeenth-century women writers as "either embattled professionals like Aphra Behn or intimidated aristocrats like Anne Finch." Rather, "throughout the seventeenth century women in fact participated actively in coterie literary life. . . manuscript circulation was an extremely important activity in early women's literary history."³² This is especially true of Philips, who shared her poems among a wide circle of literary friends, and whose first volume of printed verse appeared without her consent in 1664.³³ This apparently caused her much consternation, and prompted an authorized version of the poems, which Philips did not live to see produced.

Two editions of Philips's letters to Charles Cotterell appeared in 1705 and 1729, as *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*. Orinda's reputation in verse was still one booksellers could bank on, as the preface to the 1729 *Letters* testifies: "the real Product of that Pen which infinitely obliged us with so curious a Variety of Poems. . ."³⁴ Nevertheless, the last edition of Orinda's poems had appeared in 1710. From this, Colman and Thornton chose eleven poems for their anthology. Their life of "The Celebrated Orinda," is borrowed from Ballard's account, much of which is in turn

³¹Philips's other dramatic translation, "Horace," completed by John Denham, was performed at court in February 1668, and a year later enjoyed a theatre run in London.

³²Ezell, "Gentleman's Journal," 352-26.

³³The publisher, Richard Marriott, printed an apology and his intention not to sell the 1664 edition, in an advertisement in the London *Intelligencer* of 18 January, 1664. Greer argues that the 1664 edition of Philips's *Poems* may not actually have been unauthorized because it is this first edition which corresponds more closely to many accidentals in most of the manuscript material extant on Philips, some in her own hand. Moreover, the authorized 1667 edition actually suppresses lines that appear both in manuscript form and in Marriott's edition. *Slip-Shod Sibyls*, 147-172. Greer's arguments are not convincing; Philips may have been unwilling to print things she was quite content to circulate in ms.

³⁴Here the poem by Ja. Gardner of Jesus College, Cambridge, suggests a correlation between approval of Orinda's poetry from authors of the past, and present agreement on the quality of Philips's letters: "Cowley's

composed of quotations from Roscommon, Jeremy Taylor, Thomas Rowe, and the Duke of Wharton.³⁵ The conclusion of the biographical introduction to Philips in *PEL*, that her “death was lamented by several eminent poets, and among the rest, by *Cowley* and *Roscommon*,”³⁶ recalls the Preface to the anthology. It names two of the poets whose “lavish encomiums” were there cited as support for reprinting these poems. The qualification ‘eminent’ attached to the male poets seems to reflect on their female counterpart. Cowley’s name, in particular, reminds the reader of the epigraph on the title page of *PEL*, where his “Ode” to Philips is quoted.

Philips was probably the seventeenth-century woman poet best known to eighteenth-century readers. She was indeed better known than has been implied by modern scholars who have not examined eighteenth-century anthologies. Philips’s poem, “The Virgin,” for example, which Colman and Thornton reprint, illustrates the extent to which the reputation and readership of individual poems have been underestimated. Patrick Thomas asserts that the eleven poems by Katherine Philips in *PEL* marked “the first time Orinda’s poetry had appeared in print since 1710, with the exception of a single poem, reprinted in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1744.”³⁷ In fact, four poems by Philips appear in a miscellany that appeared in 1717, which was reissued with a cancel title page in 1722. The collection, titled *The Virgin Muse* and “designed for the use of Young Gentlemen and Ladies, at Schools,”³⁸ was inspired by the first poem it contains, Philips’s “The Virgin.” Alongside works by Milton, Roscommon, Cowley, Waller, Prior, Garth,

and ROSCOMMON’s Judgment Stands / Before her other works. . . “*Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*, 1729. vi.

³⁵Ballard borrows material Giles Jacob’s *Lives of the English Poets*, and may have also seen Gerard Langbaine’s *Account of the English Dramatic Poets* (London, 1691). Like the “Ladies of Antiquity” who “were praised by Horace, Martial, Ausonius, and other ancient poets,” Langbaine argued, Philips was also “commended by the earls of Orrery and Roscommon, by Cowley, Flatman, and other eminent poets.” I: 403.

³⁶*PEL*, II: 214.

³⁷Thomas, “Introduction,” *Philips’s Poems*, I: 38. “The Virgin” had been printed first in Philips’s 1667 *Poems*.

³⁸*The Virgin Muse: Being a Collection of Poems from our Most Celebrated English Poets*. . . (Dedication signed by James Greenwood (London, 1717; 1722).

Etherege, Dryden, and others, are printed also Philips's poems "Death," "Country Life," and "Against Pleasure." All but "Death" surface again in *PEL*.³⁹

In the first poem in the Philips section in *PEL*, titled "Content. To my dearest Lucasia,"⁴⁰ various conventional sources of contentment are examined, and deemed hollow: neither the court, "liberty from government," the "victor's brow," nor education can ensure happiness. Only a simple life and genuine friendship between women can satisfy this need. This theme, contentment in retirement, is echoed in Philips's "A Country Life," and throughout *PEL*. "Content" opens with an important allusion, linking the verse, and Philips herself, to an older English poetic tradition. Here, the comparison is to a Spenserian legend. Simple happiness,

Is so abstruse and hid in night,
That, like that Fairy Red-Cross Knight,
Who treach'rous Falsehood for clear Truth had got,
Men think they have it when they have it not.⁴¹

Another poem connecting Philips with an older cultural inheritance is "On the Welch Language." The poem is a subdued, patriotic celebration, which Carol Barash suggests brings together three of Philips's common themes: "the experience of political defeat, the search for political and poetic authority figures from the pastoral tradition, and the use of mythic women and their virtue to restore poetic order."⁴² The poem is enchanted with antiquity, caught up in the cycle of civilizations: "And as the Roman and the Grecian state, / The British fell, the spoil of time and fate."⁴³ The poem is also a

³⁹I am not arguing that, barring *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Virgin Muse* constitutes the sole printing of poems by Philips between 1710 and the appearance of *PEL* in 1755. There are many anthologies to be examined before definitive statements like Thomas' can be made. To name another, *The Agreeable Variety* (London: Strahan, 1706) contains poems "from many worthy authors" included poems by Chudleigh, Finch, Behn, and Philips. From Philips there are four poems not repeated in *PEL*, as well as "The Enquiry" (p.160) which Colman and Thornton do reprint.

⁴⁰Lucasia was the sobriquet of Philips's friend Anne Owen.

⁴¹*PEL*, II: 215, ll.3-6.

⁴²Carol Barash, "The Native Liberty. . . of the Subject': Configurations of gender and authority in the works of Mary Chudleigh, Sarah Fyge Egerton, and Mary Astell," *Women, Writing, History*, 55-69: 57.

fantasy of linguistic empowerment, though not gender-specific. It is Welsh that Merlin and Arthur spoke, as did the mythical English queen, Boadicea, whom Philips also celebrates. That “On the Welch Language” is reprinted in *PEL* is an interesting indication of growing interest in the native past, an anticipation in the anthology of works such as Gray’s *The Bard* (1757). Howard Weinbrot argues that “commentators. . . never tire of praising antique Britons like Boadicea. . . for having resisted and finally expelled the Romans.”⁴⁴ Later, William Cowper wrote “Boadicea, An Ode.”⁴⁵ Philips’s invocation of an Arthurian world in “The Welch Language” becomes yet another reminder of the “Fairy Red-Cross Knight” with which Philips’s section began in “Content”. Orinda, perhaps the only sound pillar of the female poetic tradition sought by writers in the eighteenth century, herself looked back to an imagined past, and framed it by heroic moments.

The Philips we encounter in *PEL* is not merely sentimental. Her complaint “Against Love” treats a popular cavalier theme, and is clever in its distanced view of the destructive nature of the emotion: “Lovers like men in fevers burn and rave, / And only what will injure them do crave.” The conventional masculine third-person pronoun here allows Phillips to suggest that men are more foolish than women: “Who to another does his heart submit, / Makes his own idol, and then worships it.”⁴⁶

“Against Love” is followed by a different sort of love poem. Titled “To my Antenor, March 16, 1660-1,” it is important because it is one of several poems addressed to husbands that Colman and Thornton include in their anthology. The date attached to “Antenor” encapsulates both a personal and a political moment. In this remarkable piece, Philips counters her husband’s impulse toward suicide in the wake of the Restoration: “For my sake talk of graves no more.” She argues that “‘Tis braver much t’out-ride the storm,” and hopes that the wheel of fortune may turn again. The final couplet provides

⁴³*PEL*, II: 228, ll.17-18.

⁴⁴Howard D. Weinbrot, *Britannia’s Issue: the Rise of British Literature from Dryden to Ossian* (Cambridge; NY: Cambridge UP, 1993).

⁴⁵ Cowper, *Poems*, I: 432.

⁴⁶*PEL*, II; 230, ll.4-5; 9-10. A similar poem by Philips in *PEL* is “Against Pleasure. An Ode.” II: 219.

the context for this crisis: "And since parliament have rescu'd you, / Believe that providence will do so too." This final reassurance is also the only religious note struck in the poem. Hitherto, "affliction nobly undergone," fortune, and fate are mentioned, but as an appeal to stoicism rather than to Christian principles. There is considerable sophistication in the rhetoric she employs here. "Death is as coy a thing as love," she tells Antenor, perhaps implying that he must choose between death and his spouse.⁴⁷ Whereas "Antenor" is clearly an occasional poem, it is an occasion with broad historical resonance.⁴⁸

The final piece by Philips in the collection is one which testifies to her powers in translation, "Tendres Desirs. From French Prose."⁴⁹ Reading and writing French had long been a sign of a woman's aristocratic upbringing, and it seems that any poet in *PEL* who engaged in translation had at least one example of her skill in rendering included in the anthology. Likely added to fill in a final blank page at the end of Philips's section of verse, these six lines contain the conventional appeal to love, couched in the demand that desire visit the beloved: "if you miss her breast whom I adore, / Then take your flight, and visit mine no more."⁵⁰ The poem, like the description of desire it contains, is "gentle" rather than suggestive or challenging. So, too, is the impression of Philips offered to readers by Colman and Thornton. *PEL* capitalized on the gentle reputation of Katherine Philips; it also furthered it, by reminding readers at mid-century what this reputation was based upon. Orinda was matchless without seeming too mysterious. Apparently without ambition, loyal to her friends, and loving to her spouse, Philips enjoyed a posthumous celebrity that both inspired and intimidated the women writers who followed her.

⁴⁷The *OED* notes that "coy" originally signified a trap, but here indicates the affectation of reserve. cf. Marvell's "To his Coy Mistress": "Had we but World enough, and Time, / This coyness Lady were no crime." *Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Hugh Kenner, (NY: Holt Rinehart, 1964) 457, ll.1-2.

⁴⁸ By contrast, most of the poems by Philips not printed in *PEL* are occasional coterie verses, poems with such titles as "To my dearest Sister, Mrs. C. P, on her marriage," and elegiac pieces such as "Engraven on Mr. John Collier's tomb-stone at Bedlington." *Poems... by Orinda* (London: Tonson, 1710) 34; 98.

⁴⁹ Philips's French source has not been identified.

⁵⁰*PEL*, II: 232, ll.-6.

III. APHRA BEHN (1640-1689)

Perhaps as familiar to the readers of 1755 as the name Katherine Philips was that of Aphra Behn, though for markedly different reasons (Behn was known for her biography, whereas Philips was known for her poetry). Behn's selection covers the largest number of pages in *PEL*, and is second only to that of Mary Leapor in the number of poems it contains. The story of Behn descended through the century chiefly through the agency of booksellers Charles Gildon (1665-1724) and Samuel Briscoe (1692-1718). Gildon wrote an account of Behn's life, and Briscoe commissioned a Memoir from "One of the Fair Sex" (possibly in fact Briscoe himself). It is generally agreed that in her youth Behn traveled to Surinam with her family, that at least part of *Orinooko* is factual, that she married and probably divorced, and worked as a spy for Charles II in Antwerp,⁵¹ Colman and Thornton borrowed their six-page account (which Page calls "somewhat salacious"⁵²) from Cibber and Shiells. It purports to quote Behn's letter to a friend in a passage beginning "My other lover is about twice Albert's age. . . ." Most early accounts of Behn's life are highly suspect and on occasion almost entirely erroneous.⁵³

Unlike Cavendish and Philips, Behn wrote for a living. She was, of course, a prolific and successful playwright, as well as a writer of prose works, and a compiler of printed miscellanies.⁵⁴ The now-famous depiction of Behn as a prostitute by her

⁵¹See *PEL*, I: 54 for the account of Behn's intelligence mission: In Antwerp "by means of a political intrigue with a *Dutchman*, whom her life-writer calls *Vander Albert*, she discovered the design formed by the *Dutch*, of sailing up the river *Thames*, and burning the English ships in their harbours, which she communicated to the court of *England*, but her intelligence, though well grounded, as appeared by the event, being only laughed at and slighted, she laid aside all further thoughts of state-affairs, and amused herself during her stay at *Antwerp* with the gallantries of that city."

⁵²Page, Colman, 37.

⁵³In the last ten years Janet Todd has eclipsed all other biographies of Behn. See Todd's *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (London: André Deutsch, 1996) and her edition of *The Works of Aphra Behn* (London: William Pickering, 1992). Important to the correction of previous mistakes in dating and geography in Behn's life was Jane Jones's "New Light on the Background and Early Life of Aphra Behn," *Notes and Queries*, v. 235 [New Series v. 37] no. 3 (Sept. 1990) 288-293, and a longer version of this in *Aphra Behn Studies* (1996), 310-320.

⁵⁴Behn's prose includes, among others, *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684), *Orinooko*, *The Fair Jilt*, *Agnes de Castro*, *History of the Nun* and *The Lucky Mistake*, all published in 1689 and

contemporary, Robert Gould, encouraged the ambivalence with which Behn would be read by later generations (“For *Punk* and *Poetess* agree so Pat, / You cannot well be *This*, and not be *That*.”⁵⁵) The English Sappho with the obscure history continued to be portrayed as unforgivably licentious throughout the eighteenth century. The entry on Behn in *Biographia Britannica* (1747) is critical: “Her *novels*, *Oroonoko* excepted, are chiefly translations: Her *Poetry* is none of the best; and her *Comedies*, though not without wit and humour, are full of the most indecent scenes and expressions.”

Yet Behn’s reputation, like her work, was of a tripartite nature. As a writer of prose fiction she was still widely read; in 1751 the ninth edition of Gildon’s compilation of her novels and histories stood witness to Behn’s continued readership.⁵⁶ As a playwright she remained popular on stage and in print, though her works were increasingly bowdlerized, and it was chiefly as a playwright that she was censured. As a poet, she was no longer current since with few exceptions most of her poems seem not to have been reprinted since their original appearances in the 1680s.⁵⁷

reproduced in numerous editions of *The Histories and Novels* (1696) later, *All the Histories and Novels* (1698). A number of the later verse attributions are questionable, for example, three previously unpublished poems attributed to Behn in Gildon’s *Miscellany Poems Upon Several Occasions* (London, 1692). See Greer, n.57, below. See also Appendix A on Anne Finch and Gildon.

⁵⁵*The Poetess. A Satyr* (London, 1707) 3. Gould was paraphrasing Rochester’s “A Letter from Artemezia in the Towne to Chloe in the Country”: “That Whore is scarce a more reproachful name, / Then Poetesse:” *The Poems of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. Keith Walker (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1984). 83: ll.26-7. It is worth noting that Behn herself colluded in “overlapping discourses of commercial, sexual, and linguistic exchange,” as Catharine Gallagher argues, by “introduc[ing] to the world of English letters the professional woman writer as a newfangled whore.”; “Who was that Masked Woman? The Prostitute and the Playwright in the Comedies of Aphra Behn,” *Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism*, ed. Heidi Hutner (Charlottesville; London: UP of Virginia, 1993) 65-85: 66.

⁵⁶Although among those works Gildon brought out, “All eight posthumously published novellas of Aphra Behn should probably be considered spurious.” Greer, “Briscoe,” 41.

⁵⁷A few of her poems were printed individually in *The Muses Mercury: or, The monthly Miscellany*, which ran from January to December of 1707, and contained at least one poem by Behn in every issue from March to December, but *PEL* came nearly forty years later, for a different audience. The *Mercury* reproduced, with variants, the contents of *The Covent Garden Drolery* (London, 1672) which Behn edited and to which she contributed. In the March issue of the *Mercury* was printed Behn’s “The Disoblig’d Love”; April: “To Mrs. H—le, being belov’d by both Sexes. Upon reading the Lives of the Romans.”; May: “Cupid in Chains”; June: “The Complaint of the Poor Cavaliers”; “On a Pin that hurt Amynta’s Eye”; “The Dream”; July: “To Mrs. Harsenet, on the Report of a Beauty, which she went to see at Church”; August: “To J. Hoyle, Esq.”; September: “On Capt— Going to the Wars in Flanders”; October: “To the Author of a New Eutopia”; November: “For Damon, being ask’d a Reason for his Love”; December: “A Song for J. H.” Of these only “The Dream” appears in *PEL*.

Not surprisingly, the virtue-seeking George Ballard did not include Behn among his “Learned Ladies.” The biographical information that trickled down to Colman and Thornton is anecdotal, concluding with the assertion that, after her intelligence mission to Antwerp, Behn “returned to *London*, where she dedicated the rest of her life to pleasure and poetry.”⁵⁸ From what little we do know of Aphra Behn, it was not merely the love of fame, but the need to survive that motivated her dramas and publications. Pleasure had little to do with her life after Antwerp, when debts and dunning drove her efforts and undermined her health. Less than a year before her death, in a poem printed among memorial verses for Edmund Waller, Behn addressed Waller empathetically: “I, who by Toils and Sickness, am become / Almost as near as Thou art to a Tomb?”⁵⁹ The biographical introduction to Behn in *PEL* ends with the epitaph on Behn’s tomb in Westminster Abbey:

Here lies a proof that wit can never be
Defence enough against mortality,
Great Poetess, O! thy stupendous lays,
The world admires, and the Muses praise.⁶⁰

Behn was clearly an ambivalent figure in the eighteenth century, sometimes a heroine, more often a kind of spectral warning. A passage in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, September, 1738, epitomizes both the fear and the admiration many readers felt towards Behn. Titled “The Apotheosis of Milton,” the essay describes a speaker locked in Westminster Abbey at night. There he envisions an assembly gathered to consider the admission of poets into a sort of heavenly brotherhood:

But observe that Lady dressed in the loose *Robe de Chambre* with her neck and Breasts bare; how much Fire in her Eye! What a passionate Expression in her Motions! And how much Assurance in her Features! Observe what an Indignant Look she bestows on the President, who is telling her, that *none*

⁵⁸*PEL*, I: 58.

⁵⁹Behn, “On the Death of Edmund Waller, Esquire,” *Poems to the Memory of the Incomparable Poet Edmund Waller, Esquire By Several Hands* (London, 1688) 17, ll. 3–4.

⁶⁰*PEL*, I: 58.

*of her Sex has any Right to a Seat there. How she throws her Eyes about, to see if she can find any one of the Assembly who inclines to take her Part. No! not one stirs; they who are inclined in her favour are overawed, and the rest shake their Heads; and now She flings out of the Assembly. That extraordinary Woman is Aphra Behn...*⁶¹

Despite Behn's own assertions in prologues and other verses that by taking pen in hand she was expressing her "manly" part, she is highly sexualized in this scenario. Colman and Thornton had access to old volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the notice they give Behn in their own visionary essay at Apollo's court seems to borrow from, and answer this earlier essay:

A bold masculine figure now pushed forward in a thin, airy, gay habit, which hung so loose about her, that she appeared to be half undressed. When she came up to Pegasus she clapped her hand upon the side saddle. . . She made the poor beast frisk and caper, and curvet, and play a thousand tricks, while she herself was quite unconcerned, though she showed her legs at every motion of the horse. . . Thralia, indeed, was a good deal pleased with her frolic; and Erato declared, that next to her favourite Sappho she would always prefer this lady. Upon inquiring her name, I found her to be the free-spirited Mrs. Behn. When she was to dismount, Lord Rochester came up, and caught her in his arms; and repeating part of her Ode to Desire,

-----To a myrtle bower
He led her nothing loth.----- Milton.⁶²

She is clearly admitted to Parnassus in this vision, but she is also treated far less respectfully than in the "Apotheosis." The "Ode to Desire" is footnoted, here, with the volume and page number where it occurs in *PEL*, but rather than quote from Behn's own poem, Mr. Town quotes *Paradise Lost*, and implies that Behn and Rochester have gone off to have sex. "Bold" and "masculine," as well as lascivious and female, the vision of

⁶¹*GM*, #8, Sept. 8, 1738, p. 469. Diana M. A. Relke discusses the "Apotheosis" in connection with a Westminster Abbey fantasy that Laetitia Pilkington constructs in her *Memoirs* (II: 266). See Relke, "In Search of Mrs. Pilkington," *Gender at Work: Four Women Writers of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Ann Messenger (Detroit: Wayne State UP 1990) 114-160:145.

⁶²*Connoisseur* #69, 119-120.

Behn hovers here as a temptation to the reader to explore the writings of this remarkable woman.⁶³

The first section by Behn in the anthology, comprising thirty-three smaller poems, is *A Voyage to the Isle of Love*, sub-titled “An Account from Lysander to Lycidas his friend.” I noted in Chapter Three that *Voyage* is Behn’s translation of Abbé Paul Tallemant’s *Voyage a l’Isle D’Amour* (Paris, 1675). Tallemant’s work was one of at least fifteen imitations and parodies that appeared in the decade following Madeleine de Scudery’s *Carte du Pays de Tendre* (1654). Scudery’s poem is an allegorical topography of the individual’s emotional struggle—a common motif as in Spenser and Bunyan, but reworked as a romantic, rather than a spiritual quest. At the time Behn was writing, translation was both a prestigious and much-debated activity. Harold Love suggests that the latter seventeenth century saw “translation and the closely related craft of imitation” establish themselves “in a way that was both unprecedented and never to be repeated, as the central preoccupation of English poetry.”⁶⁴ Dryden’s many translations were widely read. Thomas Creech, who made his name as a translator of Lucretius, Horace, Theocritus and Manilius, wrote little original work, yet was lauded by Behn as a second Rochester. Love isolates seven modes of translation that were available to the Restoration poet, from “crib” or direct, word by word translation, to “a final class of reconstructions *ad libitum* out of the rubble of demolished texts.” Whereas the first, laborious effort was rarely attempted, freer imitations were common, especially in reworkings of French writers, with whom Restoration poets would willingly take more liberties than with the classics.⁶⁵ The expansion and compression of the original lines and themes were often substantial. The translation of a poem often meant its transformation, and Aphra Behn’s translation of *Voyage* is very much her own creation. Behn doubled

⁶³Coming so near the beginning of the anthology, and with such a generous selection, Behn seems to dominate this first volume. A nineteenth-century sale catalogue, a fragment of which is now inserted in the University of Toronto copy of *PEL*, advertises it as a book of poems by Behn, with seventeen others.

⁶⁴Harold Love, “The Art of Adaptation: Some Restoration Treatments of Ovid,” *Poetry and Drama 1570-1700: Essays in Honour of Harold F. Brooks*, ed. Anthony Coleman and Antony Hammond (London and NY: Methuen, 1981) 136-155: 136.

⁶⁵Love, “Adaptation,” 140.

the length of the French poem, rendered the prose narration of Tallemant's piece into verse, expanded the songs, and took liberties with poetic license that "questioned many of its masculinist assumptions."⁶⁶ Behn also transformed the flirtatious speech of a man to his lover in Tallemant's story, to a tale told by one (male) friend to another.

Voyage begins with Lysander giving thanks to Lycidus for a friendship "which still enlarged with years and sense / Till it arriv'd to perfect excellence."⁶⁷ Lysander then describes this journey of the heart prompted by a voyage to a geographical location:

This is the coast of *Africa*,
Where all things sweetly move;
This is the calm *Atlantic* sea,
And that the *Isle of Love*;⁶⁸

The poem is essentially an allegory about the human flaws, institutions and customs that thwart passion. Lysander's beloved, Aminta, makes him wretched, jealous and ecstatic by turns, and Lysander must experience hope, pretension, discretion, despair, absence and resolve and other states of mind in sections under those titles. Finally, Aminta is snatched away from his arms by *Devoir* and dies; Lysander is left to wander the desert of remembrance.

Readers of *PEL* had eighty-two pages of the *Voyage* in which to immerse themselves before the remainder of Behn's section; there is nothing else comparable to this series of poems in the rest of the anthology, either for length, or for sensuality. In a section titled "The Dream," Lysander sleeps, and his imagination creates a titillating vision:

All trembling in my arms Aminta lay,
Defending of the bliss I strove to take;
Raising my rapture by her kind delay,

⁶⁶Ellen Brinks, "Meeting Over the Map: Madeleine de Scudery's *Carte du Pays de Tendre* and Aphra Behn's *Voyage to the Isle of Love*," *Restoration* 17:1 (1993) 39-52: 39.

⁶⁷*PEL*, I: 60, ll. 14-15.

⁶⁸*PEL*, I: 64, ll. 128-131.

Her force so charming was and weak.
 The soft resistance did betray the grant,
 While I press'd on the heaven of my desires;

 ----Now the last mystery of Love she knows,
 We sigh, and kiss: I wak'd, and all was done.⁶⁹

This dream is obviously wet, and Colman and Thornton were taking the chance of offending their readers by including it. They were also clearly hopeful that readers would be as entertained as they were themselves with this curious woman's fearless verse. While the letters that introduce Mary Barber's verse at the beginning of this first volume "Swift's praise for Barber's domestic virtues, and Jones's disapproval of ladies who wrote of love" may have been intended to partially counteract this protracted indulgence in amorous verse, the two epistles are not adequate to temper the quantity, or the power of Behn's contribution to *PEL*. The "myrtle bower" to which Rochester leads Behn in the *Connoisseur* article seems to echo the "Bower of Bliss" that Lysander later encounters on his voyage, a place where, like Behn's own writings, "Each minute new discoveries bring, / Of something sweet, of something ravishing."⁷⁰

Most of the minor poems by Behn in the miscellany also focus on romantic love. One of these, "On a Locket of Hair wove in a True Lover's Knot, given me by Sir. R. O.," describes the love-knot as almost mystical. All the hairs woven therein represent shafts from Cupid's quiver. Cupid is a recurring character in Behn's poetry, a minor deity figuring largely in *The Voyage to the Isle of Love* as Lysander's chief adviser, and powerfully in other, shorter poems. For example, in the poem "On Her Loving Two Equally. A Song" the speaker wishes that Cupid would remove the dart from one of two men whom she loves, but she cannot decide which this should be. The influence of cavalier poets like Herrick and Lovelace is evident in the "seize the day" tone of the piece (which stands in contrast to some of the later poetry in *PEL*, where the emphasis is on the certain superiority of the life after death). Behn's speaker comments on the fleeting nature of youth and beauty, imploring his beloved: "Then haste, my Silvia to the Grove."

⁶⁹*PEL*, I: 81, ll. 1-1-6, 11-12.

A sense of both the urgency to gather rosebuds while ye may as well as the defiance of time are present in the conclusion. In an amorous embrace, “The duller world while we defie, / Years will be minutes, ages hours.”⁷¹ Behn’s “In Imitation of Horace,” printed later in the anthology, is the adaptation of the poem in which Horace’s final line advised the reader *carpe diem*.⁷²

A similar note is struck in the second major translation by Behn in *PEL*, *The Golden Age*, the conclusion of which contains much matter in a little space:

Then let us, Sylvia, yet be wise,
And the gay hasty minutes prize:
The sun and spring receive but our short light,
Once set, a sleep brings an eternal night.⁷³

“The Golden Age” describes a period before the Olympian gods seized power, and combines with it the notion of Eden. Here, people free from labour enjoy a pastoral world untouched even by agriculture (“the stubborn plough had then / Made no rude rapes upon the virgin earth”).⁷⁴ Unlike Eden, however, in Tasso’s and Behn’s dystopian landscape, “alienation, labour, and repression are not the consequences of originary sin but are continually being reproduced by the repression of desire, or by “Pride and Avarice.”⁷⁵ This repression originates with the authorities of church and state. As in the

⁷⁰*PEL*, I: 133, ll.9-10.

⁷¹*PEL*, I: 156-57, ll. 17, 23-24.

⁷²Horace’s original, I. xi. 1. is “Tu ne quaesieris (scire nefas) quem mihi, quem tibi / Finem Dī dederint, Leuconoe” (Leuconoe, do not desire to know (for it is unlawful) what term of life the Gods have allotted to me, what to you). *The Works of Horace, Translated into English Prose... Together with The Original Latin, from the Best Editions*, 2 vols. Comp. David Watson (London: Longman, 1792) I: 48, 49. Behn’s poem doubles Horace’s original twelve lines and writes as a woman addressing a man, whereas Horace’s own piece is addressed to a woman, as are versions of the same piece by Milton, Creech and Cowley.

⁷³*PEL*, I: 149-150, ll.191-194. This is an imitation of Catullus, 5, vv. 4-6. *Nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux, / Nox est perpetua una dormienda*. See Chapter Three for the history of this translation. Janet Todd also notes that “unlike Tasso and presumably following her French source, [Behn] writes as if she were a man addressing a woman.” Janet Todd, ed. *The Poems of Aphra Behn: A Selection* (London: William Pickering, 1994) 220.

⁷⁴*PEL*, I: 143, ll.32-33.

⁷⁵Robert Markley and Molly Rothenberg, “Contestations of Nature: Aphra Behn’s “The Golden Age” and

Isle of Love, honour is here the enemy of love and harmony, and the impediment to recreating the era for which the poet longs.⁷⁶ Barash notes that Behn invokes a time when “sexual desires could be expressed and not instantly commodified or placed in a temporal hierarchy, a time prior to both monarchy and commerce.”⁷⁷

What is striking and important about the *printing* of *The Golden Age* in *PEL* is the unique omission of two couplets at different locations in this piece – the only occurrence of such excisions in the entire two-volume collection. The first omission occurs in Section IV, which deals with a time before monarchic rule. The following lines are taken from Behn’s 1684 *Poems*. The couplet omitted from the version in *PEL* is in square brackets.

Then no rough sound of Wars alarms
Had taught the World the needless use of Arms:
Monarchs were uncreated then,
Those Arbitrary Rulers over men;
[Kings that made Laws, first broke ‘em and the Gods
By teaching us Religion first, first set the World at Odds:]
Till then ambition was not known,
That Poyson to content, Bane to Repose;
Each Swain was lord o’er his own will alone,
His Innocence Religion was, and Laws.
Nor needed any troublesome Defence
Against his Neighbours Insolence.⁷⁸

Later, the fifth and sixth lines of Section VII in Behn’s 1684 *Poems* are also omitted from the anthology. The sentiments here recalls the private vows lovers exchanged in the days when they were allowed to meet, uninhibited by the laws that now govern intimacy. Again, it is a significant couplet that Colman and Thornton omit:

the Sexualizing of Politics,” *Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory and Criticism*, ed. Heidi Hutner (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1993) 301-321:303.

⁷⁶Todd, *The Poems of Aphra Behn*, 220.

⁷⁷Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community, and Linguistic Authority* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1996) 107. Tasso's poem had been translated into English in 1628 by Henry Reynolds, who downplayed the sexual freedom that characterizes the original, but Behn's French source, and Behn herself, clearly describe this appealing aspect of the age.

The Lovers thus, thus uncontroul'd did meet,
 Thus all their Joyes and Vows of Love repeat:
 Joyes which were everlasting, ever new
 And every Vow inviolably true:
 [Not kept in fear of Gods, no fond Religious cause,
 Nor in Obedience to the duller Laws]
 The Fopperies of the Gown were then not known,
 Those vain, those Politick Curbs to keep man in,
 Who by a fond mistake Created that a Sin;
 Which free-born we, by right of nature claim our own.⁷⁹

The attention to detail throughout the rest of *The Golden Age* in *PEL*, the accurate reprinting of poems throughout the anthology, and the similarity between these two expurgated passages suggest that these lacunae were deliberate, rather than oversight. Arguably, these excised couplets reiterate some of Behn's objections that appear in the rest of "The Golden Age." Those who wear the gown and the crown are oppressive figures. Whereas several other poems in *PEL* satirize marriage, none attacks the divine institution of matrimony as Behn does here.

Whether it is morality or more earth-bound issues of authority that influence these excisions may be called into question, however. Equally striking is the rejection of divine authority in both excised couplets. The word "Laws," used disparagingly, occurs in both passages, and it is this which characterizes these lines as the only four with which Colman and Thornton chose to tamper, rather than to include in their light and easy book of women's verse. It may be that here contemporary pressures were brought to bear on Behn's text. The lines the editors chose to omit would have commented adversely on Lord Hardwicke's controversial Marriage Act of 1753, legislated to put some check on the possible rashness of the young, who could not be validly married without parental consent. While the Act largely repeated the existing laws governing marriages, its crucial innovation was to make illegal marriages invalid. Behn's nostalgia for the "inviolable"

⁷⁸Behn, "The Golden Age," *Poems* (London, 1684) section IV: ll. 1-12.

⁷⁹"The Golden Age," *Poems* (1684), section VII, ll. 1-10.

nature of the vows repeated by “uncontroul’d” lovers, though unrelated to the later marriage act, might have seemed to dispute this very legislation.⁸⁰

Another poem by Behn makes the same sort of claim that is omitted from *The Golden Age*. Titled simply “Song,” its eight lines present a skeptical view of actual marriage rather than the sacred institution:

In vain does Hymen with religious vows
Oblige his slaves to wear his chains with ease;
A privilege alone that Love allows,
'Tis Love alone can make our fetters please.⁸¹

The difference here is that the “angry” tyrant in this poem is Hymen itself—a sentiment that the two bachelor editors may then have shared. The latter poem is not only secular but the conventional sort of raillery against the pagan god, whereas Christian doctrine as well as the monarchy are criticized in the longer poem.

The omissions in *The Golden Age* suggest the impulse to present Behn’s views on royalty as monochromatic, rather than conveying the poet’s more interesting duality as a Royalist and a critic of monarchy. In over six-hundred pages of verse, these are the only excisions that Colman and Thornton make. An exploration of the unknowable in Behn’s *Golden Age* becomes, in the anthology, the unspeakable.⁸²

Still, Behn’s own views on love and desire come through clearly in *PEL*. As mentioned above, one of the recurring topics in Behn’s verse (and other genres) is the notion that what is conventionally meant by the term “honour” is often, in fact,

⁸⁰Colman and Thornton raised the marriage act as a topic in *Connoisseur* #4: “I find the whole sex in general have expected from me some shrewd remarks upon the Marriage Bill.” Mr. Town avoids making such remarks (or, they are made very shrewdly) by turning the topic to women who should be married because “custom has given a certain charm to wedlock which changes the colour of our actions, and renders that behaviour not improper, which in a state of celibacy would be accounted indecent and scandalous.” Feb. 21, 1754, I: 19-24. More importantly, Mary Jones’s letter in praise of Mary Barber at the beginning of *PEL* condemns poems by women “in which *Coryden* has proved false; or. . . *Sylvia*’s cruel parents have had prudence enough to keep two mad people from playing the fool together, for life.” *PEL*, I: 6.

⁸¹*PEL*, I: 164, ll.1-4.

dishonourable. Behn casts chivalric action in an unsavoury light in a number of her verses. One such poem, titled “Song to a Scottish tune” in Behn’s text, and “Scots Song” in *PEL*, is spoken (or sung) by a young woman who laments her lover’s exchange of a shepherd’s accoutrements for those of the soldier: “His sheep-hook to a sword must turn,” she complains, “Alack, what shall I do?” She refuses to accept that his ambition is honourable, and ends her lament with a sorrowful prediction and a pragmatic query:

His bag-pipe into war-like sounds
Must now exchanged be:
Instead of Bracelets, fearful Wounds;
Then what becomes of me?⁸³

The poem, which comments on the young men of an impoverished land leaving home to become mercenary soldiers, first appeared in *The Covent Garden Drolery* in 1672, then in Behn’s 1684 *Poems*. Despite the fact that it is economic pressure which drives the humble shepherd, the principal target of this piece was likely James Scott, the Duke of Monmouth, Charles II’s illegitimate son by Lucy Walter. Until Monmouth’s execution in 1785, for raising a rebellion against his Catholic uncle, James II, Behn wrote often about Monmouth, in tones of remonstrance albeit tempered by sympathy and admiration.⁸⁴ In these pieces he is troped as a shepherd and swain, and continually referred to in terms of Scottishness.⁸⁵

⁸²The “Act of Parliament, 6 Anne, cap. 7 (1707), made it treason to maintain by printing or writing that the Pretender or his offspring had a legitimate title to the crown of England.” Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England*, 366.

⁸³“Scots Song,” *PEL*, I:152, II, 29-32.

⁸⁴ Behn was arrested in August 1682, along with an actress, for an incendiary epilogue to an anonymous play called *The Tragedy of Romulus*, in which she criticized James Scott for aligning himself with the Exclusionists in open rebellion to his father. “The arrest was recorded in the *True Protestant Mercury* (Saturday, 12 August-Wednesday, 16 August 1682). It is not known what action was taken as a result.” Ros Ballaster, “Fiction feigning femininity: false counts and pageant kings in Aphra Behn’s Popish Plot writings,” *Aphra Behn Studies*, 50-65:65. For a more detailed discussion of Behn’s responses to Monmouth see Virginia Crompton, “For when the act is done and finish’d cleane, / What should the poet doe, but shift the scene?: propaganda, professionalism and Aphra Behn,” *Aphra Behn Studies*, 130-153.

⁸⁵As Todd notes, in more than one of Behn’s “SONGS,” “the tune and dialect are allegedly “Scotch” so as to make clear the poem’s allusion to Monmouth: as well as his name (James Scott), he was now connected with Scotland as a result of his successful military campaign against the Covenanters, culminating in the

Another poem reprinted in *PEL*, “Silvio’s Complaint,” again reproaches Monmouth for his role in national politics. Behn’s poem in part describes and in part is sung by “a noble youth” who declares: “‘Twas better I’s was ne’er born, / E’er wish’d to be a king.” More harshly, Behn denounces Monmouth’s counsellors --particularly Shaftesbury, whom Dryden condemned in *Absalom and Achitophel* in 1681. Like Dryden, Behn must walk a fine line in this poem, heaping censure on all but the young man who wished to usurp the throne. Here Behn renamed Shaftesbury “old Thirsis,” whose influence Sylvio blames for his own fall:

There I first my peace forsook,
There I learnt ambition first.
Such glorious songs of heroes crown’d,
The restless swain wou’d sing:
My soul unknown desires sound,
And languish’d to be king.⁶⁶

Thanks to these Tory poems, chosen by Colman and Thornton, Aphra Behn’s pro-Stuart sympathies were evident to readers in 1755, as they had been in 1684. It is possible, however, that the readers of *PEL*, knowing the history of the Duke of Monmouth, would have associated these poems with more recent threats to the throne, again from the Stuart line, and that the very “Scottishness” of Behn’s writings would have contributed to this altered reading.

That the title “Scots Song” introduces a poem which laments a man going to battle would have had a contemporary significance for the readers of *PEL*. In their own recent past the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 saw Charles Edward Louis Stuart (1720-1788), son of the titular James III, attempt to reclaim the British throne with the help of Scottish supporters. The battle of Culloden brought bitter defeat in 1746, after which Charles fled to France. This was followed by stringent legislation aimed at cultural humiliation for the Highlanders. While Bonnie Prince Charlie lived out the remainder of his life in France and Italy, Highland dress was outlawed, and hostility toward the Gaelic tongue increased

battle of Bothwell Bridge in 1679.” Todd, *Behn’s Works*, I: 397-98n. Moreover, James Scott was Duke of Buccleugh, a title which his descendants inherited, whereas the Dukedom of Monmouth died with him.

dramatically.⁸⁷ Charles lived until 1788, and though he eventually lost all foreign support for his cause, many English even after 1760 felt a continuous threat from the North. In 1750 the Duke of Newcastle was still receiving intelligence reports declaring that “Highlanders seem[ed] more inclined to rebellion than ever.” The berating of a Scottish shepherd-turned soldier by his abandoned lover, therefore, still comments indirectly on British sovereignty, but Behn’s 1684 remonstrance to Monmouth had become a very different thing by 1755. Both “Scots Song” and “Silvio’s Complaint” are about foolhardy and ambitious lads – a mould which Bonnie Prince Charlie did fit. As an infant, he had been extolled as “*SPEs BRITANNIAE*” (the hope of Britain), and Jacobite sympathies continued to run high after his adventurous escape to France. Jeremy Potter notes that “Bonnie Prince Charlie belongs to Scottish romance” in the same way that Monmouth, “the most romantic of England’s pretenders,” is his English counterpart.⁸⁸

The concern in 1755 was more general than specific. It is not insignificant that the editors of *PEL* decided upon the song that underlines a Scottish shepherd’s unfortunate choice to become a mercenary. He is a man of the common people, representative, perhaps, of the folly of a faction of that people in embracing the Jacobite cause. What is titled “Scots Song” in *PEL*, therefore, may refer to the song, or more apropos, the dirge, of a scot (to refer to Monmouth), or of *the* Scots, who chose sides badly, and suffered ‘fearful wounds’ in the Jacobite rebellions of the 1740s.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *PEL*, I: 157-160:159, II.7-8, 43-48.

⁸⁷ Bruce Lenman, *The Jacobite Cause* (Glasgow: Richard Drew Publishing, 1986) 117.

⁸⁸ Jeremy Potter, *Pretenders*, (London: Constable, 1987) 137-38. Charles and Monmouth had different kinds of supporters, and different religious sympathies. With the hindsight of 1755 readers knew, too, that Monmouth had been executed following the invasions of 1685, whereas Charles was safe and still plotting, first in France, then Italy, the center of Catholicism. By the time *PEL* was published, rumours of the bonnie Prince’s drunkenness and the lack of foreign support for his cause had diminished his stature with many of those who had sympathized with him. David Greenwood’s biography of Dr. William King of Oxford makes it clear that even hard-core Jacobite support for a restoration – which after all had produced no significant English support, despite the widespread panic among Hanoverian loyalists, in 1745 – fell off in the 1750s, especially when King and others met Charles in London in 1750. King concluded he was not worthy of the crown, and quietly abandoned the cause of which he had been a leader for forty years. Greenwood, *William King: Tory and Jacobite*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969)

⁸⁹ In the debates on the civil list of George I, Colman’s uncle William Pulteney had supported the proposal by Walpole that a reward of £100,000 be offered to anyone apprehending the Pretender (then the titular James III) should he try to land on English soil. *DNB*, xvi: 422.

Both inclusions and omissions in the anthology suggest a subtle reinterpretation both of Aphra Behn and of her work.⁹⁰ The excision of lines that in 1684 suggested lovers should be unconstrained by laws would have anticipated, and may have echoed, curiously, the complaints of the opponents of the 1753 Marriage Act. Similarly, Behn's "Scottish" poems still function in 1755 to censure a claim to the throne, but it is now the claim of a different prince, and a different crisis of legitimation, and the poetry seems to comment on events, like the battle of Culloden, that occurred long after the poet's death. Between the freedom with which Behn wrote about love and sexuality, and her political allusions and the resonances that accompanied these, mid-eighteenth-century readers would have discovered a poet whose work and life seemed fixed in a very different era from their own, but whose subject matter --intense passion, an idealized past, and the nature of monarchy --could not have been alien to their own concerns.

IV. ANNE KILLIGREW (1660-1685)

Her superior genius being improved by a polite education, she became eminent in the arts of poetry and painting.

George Ballard⁹¹

Unlike Aphra Behn in that she died young, published nothing in her lifetime, and retained a reputation for virtue throughout her life and posthumously, Anne Killigrew was also embraced by the powers that created a canon of seventeenth-century women writers. She was born in 1660, on the cusp of the Restoration, and (like *Tristram Shandy*) was christened privately, since the baptism service in the Book of Common Prayer was at the time forbidden by Parliament. Her father was Dr. Henry Killigrew, a Royalist, theologian and dramatist, related to other theatrical Killigrews. Anne grew up to join the household of Mary of Modena, second wife of the Duke of York, later James II, as a maid of honour.

⁹⁰Colman and Thornton chose not to reproduce poems from Behn that related to her plays, the various prologue and epilogues that appeared in her *Poems*. Nor did they include pieces on more occasions that would not be easily identifiable to the reader (for instance, a piece "On the Death of Mr. Grinhill the famous Painter.")

Mary became queen four months before Anne died of smallpox, on 16 June 1685, whereupon Henry Killigrew put together a memorial volume of her verses, *Poems by Mrs. Anne Killigrew* (1685). It was for this book that Dryden wrote his prefatory "To the Pious Memory of the Accomplish't Young Lady Mrs. Anne Killigrew, Excellent in the two Sister-Arts of Poesie, and Painting." Killigrew's memory has survived mostly in Dryden's ode, which praises her skill in these dual arts, and equates her with Katherine Philips on two levels: death by smallpox, and a fine quality of soul:

But thus Orinda dy'd:
Heav'n, by the same disease, did both translate,
As equal were their souls, so equal were their fate.⁹²

Like Ballard in his *Memoirs*, Colman and Thornton conclude their introduction to Killigrew's work with these three lines, "as they also do honour to another female character."⁹³ It is a nice juxtaposition of two women whose writings they have included in their collection, and a reminder of Dryden's approval of both. Again, these lines reiterate what seems to be the memorial function of *PEL*.

Of the twenty-two poems printed in Killigrew's posthumous volume, eight are reproduced in *PEL*.⁹⁴ Elizabeth Hampsten reads Killigrew's work as being "almost entirely about violence and corruption." The poet is "bitter, the evils of the age are senseless and wasteful."⁹⁵ The task of the editors of *PEL* was therefore a challenging one, given that the tone of the anthology overall is light. For example, instead of reprinting a dark occasional poem, "On My Aunt Mrs. A. K., Drowned Under London Bridge in the

⁹¹Ballard, *Memoirs*, 337.

⁹²Dryden, "To the Pious Memory of the Accomplished Young Lady Mrs Anne Killigrew," *Poems by Mrs Anne Killigrew* (London, 1686) [ii.], ll. 162-164. qtd. in Ballard, 339. George Ballard's account of Killigrew combines a "superior genius" with "polite education," but he quotes only Dryden's ode, not her own poetry.

⁹³*PEL*, II: 2

⁹⁴The copy of Killigrew's *Poems* now at the Folger has in the margin of the index ten autograph X's beside various titles, seven of these being among the eight included in *PEL*. The discrepancy (three extra titles noted, one omitted) suggests that there is no connection with *PEL*. The markings do suggest, however, that these were among the most popular of her verses.

⁹⁵Elizabeth Hampsten, "Petticoat Authors: 1660-1721," *Women's Studies*, 7 (1980) 21-38: 31-32.

Queen's Barge, Anno 1641," Colman and Thornton chose such pieces as "The Complaint of a Lover," a mildly satiric pastoral song, and the optimistic "Love, the Soul of Poetry."

The desire for poetic fame is a source of problematic pride in the writings of most of the women in *PEL*, though each differs in her response to the notion of fame. In "Love, the Soul of Poetry," Killigrew writes of Alexis, who first wrote because he delighted in verse, and was inspired by the pastoral landscape around him. His muse was initially "low" and, though graceful, never "noble." Love altered this, and "new raptures" inspired his verse, proving "love to be, / As the world's soul, the soul of poetry." The explanation is a sentimental one, and seems to demand a male protagonist/shepherd, although it is a woman who writes about his poetic maturation. If love is the soul of poetry, does modesty then prohibit women from fully engaging in writing verse?

Killigrew addresses and forestalls this problem in a piece that appears later in her section in *PEL*. "Upon the Saying that my verses were made by another" has become the most anthologized and discussed of her poems. Not only her honesty, but her posterity too, are at stake in this poem. Killigrew was accused "we know not by whom" of plagiarism due to her use of stock phrases and epithets. Here, she compares her own reputation to that of Katherine Philips, and appeals to Philips's writing as a model for her sex. Again, this fits well with the connection that Colman and Thornton create in the prefatory writings in *PEL*, and reinforces the impression that the contents of the anthology are cohesive, that the poets in the collection authorized one another.

As one might expect, Killigrew's verse is more visual and visually-inspired than that of most of the period. "The reader will here find," the editors promises, "that she sometimes employed her quill and her pencil on the same subject."⁹⁶ She frequently adapted biblical imagery, often obscure, revealing a careful study of scripture and an artistry in "making it new" that Ann Messenger suggests belies Dryden's emphasis on her lack of art.⁹⁷ Dryden devotes more space to her painting than to her verse in his "Ode," and some of the titles Killigrew gave her poems do feel like still lifes. "St. John Baptist,

⁹⁶*PEL*, II: 2.

⁹⁷Messenger, *His and Hers: Essays in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky) 14 passim.

painted by her self in the Wilderness, with Angels appearing to him, and with a Lamb by him” is composed of four couplets. Both this poem and another on Salome refer to two paintings by Killigrew on the life of the saint. Here, John the Baptist speaks to the reader, describing the simple perfection of his life:

The sun’s my fire, when it does shine,
 The hollow spring’s my cave of wine,
 The rocks and woods afford me meat;
 This lamb and I on one dish eat:
 The neighbouring herds my garments send,
 My pallet the kind earth doth lend:
 Excess and grandure I decline,
 M’associates only are divine.⁹⁸

The specificity of “this” lamb with whom the saint shares his food emphasizes the immediate visual inspiration for the poem, as well as the combined experience of reading and gazing upon the scene in the wilderness. Killigrew underlined her dual artistry in both mediums, including a self portrait (c.1685) where the artist points to a piece of paper in her left hand, reminding the gazer that she is also a writer. Killigrew’s dual role of painter and poet is reflected in “John the Baptist,” in the way she seems to lend her own voice to John, or to borrow his, when the prophet speaks of his “pallet.”⁹⁹

The second poem relating to John the Baptist, again inspired by one of her own paintings, is “Herodia’s[sic] Daughter presenting to her Mother St. John’s Head in a charger, also painted by herself.” This poem shares a page with the previous one on John (both in Killigrew’s *Poems* and in *PEL*). Again written in the first person, “Herodia’s Daughter” is six couplets in which Salome addresses her mother triumphantly, entreating her to “behold” the “disarmed and harmless” prophet. A repulsive image of the saint’s tongue is evoked, probably inadvertently, as literally knotted, in the lines “I present you here; / The Tongue ty’d up, that made all Jury quake, / And which so often did our Greatness shake.” More successful is the description: “No terror sits upon his awful

⁹⁸*PEL*, II: 6, ll.1-8.

brow, / where fierceness reign'd, there calmness triumphs now," in which the reader can visualize the martyr's head.¹⁰⁰ Killigrew strikes an interesting note near the end by twisting Salome's speech to conflate the seductive means she employed with Herod, and the resulting death of the prophet:

As lovers use, he gazes on my face,
With eyes that languish, as they sued for grace;
Wholly subdu'd by my victorious charms,
See how his head reposes in my arms.¹⁰¹

This entreaty to "see" is powerful and evocative, encapsulating both Salome's request of her mother and Killigrew's manipulation of the reader. Although both of Killigrew's John the Baptist poems are brief, there is a quality of the dramatic lyric in them: "Come, joyn with me in my just transport, / Who thus have brought the hermite to the court."¹⁰²

Salome was one of the many biblical examples, beginning with Eve, who was cited in the misogynist debate about the nature of women's souls. The paintings and literature of early modern Europe, of course, depict Salome as the fearful, seductive harlot who demands and receives the hero's head. Elizabeth Hampsten posits that Killigrew envisions a woman who "brings to court a man in possibly his only harmless, entirely loveable state: dead."¹⁰³ How Killigrew felt about John the Baptist though is more complicated than this conjecture. The legend of the prophet and depictions thereof which prompted Killigrew to engage in painting and versifying John the Baptist were ingrained in her culture, but her immediate inspiration may have been closer to home.

Anne's father, Henry, was Anglican chaplain to the Duke of York and Master of the Savoy, a manor in the Strand that was put to a number of uses through the centuries. Built along the Thames in 1245, it was burnt, repaired, and neglected until Henry VII

⁹⁹According to the *OED* this refers usually to a straw bed, but there could be a play on 'palette', which was also spelled 'pallet'.

¹⁰⁰*PEL*. II: 7, ll.2-2; 5-6.

¹⁰¹ll.7-10.

¹⁰²ll.11-12.

endowed the Savoy as a hospital dedicated to St. John the Baptist for the relief of 100 poor.¹⁰⁴ At the Restoration it was the meeting place of the commission on the revision of the Liturgy. It was re-endowed by Queen Mary, and maintained as a hospital until the accession of Queen Anne, when it became a refuge for debtors and disorderly persons.¹⁰⁵ Anne Killigrew, who knew the Savoy well, would likely have spent some time there, if not in the hospital itself, then certainly in the Savoy chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist, where she is now buried. Most of the paintings and stained glass in the chapel have been destroyed or replaced, so that we cannot ascertain precisely what Killigrew saw there. Her interest in representations of the story of St. John may well relate to this edifice, and reflects the art present there during her lifetime. Her physical environment lends a context to the composition of the John the Baptist poems.¹⁰⁶

Nor does Hampsten's interpretation of Killigrew's poem take into account the likelihood that the Baptist's story held profound meaning for Restoration readers, for whom public beheadings were part of the collective experience. Anne Killigrew lived in interesting times, with a strong sense that even an institution like the monarchy was not permanent. Further, the historical importance of John the Baptist as the *innocent* victim of a ghastly execution would not be lost on a Restoration audience. Killigrew's poems were composed while she was a member of Maria's entourage, first during the reign of Charles II, then James II, and the image of a sovereign beheaded had not disappeared with

¹⁰³Hampsten, "Petticoat," 32.

¹⁰⁴Henry Benjamin Wheatley, *London, Past and Present; its History, Associations, and Traditions*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1891) III: 217-219. Dryden's publisher, Jacob Tonson, had a warehouse there. The Savoy was the last place that so-called Fleet-Street marriages were performed, and at the time *PEL* was produced it was best known for its minister, John Wilkinson, who from 1728 to 1758 married 1190 couples in illegal weddings, for which he was later sentenced to transportation. Mervyn Blatch, *A Guide to London's Churches* (London: Constable and Company, 1978) 263. Nonsense club member Charles Churchill had a clandestine marriage at the Fleet in 1750.

¹⁰⁵Henry Killigrew beat out Abraham Cowley for the position of Master. Killigrew was at least in part responsible for the final bankruptcy of the hospital, and his life was threatened several times during the late 1660s and early 1670s. Barash, *English Women's Poetry*, 163.

¹⁰⁶Neither of the Baptist paintings is thought to be extant, nor is one representing yet another biblical beheading: *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, a canvas that was sold with two other paintings with Killigrew's brother's estate in 1712. See Barash, p. 300, for the titles of paintings known to be by Killigrew.

time. Her family's loyalties and her own interests as a maid of honour were clearly defined.

Among the other poems by Killigrew in *PEL*, it is not surprising to find included one neat couplet, "An Epitaph on herself": "When I am Dead, few Friends attend my hearse, / And for a monument, I leave my VERSE." None of Killigrew's poems is very long, and Colman and Thornton chose the shortest of these. Following "Epitaph," the six-line "Extemporary Counsel to a Young Gallant in a frolick," advises the young man, conventionally, to avoid slavery to beauty or gold, and to strive toward honour and virtue. The final couplet of Killigrew's section contains its own closure, reiterating the tendency in *PEL* to conclude each selection with a dramatic flourish: "When virtue you dare own, not think it odd, / Or ungenteel to say, 'I fear a God.'"¹⁰⁷

Dryden's ode did much to preserve Killigrew's memory, but the poet laureate's lines on her evidently did not promote re-printings of her poems. In Dryden's miscellany and numerous larger miscellany collections many readers would have encountered the verses written in her memory, but prior to 1755 few knew Anne Killigrew, Dryden's subject, in her own role as artist.

V. MARY CHUDLEIGH (1656-1710)

Born in 1656 to Richard Lee, a man of considerable property, in Winslade, Devonshire, and Mary Sydenham, Mary Lee married Sir George Chudleigh of Ashton in 1685. Dryden knew and approved her work, which points to her own participation in coterie manuscript circulation, but her writings appeared in print only in the last ten years of her life, so that her production and publication straddled the turn of the century. The work that was finally produced for the wider reading public was popular, as well as highly influential with other women writers, because she was first drawn into print by the compulsion to defend the worth and rights of women. Chudleigh's best known poem, *The Ladies' Defence*, was first printed anonymously, in 1701, in answer to a virulent misogynist sermon on conjugal duty, titled "The Bride-Woman's Counsellor" and

preached by the non-conformist minister John Sprint.¹⁰⁸ Her *Essays upon Several Subjects in Prose and Verse* appeared in 1710, and her letters to Elizabeth Thomas (written 1701-3) were published among those that Thomas sold to Edmund Curll, who printed them in *Pylades and Corinna* (1731). As mentioned, these letters also appeared in the Wharton family publications.

Colman and Thornton again borrowed from Ballard for their information about Chudleigh, whose granddaughters subscribed to the *Memoirs* and supplied Ballard with original documents.¹⁰⁹ Following the *DNB*, a myth of constrictive domesticity has been written around her as a historical figure, due to the questions she raised in her writings, but no proof of her own marital unhappiness exists. The deaths of four of her six children and her own deteriorating health from a crippling rheumatism made life difficult for her, but as Margaret Ezell notes, Chudleigh at no time wrote directly about her own marriage. Ezell argues that the tendency “to supplement the bare facts of Chudleigh’s life by reading the contents of her poems as though they were strictly autobiographical, confessional accounts of her personal situation” is misleading, and that Chudleigh’s work taken as a whole reads not as a coherent autobiographical chronicle but instead “a continuous philosophical exploration of human passions and the ways to live a truly harmonious life, at peace with one’s passions.”¹¹⁰

Chudleigh’s own volume of verse opens with a direct appeal to women, identifying them as the principal audience of her poems: “If the Ladies, for whom they are chiefly design’d, and to whose Service they are entirely devoted, happen to meet with any thing in them that is entertaining, I have all I am at.”¹¹¹ Rather than an ingratiating tone, this reflects a kind of welcome chivalry from a woman toward women. Carol Barash demonstrates that Chudleigh relied especially on the position of Queen Anne for her own

¹⁰⁷ *PEL*, II: 14, 5-6.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter Three for a note on the print history of the “Defence.” For a comprehensive account of Chudleigh’s life and career, see Margaret J. M. Ezell, Introduction, *The Poems and Prose of Mary Lady Chudleigh*, Women Writers in English Series 1350-1850 (NY and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993) xvii-xxxvi.

¹⁰⁹ Ezell, *Chudleigh*, xxi.n.

¹¹⁰ Ezell, *Chudleigh*, xviii.

authority as writing woman. Chudleigh dedicated her *Poems on Several Occasions* to Anne; the volume begins with a poem commemorating the death of the Queen's son, and ends with a poem cataloguing powerful women, with the poet's "ambitious Muse, . . . in service, and in praise" of Anne.¹¹² This historical strain of maternal-monarchic zeal is not evident in the poems by Chudleigh that are reprinted in the 1755 anthology. Rather, Chudleigh's broader, early feminist concerns are introduced in the six poems that Colman and Thornton had printed, and it is these that frame the section in *PEL*.¹¹³

The first poem by Chudleigh in the anthology, "To the Ladies," has become the most frequently anthologized of her poems. It is compact, pithy, and polemical about the negative side of marriage.¹¹⁴ Certainly the cynical opening lines would appeal to a large percentage of the anthology's female readership "Wife and Servant are the same, / But only differ in the name." Further on, the poet complains that,

When she the word *obey* has said,
And man by law supreme has made,
Then all that's kind is laid aside,
And nothing's left but state and pride.¹¹⁵

This was not an uncommon grievance, and was as relevant in 1755 as when Chudleigh wrote it. As Robert W. Uphaus and Gretchen M. Foster note, "the law 'supreme' that compels obedience from a wife is the law of coverture, where a woman places herself in the protection of her husband, giving up her legal existence as an individual to her husband."¹¹⁶

¹¹¹Chudleigh, Preface, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1703).

¹¹² See Barash, "The Native Liberty. . . of the Subject," *passim*, and her *English Women's Poetry*, 238.

¹¹³See Chapter Three on the order of Chudleigh's poems in *PEL*.

¹¹⁴It was also a poem that was recorded in many commonplace-books. Ezell has found it transcribed on the Shakespeare First Folio owned by Elizabeth Brockett as well as in Elizabeth Dottin's manuscript volume of Bishop Henry King's poems. Ezell, *Chudleigh*, xxxi.

¹¹⁵*PEL*, I:181, ll. 1-2; 5-8.

¹¹⁶*The Other Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert W. Uphaus and Gretchen M. Foster (East Lansing: U of Michigan P, 1991) Intro. 1-16:12.

Along the same lines is Chudleigh's pastoral dialogue, "The Inquiry, a Dialogue between Cleanthe and Marissa," a light-hearted discussion as to which is the biggest fool, a miser, a pedant, or a "whining lover." Although the answer is the latter, the poem suggests that *most* men are fools, including "he, who seeks in bloody wars, For fame, and honourable scars" – a sentiment that echoes Aphra Behn's mistrust of conventional honour. The opening lines of another poem, "To Eugenia. On her Pastoral," are again reminiscent of Behn: "Methinks I see the Golden Age agen, / Drawn to the life by your ingenious pen."¹¹⁷ Kings were then shepherds, Chudleigh argues, and laws were useless because innate innocence reigned in men's hearts. Despite her admiration for another woman's writings in "To Eugenia," however, the poem that follows minimizes Chudleigh's own ambition. In "The Resolve" the speaker rejects superficial values. "For what the world admires I'll wish no more," the poet vows, adding that she will not seek "a name" or "empty fame."¹¹⁸ That this sort of assertion appears throughout *PEL* highlights for the reader the importance of the rhetoric of retirement for these women. It is an avowal of religious belief and the desire for simplicity – a sort of excavation of the soul – but also a construction of the female poetic persona.

Many readers of *PEL* would at least have heard of *The Ladies Defence*, a long and clever dialogue "Between Sir John Brute, Sir William Loveall, Melissa, and a Parson," which Chudleigh called "a Satyr on Vice. . . not, as some have maliciously reported. . . an Invective on Marriage."¹¹⁹ Colman and Thornton had to choose between this piece, which covers thirty-one pages of the anthology, and the printing of several other poems, and Ezell calls its inclusion a "generous selection" on the part of the editors.¹²⁰

A plethora of misogynist assumptions and responses to them are touched on in the *Defence*, where the conventional depiction of both coquettes and prudes as unpleasant in

¹¹⁷*PEL*, I: 182, ll.1-2.

¹¹⁸*PEL*, I: 184, ll.1-3.

¹¹⁹Qtd. in Ezell, *Chudleigh*, Intro. xxiii.

¹²⁰Ezell, Intro. xxxiii. Of the poems that Colman and Thornton did not choose to reprint from Chudleigh's volume of poems were the more occasional pieces, on the deaths of her daughter and her mother, on

their own way is inverted and applied to the masculine world. Rakes as well as ministers are dangerous to women: Sir William Loveall, the bachelor, has “had of mistresses a numerous store,” whereas Sir John Brute’s name encapsulates his attitude toward his own wife, and the un-named “Parson” (a stand-in for the real-life John Sprint) demands that women “give up their reason, and their wills resign, / And ev’ry look, and ev’ry thought confine.”¹²¹ It is the parson and Melissa who have the most speeches, with the oppressive prescriptions of the former making the reader’s experience of the poem ever more claustrophobic. Marriage is a “dire gordian knot,” a “nuptial chain” that must be endured by women in a sort of thoughtless trance. Melissa has the final word in a long and measured, though passionate speech, at the conclusion of which she endeavours to open up bright possibilities in a feminist version of the rapture:

We shall, well pleas’d, eternally converse,
 And all the sweets of sacred love possess:
 Love, freed from all the gross allay of sense,
 So pure, so strong, so constant, so intense,
 That it shall all our faculties employ,
 And leave no room for any thing but joy.¹²²

At such moments, Chudleigh’s verse shines (“So pure, so strong, so constant, so intense”), and Melissa’s earlier vow that women shall “read and think, and think and read again” is beautifully defiant.¹²³ The poet was an admirer, and very possibly a friend of Mary Astell, and was familiar with Astell’s *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*.¹²⁴ Chudleigh’s writings reflect her study of English verse translations of the classics, particularly her “A dialogue of Lucian paraphrased,” which also appears in *PEL*.¹²⁵ The

Dryden’s translation of Virgil, and more overtly religious poems like “The Offering,” which begins: “Accept my God, the Praises which I bring.”

¹²¹“Ladies Defence,” *PEL*, I: 197-226, II.42, 60-61.

¹²²II.840-845.

¹²³ I.799.

¹²⁴Chudleigh herself recommended for the edification of her female readers Seneca, Plutarch, Epictetus, Horace, Ovid, Virgil, Lucretius, Theocritus, Juvenal, and Persius in the Preface to *The Ladies Defence*.

combination of poems that Colman and Thornton selected to represent Chudleigh highlight this learning, her wit, and her role as a champion of women, so pertinent to the anthology. For readers in 1755, it was Mary, Lady Chudleigh's vehemence in the name of all women that they were introduced to in *PEL*, and which would have been an attractive feature of her verses, complemented by the fact that she did not seek "a name" for herself.

* * *

There is passion behind the poetry of these seventeenth-century women. Margaret Cavendish's verse was driven by enthusiasm for scientific discoveries and the power of imagination. In the case of Katherine Philips, it was an ardent focus on friendship, and for Aphra Behn the stirrings in the breast were intricately tied to the body and the body politic. In Anne Killigrew's verse, the love of painting and of versifying were intimately connected to one another, mirroring and interpreting in two media what she witnessed with her own eyes. For Mary Chudleigh, the respect that was due the fair sex was integral to her sense of self. Sometimes, as was the case with Philips and Chudleigh, the love of knowledge was expressed in opposition to conventional romantic love, which in their poems could manifest itself as a trick, a trap set for the heart that interfered with the life of the mind. Their writings were informed by a reverence for the past as well – some for an era before the civil wars, the death of the sovereign, and the ascendancy of Parliament, others for a classic tradition of heroic women. In *PEL* these poets are themselves situated within that tradition, and theirs becomes a golden age.

¹²⁵Lucian was also a favourite with deists, which may have influenced Colman's and Thornton's' decision to include this, as well as a poem from Lycidus that they attribute wrongly to Behn: "Cato's Answer to Labienus." See Chapter Three, p. 83.

CHAPTER FIVE

Publishing in the New Century: Anne Finch,
Mary Monck, Catharine Cockburn, and Elizabeth Singer Rowe

Attend, ye num'rous daring daring throng, who strive
To gain the dang'rous hill, where few arrive;
Learn how the sacred height you may attain,
And shine among the Muses favourite train.

Catharine Cockburn¹

Like Mary Chudleigh, the women discussed in this chapter had writing careers that spanned the turn of the century. Born in the sixteen-sixties and seventies, they wrote in the century of their birth, but it was in the eighteenth century that they attained their fame. They were less influenced by cavalier poetry and an earlier pastoral tradition than was Aphra Behn. Their writings also reflect the moral reformation of the reign of Mary and William in the 1690s. Anne Finch, Mary Monck, Catharine Cockburn and Elizabeth Singer Rowe also inherited both the reward of a growing awareness of being one among a number of female writers; unlike, for example, Margaret Cavendish's sense of solitude. With numbers, however, comes the problem of choosing one's company. These turn-of-the-century poets had before them examples of women who had either negotiated the slippery slope of Parnassus or, to some degree, tumbled down from the mount, accused of wantonly distressing the muses, or of eccentricity that precluded "normal" lady-like behaviour. The "self-protective tactics" that Jeslyn Medoff identifies as responsive to this particular burden of the past include an apologetic and self-deprecatory tone, sometimes the denial of any expectation of monetary reward for writing, and always the presentation of oneself as chaste and humble.² Finch would retain a favorable reputation as a poet, in

¹"Calliope's Directions how to deserve and distinguish the Muses Inspiration," *PEL*, I: 229-232, ll. 1-4.

²"Women writers who followed in [Behn's] wake would have to make conscious decisions about. . . style and subject matter. . . the personae they, as authors, would assume in public. . . and the way they tried to control their reputations as women, which were essentially inseparable from their reputations as writers." Medoff, "The Daughters of Behn," 34.

part because she was cautious about what she chose to print. Rowe was to become known for her exceptional piety. Monck, by focusing on translation, may have been engaged in another kind of defensive strategy by adapting the works and the authority of men who wrote in other languages. Catharine Cockburn, née Trotter, had been a playwright, and was one of the Nine Muses who paid homage to Dryden in 1700, but the poem printed as by Calliope in *PEL* is a mere gesture towards that earlier freedom; in the later poem chosen by Colman and Thornton, she is all caution and prudery and disappointment.

I. ANNE FINCH (1661-1720)

I am afraid the Dr. will think I set up for a poet, and that is a character
I detest, unless I was able to maintain it as well as my Lady Winchilsea.

Mary Delany³

Anne Finch, Lady Winchilsea, was born at Sydmonton in Hampshire, the only child of royalists Sir William Kingsmill and Anne Haselwood. Anne's father died while she was an infant, her mother when she was three, and her stepfather when she was ten. Her uncle, William Haselwood, became her guardian, as well as of her brother and sister, but the details of her childhood are sketchy.⁴ By 1683 she was living at court as a lady-in-waiting to Mary of Modena, then Duchess of York. There she met Heneage Finch, gentleman of the bedchamber to the Duke of York, and they married in 1684. After James' flight in 1688 they refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary, left the court, and settled at Eastwell Park in Kent, the estate of Finch's nephew Charles. The young earl died in 1712 and Anne's husband became Lord Winchilsea. The countess's *Miscellany Poems*, printed in 1713, was reissued the following year with variant title-

³Delany, *Autobiography and Correspondence*, I:197, 14 March, 1728-29.

⁴For the most comprehensive biography of Finch to date, see Barbara McGovern's *Anne Finch and her Poetry* (NY and Athens: U of Georgia P, 1992) 8-19.

pages, with and without her name.⁵ It was from here that Colman and Thornton chose eleven of the twelve poems by her that are included in *PEL*.

As Mary Delany's affectionate comment suggests, Lady Winchilsea was a favourite with readers throughout the eighteenth century. This popularity seems an extension of the encouragement Finch had encountered from other writers. Swift enjoyed her poetry and her company, and in a poem titled "Apollo Outwitted" he paid homage to Finch, encouraging her to publish.⁶ Swift was likely also responsible for the inclusion of three poems by Finch in Jacob Tonson's sixth *Poetical Miscellanies* (1709). Here, Finch's poems are sandwiched between Swift's verse and Pope's pastorals—his first appearance in print. Pope himself was probably behind the inclusion of two of her poems in Richard Steele's *Poetical Miscellanies* of 1713.⁷ By 1704, Finch and Elizabeth Singer Rowe had some kind of acquaintance, "for the well-known Rowe was reading Finch's poems in manuscript and encouraging her in her writing."⁸

Because her volume of poems was published in 1713, Finch has been considered as something of a contemporary to the young Pope, who seems to have met her the year her poems were published. Their names are often linked: John Duncombe praised her as "a lady of great wit and genius," and interpolates his own opinion with that of Pope: "My praises would but wrong her sterling wit, / Since Pope himself applauds what she has writ."⁹ In fact, Finch's career was more extensive than her connection to Pope suggests. She began writing, she says, at the age of twenty-one. Though she was discreet about her writings, for fear of "remarks upon a Versifying Maid of Honour," recent scholarship has

⁵See Chapter Three for the various title pages of Finch's *Miscellany Poems*.

⁶"Apollo Outwitted. To the Hon. Mrs. Finch, (since Countess of Winchilsea,) under the Name of Ardelia." Swift, *Poetical Works*, 83-60.

⁷McGovern, 93. Finch's "Pastoral Dialogue Between Two Shepherdesses," "Adam Pos'd," and "Alcidor" appear in Tonson's volume.

⁸McGovern, 118.

⁹Duncombe, *Feminiad*, ll.123-124.

shown that lyrics by Finch were published anonymously as early as the 1680s in pro-Stuart miscellanies, and religious verse by her can be found in miscellanies of the 1690s.¹⁰

Myra Reynolds's 1903 edition of Finch's works notes that the poet wrote "in all the popular literary forms except comedy. Love songs, sacred songs, pindarics, satires, epistles, fables, translations, tragedies, verse criticism, and one prose critical essay. . ."¹¹ Half of the pieces in Finch's *Miscellany Poems* are fables, and her selection in *PEL* is reflective of this proclivity: eight of the twelve poems by Finch reproduced in the anthology also belong to this genre.¹² Ann Messenger argues that the fable was considered "an appropriately humble form," as well as "'low,' however widely read, because it contained a story and a moral suitable for children."¹³ Messenger underestimates the sophisticated potential of the genre, however. Readers of *PEL* would have known that Swift had written similar pieces ("A Fable of the Widow and her Cat" (1712); "The Fable of the Bitches" (1715) and others). John Gay's original fables (1728-38), were still being read when *PEL* appeared.¹⁴ Charles Hinnant notes that "John Gay wrote to Swift in 1732 that the fable was 'the most difficult' of any form he had ever undertaken to compose."¹⁵ Aesop's tales were in constant demand in translation, particularly in the prose version produced by Roger L'Estrange (1616-1704), which Finch knew well, and which were still

¹⁰ See Appendix A.

¹¹ Myra Reynolds, *The Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea. From the Original Edition*. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1903) "Introduction," xvii-xxxiv: xvii.

¹² Fables also dominated the volume's precursor, a manuscript folio which had privately circulated in 1689. See Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740* (Cambridge UP, 1996) 131. Of the many poems in Finch's 1713 *Miscellany Poems* that Colman and Thornton do not reproduce in *PEL* are a number of songs, occasional verses (e.g. "On the Marriage of Edw. and Eliz. Herbert), and prayers, such as "The 146th Psalm Paraphrased") There are also a number of pieces on more general topics such as "All is Vanity" and the short but engaging "Adam Pos'd," about the quandry faced by "our First Father" when he came to name the first woman "a vain Fantastick Nymph," *Misc Poems*, 123.

¹³ Ann Messenger, "Publishing Without Perishing: Lady Winchilsea's Miscellany Poems of 1713," *Restoration* 5 (1981) 27-37: 31.

¹⁴ Over 350 editions of the *Fables* were produced before 1810. See Vinton A. Dearing's "Introduction," *Gay's Fables, (1727, 1738)* (Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library, U of California, 1967) i-iv: i. In *PEL*, Mary Barber's selection, the first in the anthology, begins with a poem in homage to Gay (see Chapter Six).

well-known at mid-century.¹⁶ Moreover, fables designed for the edification of women, like Edward Moore's *Fables for the Female Sex* (1744), enjoyed a steady popularity, and may have influenced a connection between women and this didactic form of versification. On one level the fable seems a childish genre, complete with a narrative and a moral, yet the bleak outlook inherent in most fables belies this apparent naiveté. Anne Finch's first endeavors in this genre were translations of Jean de La Fontaine, the first in English, wherein she adapted his work in ways uniquely her own, not simplifying but rather adding complexities to and emphasizing the violence of the originals.

For example, Finch added considerable material to both beginning and ending of her translation of "The Young Rat and his Dam, The Cock and the Cat" (from La Fontaine's "Le chochet, le chat et le souriceau") which Colman and Thornton include in *PEL*. The basis of the original tale, as recounted by the rat to his mother, is that he met with a rooster and a cat, and was attracted by the looks of the cat "the fur, ears and tail so like those of a large rat. The cock, bizarre and foreign in appearance, frightened the rat away with its screeching before he could make the cat's acquaintance. Upon hearing this, the older rat warns her son: "Garde-toi, tant que tu vivras, / juger les gens sur la mine." The original moves quickly into the action, and La Fontaine merely introduces the rat as he returns home to tell of his adventures. Only two lines precede the anticipatory: "Voici comme il conta l'aventure a sa mere:"¹⁷ Finch does more than add material; she reorganizes, even reconceptualizes the whole piece, deflecting the focus from the young rat's folly to the maternal advice, and the moral from a timeless but simple truth about behaviour to a piece of contemporary social satire.¹⁸ The dam's annoyed response to her son goes beyond her explaining the threat of cats and harmlessness of cocks. Rather, Finch sets up a paradigm in which both rat and cat represent vanity. Finch gives a

¹⁵Charles Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch: An Essay in Interpretation* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1994) 167.

¹⁶Roger L'Estrange, trans. *Fables of Aesop And Other Eminent Mythologists With Morals and Reflections*. 2 vols. (3rd ed., London, 1699).

¹⁷Jean de La Fontaine, *Fables de La Fontaine* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1868). 263: II.3

tongue-in-cheek reinterpretation of La Fontaine's moral "not to judge others by appearance. Instead, the mother advises:

Be here, my son, content to dress and dine,
Steeping the list of beauties in thy wine,
And neighb'ring vermin with false gloss outshine.¹⁹

Most remarkable is the variation that follows: La Fontaine's lesson about the true worth of a person, and the warning not to befriend another on the grounds of physical similarity to oneself, are thrust to one side. Finch characterizes her animals as purely English creatures, and manages to reconstruct La Fontaine's tale as a criticism of those who make the Grand Tour, concentrating on personal adornments, while ignoring preparations for war:

Amongst mankind a thousand fops we see,
Who in their rambles learn no more than thee;
Cross o'er the *Alps*, and make the tour of *France*,
To learn a paltry song, or antick dance;
.....
But what may prejudice their native land;
Whose troops are raising, or whose fleet is mann'd,
Ne'er moves their thoughts, nor do they understand.²⁰

This is not a standard critique of young persons who toured, but rather a reference to the events of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when James was exiled and William and Mary ascended to the throne. Finch is referring to persons who became aware of William's preparations of fleet and army in the fall of 1688 and did not understand the implications of these actions. "The Young Rat and his Dam, The Cock and the Cat" becomes, in Finch's adaptation, a study of both personal and public domesticity that lends a note of patriotism and subtle political comment to the anthology.

¹⁸Finch adds "dam" to the title, beginning the piece with: "No cautions of a matron, old and sage, / Young Rattlehead to prudence could engage." *PEL*, II: 297-300: ll.1-2. The fable is swelled to eighty-three lines from the forty-two of the original.

¹⁹ll.67-69.

Conflicts between public and private spheres are often important themes in the writing of women during the eighteenth century and this is reflected in *PEL* in the several poems that touch on retreat from the world. Wisdom as exemplified by retirement to a quiet space is a recurring theme in Finch's work. A later fable in her selection "The Decision of Fortune"²⁰ strikes a similar note to "The Young Rat and his Dam" in its emphasis on the importance of remaining in a personal domestic sphere. The tale adheres to the traditional depiction of Fortune as a seductive female "this fickle mistress of all human-kind." Whereas one of two men in the fable chooses to follow fortune "to horse, to sea, to utmost isles," while scorning a friend who keeps to "paternal acres. . . content in this [his] native place,"²¹ Fortune chooses to dwell with the latter.

"The Eagle, the Sow, and the Cat" is another tale adapted from the "several authors" section of L'Estrange's collection.²² The fable pits the wit of three matriarchs against one other. The animals of the title have all set up homes for their newborn in different parts of the same tree. The cat, half-way up, succeeds in convincing both the sow below and the eagle above that each of them (and her offspring) is imperiled by the other, whereupon the eagle and sow abandon their young. The predictable conclusion is that the cat and her litter dine well.

Where Finch strays from the original prose fable is in this abandonment of the young by their mothers, who fear for their own lives (the sow because she believes the eagle will attack her, the eagle because she believes the cat's story about the pigs weakening the base of the tree). In the original, neither mother will leave to forage for food for fear of her young being attacked; the young starve, and only then are they consumed by the cat and her litter. L'Estrange's moral: "There can be no Peace in any State or Family, where Whisperers and Tale-bearers are Encouraged,"²³ is not radically different from Finch's final condemnation of "Curs'd sycophants," but the ignoble light shed upon parental abandonment in Finch is something new. It may be that the poet

²⁰ ll.67-69; 70-73; 76-78.

²¹ *PEL*, II: 308-311, ll.14, 17, 21.

²² *PEL*, II: 304-306.

²³ L'Estrange, trans. "The Eagle, Cat and Sow," *Fables*, I: 274.

found the original premise of mothers who will not leave the nests even to gather food less likely than a flight to preserve their own lives. Finch's version, where killing precedes feeding, is more straightforward and less harrowing than the starvation of birds and pigs in L'Estrange's original prose. Unlike the gentle humour with which Mary Barber wrote of motherhood (discussed in the following chapter) Finch here offers something very different, and more predatory, on the theme of maternity.

The premise of Finch's original verse fable, "Love, Death, and Reputation" is that these three personified entities seek to part from one another. The vulnerability with which Finch characterizes Reputation is especially interesting, here, because, unlike either Death or Love, Reputation is female. Death longs for a bleak environment of pestilence and plagues. Love seeks pastoral retreat. Reputation ponders her options awhile, then rejects the prospect of leaving, since Love and Death are always sure to meet again, but "No return my nature bears, / From green youth, or hoary hairs." The probable outcome were Reputation to depart: "If through guilt, or chance, I sever, / I once parting, part for ever."²⁴ The poet's choice of the words "guilt or chance" indicates that either real or imagined culpability will result in the irreparable loss of reputation, vulnerable because it depends on opinion rather than fact.

Another fable by Finch, "The Hog, the Sheep, and the Goat Carrying to the Fair," is imitated from L'Estrange. As in her other poems, there is at the center of this piece a pervasive sense that much is inevitable in this life—uneven power relationships, weaknesses, and the frequent inability to recover from them. Of the three animals traveling to the fair only the hog will not cease to squeal and protest his fate, knowing that the sheep will be sheared of its wool, the goat will be milked, but he himself is destined for the knife. The only message of this poem, however, is that "far-extended sight" does not lessen, but rather augments an individual's suffering.

The notion of sight and blindness is again explored in "Cupid and Folly" ("Imitated from the French" of La Fontaine). This clever poem opens on the scene of two little boys wrestling on the grass. Folly takes the play too seriously, however, and blinds

the cherubic little god. A trial is demanded by the outraged mother, Venus, where “This decree at last was read, / That Love by Folly should be led.”²⁵ With its combination of charm and cynicism, “Cupid and Folly” is particularly well wrought. This poem, too, suggests a kind of inevitability, something that cannot be repaired.

The longest piece by Finch in *PEL* is also her best-known: the 150-line ode, “The Spleen.”²⁶ Ballard, like Cibber and Shiells, and Birch in the *General Dictionary*, made much of this pindaric ode, all calling it “considerable” (as do Colman and Thornton). In addition to being one of the longer poems in the anthology, the ode is among the most impressive, beginning with a rousing address to the fearful spectre of the spleen itself:

What art thou, Spleen, which ev’ry thing dost ape?
 Thou *Proteus*, to abus’d mankind,
 Who never yet thy real Cause cou’d find,
 Or fix thee to remain in one continu’d shape.
 Still varying thy perplexing form. . .²⁷

“The Spleen” is a particularly apt inclusion, as it addresses an equality of suffering between men and women, as well as the nature of writing verse. Finch’s ode approaches the affliction as both reality and fiction, chastising those coquettes, fops and drunkards who pretend to fits of spleen, and linking the widespread malaise that she knows all too well with the fall from grace in Eden:

Falsely, the mortal part we blame
 Of our deprest and pond’rous frame,
 Which, till the first degrading sin,
 Let thee, its dull attendant, in,

 By thee religion, all we know,

²⁴“Love, Death, and Reputation,” *PEL*, II: 307-308, ll.51-54. Pope, who may have known Finch’s poem in ms. could have recalled it in writing “The Rape of the Lock,” where he, too, rhymes ‘dissever’ and “sever” in reference to hairs (though Belinda’s are far from hoary).

²⁵“Cupid and Folly,” *PEL*, II: 312-313, ll.35-36.

²⁶“The Spleen,” *PEL*, II: 290-295. See Appendix A for the print history of “The Spleen.”

²⁷ll.1-5.

That should enlighten here below,
 Is veil'd in darkness, and perplex
 With anxious doubts, with endless scruples vex,
 And some restraint imply'd from each perverted text.
 Whilst touch not, taste not, what is freely giv'n,
 Is but thy niggard voice, disgracing bounteous Heav'n.²⁸

The post-lapsarian reading of her own suffering is intriguing. The ultimate sin is despair, and we are reminded of this in subtle ways throughout the poem, by a moment of criticism directed toward Puritanism, which she saw as stern and ungrateful, and another toward Roman Catholicism, in particular those who take religious vows and wallow in morose solitude. Yet we are left with the powerful impression that there is no hope – an almost Calvinistic approach to depression – so overwhelming is the disorder.

In 1755 Johnson provided six separate definitions of “spleen” in his *Dictionary*, ranging from a focus on bodily humours to hypochondria, but the quotation which most closely illustrates Finch’s own experience of the affliction is from Richard Blackmore’s lines on melancholy: “Howe’er the cause fantastick may appear, / Th’effect is real, and the pain sincere.” Finch’s own ode is significant in that it considers melancholy and hysteria as physiological as well as emotional burdens, and because the poet discusses the affliction as one which both inspires and limits her poetics. The speaker refuses to paint or embroider, typically “feminine” activities that were supposed to soothe the troubled spirit. Interestingly, though, and in contradiction to the many satirical poems and essays on the subject, writing poetry is not here described as a *cause* of spleen. Rather, it is spleen that causes her verse to “decay” and makes her “cramp’t numbers fail.”²⁹

“The Spleen” was a well-known poem, and readers of *PEL* would likely have been aware of another poet’s approach to the same subject in a work that appeared first in 1737, and was frequently republished. This was Matthew Green’s poem “The Spleen.” Unlike Finch, Green places faith in handy remedies, and treats the topic lightly.³⁰

²⁸ll.26-29, 116-122.

²⁹l.76.

³⁰Green offers conventional medical advice:
 I always choose the plainest food

Although he sees both men and women as sufferers of spleen, Green refers to the spleen throughout his poem by the third person feminine, whereas Finch invokes and confronts the affliction itself, which is personified throughout either as genderless, or male (“Patron thou art to ev’ry gross abuse. . .”). The illness may manifest itself in different ways, but all suffer. Both a husband and a wife in Finch’s poem are susceptible to the spleen, and the one fellow victim who is specifically named by her is a man: Dr. Richard Lower.³¹ In her dramatic conclusion, she describes this famous physician who attempted to discover and cure the ailments of body and mind, as himself “caught” in the clutches of spleen “Retain’d thy pris’ner, thy acknowledg’d slave, / And sunk beneath thy chain to a lamented grave.”³² Here again the conclusion of Finch’s poem offers a surrender to the inevitable. Jean M. Ellis d’Allesandro introduces Finch’s manuscript book with the assertion that the poet considered “religion the most serious business of her life, and poetry as her play,”³³ but evidently the two were not independent of one another. Her verse was often a serious business, as well.

A lighter poem, “To Mr. Finch, now Earl of Winchilsea,” composed for her husband while he was away from home, reflects the poet’s concerns about writing and modesty and justifies the act by explaining that her spouse has willed the composition. The frame of the poem is the conventional petition to the muses, but the parody occurs in the confusion expressed by these muses, and, indeed, all of Parnassus, at the behest of a woman who wants to write about her husband. This poem may have been one of the

To mend viscosity of blood,
Hail! water-gruel, healing power,
Of easy access to the poor. . .

Matthew Green, *The Spleen. An Epistle inscribed to his particular friend Mr. J. C.* (London: for A. Dodd, 1737) ll.53-56. This was often reprinted, including in Dodsley’s *Collection*. For a discussion of the various medical explanations and treatments of spleen, see Katharine M. Rogers, “Finch’s ‘Candid Account’ vs. Eighteenth-Century Theories of the Spleen,” *Mosaic* 22:1 (Winter, 1989) 17-27.

³¹Richard Lower (1631-1691), famous British physician and physiologist. He studied the human nervous system and was the first to transfuse blood from one animal to another. Esteemed at court and a member of the Royal Society, he lost his practice and consequently much of his credit when he aligned himself with the Whigs over the Popish Plot, and died in relative obscurity and poverty. *Athenae Oxonienses*, IV: 298.

³²“The Spleen,” ll.149-150.

³³Jean Ellis d’Allessandro, Intro. *The Wellesley Manuscript Poems of Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea* (Florence: U of Florence, 1988) 12.

pieces that Colman and Thornton had in mind when they wrote their *Connoisseur* article advertising the anthology, in which women writers must earn their place on Parnassus by riding Pegasus. In Finch's poem there is a vote on Parnassus regarding whether the woman making the request should be granted the inspiration she desires. The request is denied, and the inhabitants of Parnassus offer an excuse: the mythical beast is unable to answer her needs:

That *Pegasus* of late had been
So often rid through thick and thin,
 With neither fear nor wit;
In panegyrick been so spurr'd,
He could not from the stall be stirr'd,
 Nor would endure the bit.³⁴

This sort of abuse (riding the horse "through thick and thin") is similar to what Behn and Pilkington do to the horse in the Mr. Town's *Connoisseur* vision, although neither indulges in panegyric, and Finch's mockery of that genre seems to lend both spirit and sincerity to her own request in the anthology.

Urania, the heavenly muse, is mentioned in the thirteenth stanza, and in her whispered plea may be allusions to the date that is so prominent in the sub-title of the poem, and to the calling in of William III:

Urania only lik'd the choice;
Yet not to thwart the publick voice,
 She whisp'ring did impart:
They need no foreign aid invoke,
No help to draw a moving stroke,
 Who dictate from the heart.³⁵

Whereas the personal and the political are combined in this poem, as they are in Finch's fables on the young rat and on fortune, the conclusion of this piece to her husband argues

³⁴“To Mr. Finch, now Earl of Winchelsea, Who, going abroad, had desired ARDELIA to write some VERSES upon whatever subject she thought fit, against his return in the evening. Written in the YEAR 1689,” *PEL*, II: 300-304, ll.73-78.

³⁵“To Mr. Finch,” ll.85-90.

that the intimacies of a loving marriage lie beyond the scope of art; since the world despises Hymen, the “endearments” and “ties” of marriage “should mysterious be.”³⁶ Such a piece serves as a reminder in the anthology of Katherine Philips’s poem to her husband about her fears of his thoughts of suicide, where a private moment is colored by larger issues. Further, like Behn’s “Jemmy” poems, Finch’s lines to her husband call into question Mary Jones’s flippant rejection of amorous verses by women in the “Letter to Miss Lovelace” at the opening of the anthology; the love poetry these women produce is seldom only about love.

Although “The Spleen” was Finch’s best known poem, it is another piece, linking her to Alexander Pope, and also printed frequently throughout the century, with which Colman and Thornton conclude her section and *PEL* itself. This is part of the versified banter in which she engaged Pope over *The Rape of the Lock*. The poem in *PEL* titled “Answer to the foregoing Verses” responds to Pope’s “To Lady Winchilsea, Occasioned by some Verse in the Rape of the Lock.”³⁷ The exchange with Pope was not printed in Finch’s own collection; the first printed version appeared in the *Poems on Several Occasions* that Pope secretly edited in 1717.³⁸ Both poems resurfaced in Birch’s *Dictionary* (1741), in the September, 1747 issue of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, the fifth edition of *The Foundling Hospital for Wit* (1748) and again Cibber and Shiells’ *Lives of the Poets* (1753) and Ballard’s *Memoirs* (1754).³⁹

A manuscript copy of Finch’s poem to Pope exists in her husband’s hand, and has been much examined. At the beginning of Book XIII of Pope’s autograph translation of the *Iliad*, now at the British Library, a sheet, folded once and pasted into the book,

³⁶“To Mr. Finch,” ll.104, 105.

³⁷*PEL*, II: 314 and 315-16.

³⁸*The Whole Works of Mr. Pope* had appeared early in 1717, but did not contain the exchange. Less than six months later his publisher, Lintot, brought out the miscellany *Poems on Several Occasions*, which included thirty-seven of Pope’s own poems, interspersed among those of friends. Eight poems by Finch, most anonymous, were included in the miscellany. Ault presents overwhelming evidence that Pope was the editor behind this project as well. See *Pope’s Own Miscellany, Being a Reprint of Poems on Several Occasions* [London, 1717] ed. Norman Ault, (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1935).

³⁹Birch, X:180; Cibber, 323-24; Ballard, 371-72, *PEL*, II: 314-316. After *PEL* the poems were printed in the 1766 *Biographium Faemineum* and elsewhere.

contains Winchilsea's final reply to Pope in the exchange. This is titled "To Mr. Pope, In Answer to a Copy of Verses, occasioned by a little Dispute upon four Lines in the Rape of the Lock," to which Pope added the words "By y^e Right Honourable the Countess of Winchilsea." On the clean side of the sheet, he continued his translation from the Greek.⁴⁰

At this time Pope was also in the process of revising *The Rape of the Lock* into the five-canto version that would include for the first time Umbriel's descent to the Cave of Spleen in the fourth canto and his address to the "wayward Queen" which initiated the exchange ("Parent of Vapours and of Female Wit, / Who give th' *Hysteric* or *Poetic* Fit...")⁴¹ These lines express the very sentiments that Finch had countered over a decade before in "The Spleen," where she refused to equate mental disturbance and inspiration. The sharing of paper and incorporation into the *Iliad* translation suggests that Pope may have shown a manuscript copy of "The Rape of the Lock" to Finch, because the "cave of spleen" section had not yet appeared in print.

The countess' verse among the leaves of the *Iliad* is lightly crossed out, yet Finch's poem, which draws on Virgilian and Ovidian myth in likening Pope to Orpheus, reads ironically, considering Pope's intimate and ongoing engagement with the tales of antiquity: "You of one *Orpheus* sure have read," she writes, evoking the hero's death at the hands of the women of Thrace: "Resenting heroines of those times / Soon punish'd his offence."⁴² For his own purposes, Pope introduced changes to Finch's remonstrative poem. These are written in his hand on the manuscript and the poem is printed with these changes in the 1717 *Poems on Several Occasions*. He marked for deletion ("dele") Finch's sixth stanza, lines 21-24, which describe Orpheus' skull rolled along the Hebrus, and a harp "besmear'd with Blood." An expression of admiration for Pope's writings to

⁴⁰BM. MS. Add. 4807, ff. 209v - 210r contains Finch's poem, whereas Pope's translation covers ff. 209r, and is continued on 210v.

⁴¹"The Rape of the Lock," 4: ll.57-8.

⁴²*The Iliad* was published 6 June, 1715, and Lady Winchilsea subscribed for a copy. See Pat Rogers, "Pope and his Subscribers," 218. Of the 575 entries in the subscription list to Pope's *Iliad*, nearly 30% of the subscriptions were to peerage and over 40% were titled. See also Matthew Hodgart's article: "The

date “For all that’s gone before” he changes to “all you sung.” In converting the poem from private to public use, he also alters the beginning of Finch’s familiar address: “Yet Alexander have a care, / And shock the sex no more” to read “Yet ventrous poet. . . “ Fortunately, it is Finch’s own version that was reprinted, as she wrote it, in *PEL* and in other collections. This preservation is thanks to Thomas Birch, who found a manuscript version of the poem for his *Dictionary*, and thanks to later editors who printed from Birch’s more recent and accessible work, rather than from Pope’s 1717 volume.⁴³

As a conclusion to *PEL*, Finch’s answer to Pope is enigmatic. Orpheus is no tragic hero in this piece, but a fool who “thought all was well... When he left his wife in hell.”⁴⁴ She knows she is not the only woman writer with talent, as Pope’s hyperbolic compliment had earlier suggested: “Fate doom’d the fall of ev’ry female wit, / But doom’d it then when first *Ardelia* writ.” Yet her response initially seems to concede to Pope: “disarm’d with so genteel an air, / The contest I give o’er.” As McGovern and Hinnant observe, “it is difficult to feel in Finch’s epistles that her teasing has ever gone awry or that insult has prevailed over compliment.”⁴⁵ Unlike Orpheus’ decapitation, Pope’s insult to women “won’t cost the head.” Nevertheless, she does not “give o’er” her case. Pope has offended the ladies and mocked their vanity. While she acknowledges his talent, the countess thinks he should be more cautious next time.

Our admiration you command

Subscription List for Pope’s *Iliad*, 1715,” *The Dress of Words: Essays on Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature in Honor of Richmond P. Bond* (Lawrence: U of Kansas Libraries: 1978) 25-34.

⁴³In addition to “The Spleen,” Birch printed five poems from the manuscript possessed by the Countess of Hertford. In the 1935 edition of Pope’s 1717 miscellany, Norman Ault, who had not seen the *Iliad* manuscript, speculated that the omission of the stanza was the result of “a curious accident” while Pope’s *Miscellany* was being set up at the printers. Like Reynolds, Ault re-introduced the stanza from the 1741 *Dictionary*: “for it must unquestionably have been present in the original manuscript, otherwise the joke in the following stanza (about Pope losing his head) would be pointless.” Ault, xv-xcvii: xcii. In the Wellesley ms. the note “Printed in Birch’s General Dictionary” appears in pencil in the margin to the left of the title. Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant, *The Anne Finch Wellesley Manuscript Poems. A Critical Edition* (Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1998) 169n. Greer observes rightly that “Winchilsea might have recorded her objections and published her own authentic version, but she never did.” *Slipshod*, 254.

⁴⁴*Il.* 13-15.

⁴⁵McGovern and Hinnant, *Wellesley*, Introduction, xxxvi.

For all that's gone before;
 What next we look for at your hand
 Can only raise it more.

Yet sooth the ladies I advise
 (As me to pride has wrought)⁴⁶
 We're born to wit, but to be wise
 By admonitions taught.⁴⁷

The concluding lines of *PEL*—"We're born to wit, but to be wise, By admonitions taught" occur here by chance, due to alphabetical ordering—but they function at once as a comment on the natural talents, the potential and the dependent state of women. Men must teach and support women. But the recipient of Finch's specific admonition is Pope, and there remains an ambiguity as to the identity of the "we" who must be taught—whether this pronoun is actually limited to "the ladies." Everyone can benefit from a tactful admonition, like the one she gives him. Finch's "Answer" seems to adhere to Pope's depiction of a good wife in "Epistle to a Lady": "if she rules him, never shows she rules; / Charms by accepting, by submitting sways."⁴⁸

II. MARY MONCK (?1677-1715)

I cannot do a greater Honour to her Memory, than by Consecrating her Labours, or rather her Diversions to your Royal Highness, as we found most of them in her Scrittore after her Death, written with her own hand, little expecting, and as little desiring the Publick shou'd have any Opportunity

⁴⁶This line contains a printing error that Colman and Thornton inherited. In Pope's *Iliad* ms., his 1717 *Miscellany*, and the Wellesley manuscript, the line reads "(As me to pride you've wrought)" [emphasis mine]. Birch's version, from yet another ms. source, changes "to" into "too," and "you've" to "has": "(As me too pride has wrought)." In Cibber and Shiells *Lives of the Poets* the line is reprinted exactly as it appears in Birch's *Dictionary*, but Ballard, who acknowledges the *Dictionary* as his source, was probably puzzled by the line, and changed it only partially back to the original. Colman and Thornton must have copied the poem from *Memoirs*, since both read "As me to pride has wrought." It is unfortunate that these mistakes, which obscure Finch's meaning, occur in the last stanza of *PEL*.

⁴⁷Finch, "Answer to the foregoing Verses," *PEL*, II: 314-316, ll.29-36.

⁴⁸Pope, "Epistle to a Lady," *Poems*, 559-569, ll.262-263. Pope was also likened to Orpheus by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Cf. two lines from a commonplace-book (copied during the 1750s; probably written in 1720) qtd. in the Twickenham *Pope*, 6: 15-16, and Halsband and Grundy, *Essays and Poems*, 257: "Sure P[o]pe] like Orpheus was alike inspir'd, / the Blocks and Beasts flock'd round them and admired."

of Applauding or Condemning them.

Robert, Lord Molesworth⁴⁹

Little is known of Mary Monck, aside from the fact that she was one of seventeen children born to Laetitia (Coote) and Robert, later Viscount Molesworth, of Ireland, and that she married George Monck of Dublin.⁵⁰ She had no children, and died of a “lingering illness,” which could refer to any number of ailments, at Bath in 1715. Sixty-four poems, most composed by her and some to her, appeared posthumously in 1716 as *Marinda: Poems and translations upon several Occasions*.

Monck’s print history is similar to Anne Killigrew’s in that it was Monck’s father, Lord Molesworth, who gathered her papers from her desk and sanctioned the posthumous reproduction of his daughter’s poetic efforts. Whereas Thomas Killigrew probably hoped to gain financially from his daughter’s book, Molesworth was content with the printing of his daughter’s poems as homage to royalty. In his lengthy dedication to Caroline, then princess of Wales, Molesworth praised Mary in conventional terms that combined modesty, industry, and intelligence. Typically, she had no assistance “but that of a good Library, and without omitting the daily Care due to a large Family, not only perfectly acquired the several Languages here made use of, but the good Morals and Principles contain’d in those Books. . . . she dyed not only like a Christian but a Roman Lady.”⁵¹

Unlike Killigrew, however, Monck was a married woman when she died, although she was living apart from her husband at the time. The impression left by Molesworth’s dedication is that of a young girl, the contents of whose desk remained as a shrine after her departure, when in fact Monck was probably nearly forty when she died. Indeed, this illusion of stasis is preserved in Giles Jacob’s 1720 *Lives and Writings of Our Most Considerable English Poets*, where the biographer is unapprised of Monck’s marital status. The import here, too, is her position as the daughter of a peer. The title of

⁴⁹Robert, Viscount Molesworth, “Epistle Dedicatory,” *Marinda: Poems and translations upon several occasions* (London, 1716) A2-C: B7.

⁵⁰The name is variously spelled Monk in *PEL*. I am using the same spelling that Roger Lonsdale used in *ECWW*. Lonsdale quotes Molesworth’s letters referring to his daughter’s husband George Monck, and a derangement that caused him to undergo bleeding and purging. Lonsdale, 70.

her volume gives no help, and Jacob introduces her as “Mrs. Molesworth,” with no mention made of a spouse, though Ballard rectified this in the *Memoirs*. Relying on Jacob’s opinions, Ballard recommended in particular twenty-one poems in the *Marinda* volume.⁵² Though Colman and Thornton were guided by Ballard in selecting Monck herself as an eminent lady, the fourteen poems that they chose to reprint in *PEL* include only six of those recommended in *Memoirs of Learned Ladies*.

Seven of the works by Monck in the anthology are translations, which made up the bulk of the 1716 *Marinda* volume. The range of Monck’s linguistic abilities is manifest in the selections that represent her in *PEL*. It was expected that the daughter of a peer would know French. Spanish and Italian were less common accomplishments although the texts Monck chose to translate were relatively straightforward. The first of these in the anthology, for example, is “On Providence. From Filicaia,” a loose translation from the Italian verse of Vincenzo da Filicaia (1642-1707).⁵³ The poem describes Providence as motherly, a force which lovingly assesses what should and should not be granted to its childlike petitioners. Following this is a translation from the French: “On the Invention of Letters,” written in praise of Cadmus, by Georges de Brebeuf (1617?-1661).⁵⁴

A “Sonetto,” translated from Petrarch’s: “Solo e pensoso i piou deserti campi” is followed by another from Giovanni Della Casa (1503-1556): “O sonno, o de la queta, umida, ombrosa.”⁵⁵ In both sonnet adaptations Monck reduced the number of lines from sixteen to fourteen. Onto Petrarch’s sonnet she was able to graft a new rhyme scheme – her own version of the sonnet that is neither Petrarchan, Shakespearean, nor Spenserian – consisting of four couplets rather than a conventional octave, followed by two triplets. In

⁵¹Molesworth’s “Epistle Dedicatory.”

⁵² The recommendations are identical, even though Ballard has obviously seen the text himself, and quotes a paragraph of the dedication and a shorter poem by Monck that Jacob does not. In praising Monck’s “An Eclogue in Return to a Tale Sent by a Friend” Ballard defers: “This, Mr. Jacob says, is an excellent piece.” Ballard, 362.

⁵³*PEL*, II: 187-88.

⁵⁴*PEL*, II:188,

⁵⁵Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374), *PEL*, II: 188-89; 189.

her adaptation of Della Casa's sonnet, however, there is no end-rhyme. She seems to have struggled more with this material than with Petrarch, though the end result is verse that flows surprisingly well. The enjambment at the beginning, for example, is striking: "O Sleep, thou gentle offspring of still night's / Soft humid shades; sick mortals sweet repose."⁵⁶

The last translation by Monck in *PEL* is from Torquato Tasso's twenty-canto Crusade epic, *La Gerusalemme liberata*.⁵⁷ Tasso was a popular author with translators. Both Aphra Behn and Anne Finch translated pieces from his *Aminta*, and Elizabeth Rowe also translated several sections of the *Jerusalem*. For Tasso's eight-line stanzas, rhyming *abababcc*, Monck substitutes ten-line stanzas with uneven rhyme schemes. Monck also increases the number of lines that comprise each stanza from eight to ten, shortening the uneven lines considerably. Monck's extractions from *Jerusalem* are not narrative pieces, but rather more along the lines of "gather ye rosebuds while ye may." Although the rose *is* the trope, here, it is an ambiguous image: once "the virgin rose" grows bold and "displays / Her bosom bare, see how she then decays." The conclusion advises: "Gather your roses and your heads adorn, / Whilst you can love, and be belov'd again."⁵⁸

Colman and Thornton also include Monck's translation of the Spanish, anti-marriage poem "Orpheus and Eurydice," by Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645). Like Finch in her reply to Pope, Monck here implies that Orpheus purposely brought about the second or permanent death of his wife by turning back towards her in Hades:

Happy's the married wight that e'er
Comes once to be a widower;
But twice of one wife to get free,
Is luck in its extremity.⁵⁹

⁵⁶A third sonnet translation, also on sleep, this from Giambattista Marini, is again compressed to fourteen lines without a rhyme scheme. "Sonetto. From Marini." *PEL*, II: 190.

⁵⁷Tasso (1544-1595) *La Gerusalemme liberata*, published partially in 1580 under the title *Il Goffredo*, and then completely, in 1581 under the present title.

⁵⁸*PEL*, II: 190-91, ll.6-7; 19-20.

It is not difficult to understand the compilers' desire to include the Quevedo translation in *PEL*. It is clever, and it highlights Monck's skill in Spanish. Monck omits the penultimate quatrain from the original, and adds her own final couplet contextualizing the myth in all of marital history, so that the closing pronouncement in the original "that a man made a widower is lucky, but to be freed twice from one wife is extremely so" is followed in Monck's version with a broader finality: "This is the first, last instance of this kind, / No fool will e'er again such fortune find."⁶⁰ Unlike Quevedo, Monck also included the name of Euridyce in her title.

Most of the remaining pieces by Monck are light, original compositions, such as "A Tale," about a band of cupids competing for the best location to come to rest on the beautiful Chloe. "A Tale" is reminiscent of the Rosicrucian mythology which Pope incorporated into *The Rape of the Lock*, and of Swift's Gulliver when in Brobdingnag: a discrepancy in scale between humans and other beings results in intimacies not otherwise possible. Monck's poem concludes with a cherub who missed in his descent to Chloe's chin: "and on her breast / Fell headlong, but, soon looking up, did cry, / None of you've got so good a place as I."⁶¹ Another poem, four lines titled "Epigram," displays the same kind of relaxed amusement toward physical affection:

Come, *Megg*, be quick, and make the bed,
Now tuck the feet, now place the head,
I'll kiss you if you don't bestir ye;
Quoth *Megg*, I can't abide to hurry.⁶²

Yet another poetic quatrain, "An Epitaph on a Gallant Lady," though meant as an inscription on a tombstone, offers the same type of refreshing innuendo. Here the death of "fair *Rosalind*" is mourned, for "All mankind was pleased with her, / And she with all

⁵⁹Monck, "Orpheus and Eurydice," II: 193-194, //33-37.

⁶⁰"Orpheus and Eurydice," //37-38.

⁶¹"A Tale," *PEL*, II: 191-192, //17-19.

⁶²*PEL*, II: 192.

mankind.”⁶³ Another “Epigram” touches humorously on childbirth that occurs out of wedlock. Here, Cloe [different spelling] complains of “child-bed pains” and rails against marriage, “But *Hymen*’s not so much to blame: / She knows, unless her mem’ry fails, / Before she’d wed, she’d much the same.”⁶⁴ Since this short piece was one of the three by Monck that were omitted from the new edition of *PEL* that appeared in the 1785, it may be that the editors in 1755 were sailing close to the wind in reprinting it in their collection of ladies’ poetry.⁶⁵

These pieces represent the relaxed musings of a writer bred during the Restoration, doubtless influenced by Behn as well as the male cavalier poets. Monck seems to have taken no steps to have her poems printed, but she clearly did share her poems with friends. A number of poems written to Monck by others are printed amidst her own in the volume, indicating that, as Ezell points out, Monck participated in literary exchanges, and was not “an isolated individual writing never to be read.”⁶⁶ More significant is Monck’s father’s willingness to have printed these more risqué pieces by her. Clearly, there was nothing seriously objectionable about them in 1716, nothing that contradicted Lord Molesworth’s description of her acquisition of “good morals and principles” from the books in the family library. Colman and Thornton may have felt responsibility for withholding verse that dealt with questionable subject matter from their readers, but they did not take the same moral high ground that later anthologers and writers of literary history would occupy. The Victorian critic Jane Williams, for instance, would come to label Monck’s work “sullied by the vicious habits of her time, which so obscured the moral perceptions even of the pure in heart as to permit the familiar use of indelicate expressions.”⁶⁷ This was clearly not yet the reaction in 1755.

⁶³*PEL*, II: 193, ll. 3-4..

⁶⁴*PEL*, II: 195, ll.2; 4-6.

⁶⁵See Appendix D for the contents of the 1785 edition.

⁶⁶Ezell, *WWLH*, 54.

⁶⁷Williams, *The Literary Women of England* (London, 1861); qtd. in Ezell’s *WWLH*, 92.

Another poem by Monck, “On a Romantick Lady,” chastises a friend for reading “Grand Cyrus.” The reference is to a popular novel by Madeleine de Scudery.⁶⁸ The poem touches on the influence of romances, about which women readers were often teased. Composed at least thirty-seven years before Charlotte Lennox’s *Female Quixote* (1752), in which the reading of Scudery’s romances is ridiculed, Monck’s poem anticipated, as it would have echoed for readers, the successful novel.

Colman and Thornton concluded Monck’s section with a poem that Ballard reprinted in its entirety, although it did not appear in the volume of her verses, and was unknown to Giles Jacob. “Verses from a Lady at Bath, Dying with a Consumption, to her Husband” appeared thirty-four years after the 1716 *Marinda*, in the pages of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*.⁶⁹ Colman and Thornton borrowed the poem from Ballard. They do not, however, cite Ballard as their source when explaining that Monck, “on her death-bed at *Bath*, wrote a very affecting copy of verses to her husband in *London*, which are not printed in her works, but the reader will meet with in this collection.”⁷⁰

These lines to her husband constitute the only autobiographical poem in the selection by Monck. The verse is poignant, and it makes a stronger impression because of its place at the end of her section. Unafraid of death, relieved at the prospect of a release from pain, the poet requests that her spouse not grieve: “Thou know’st a painful pilgrimage I’ve past; / And should’st thou grieve to see my sorrows end?” Only “love, fond love, would yet resist [death’s] power; / Would fain awhile defer the parting hour.”⁷¹ In spite of the scenes of heaven that Death sets in view, however, he is an ambiguous figure, a “conqu’ror” who “asserts his right,” and though “not one terror clouds” death’s face, that face is “meager.” The speaker promises to die as she has lived, her husband’s

⁶⁸Madeleine de Scudery, *Ariamène: ou, Le grand Cyrus* (Paris, 1656). It was “Englished” by F. G. Gent, 1653 [1655].

⁶⁹*GM*, number 20, July, 1750. After Ballard’s *Memoirs*, Cibber and Shiells included it in their 1753 *Lives of the Poets*.

⁷⁰*PEL*, II: 186.

⁷¹*PEL*, II: 196, II. 13-14.

“faithful wife,” and yet, since death and love have battled, and death has won, there is a lingering sense that love must have lost.⁷²

It may be evidence of the tensions between the editorial impulses toward sensibility and satire that Monck’s poem about Orpheus and her lines written at Bath are both reproduced in *PEL*. The inclusion of a poem about a husband enjoying and indeed fortifying his position as a widower along with what the editors themselves deemed the “affecting” verses Monck wrote to her husband on her deathbed might be seen as tasteless by some readers. Ballard had reiterated Jacob’s recommendation of “Upon Orpheus and Eurydice,” before reprinting the lines written at Bath. In *PEL* “Orpheus and Eurydice” diminishes the impact of the Bath verses, and the choice to include the former seems to indicate an enthusiasm for individual pieces, rather than a noticeable sensitivity to the miscellany as a whole. This impression is not entirely accurate, because what Colman and Thornton did to compensate for the printing of both poems is move two other pieces out of sequence from their order in *Marinda* to separate the lines from Quevedo and those that Monck wrote on her deathbed.⁷³

Concluding the eight pages allotted to her, these deathbed verses signal the range of the poet’s talents as well as the piety, and finally the mortality of the woman. The Quevedo translation stands in a somewhat ironic relation to this finale, but this selection from her *opus* reads well, humorously, yet also like the work of a writer whose efforts at translating verse lend her some depth, and put her beyond easy categorization. Mary Monck brings to *PEL* a balance of instruction and delight, and fits nicely into the paradigm that Colman and Thornton set up in their prefatory remarks. Here, the male authority invoked is not that of Dryden, Swift, Pope, or Locke, but rather men at a greater distance—historically, geographically, and linguistically. She represents miscellaneous talents and interests, and the final note she strikes with readers of the anthology is a dramatic one: as she writes of leaving her husband through death, she seems almost to die on the page.

⁷² ll. 18-19, 22.

⁷³ In Colman’s and Thornton’s source “Song” and “Epigram” precede, rather than follow, “Orpheus and Eurydice.” See Chapter Three.

III. CATHARINE COCKBURN (1679-1749)

You had just begun to dawn upon the world, when I retired from it. . . Being married in 1708, I bid adieu to the muses, and so wholly gave myself up to the cares of a family, and the education of my children . . .

Catharine Cockburn, letter to Alexander Pope, never posted⁷⁴

Catharine Trotter was born in London to David Trotter, a naval commander who died of plague at Scandaroon in 1684, and Sarah Ballenden. After her father's death her mother, who was connected with noble Scottish families, received a pension from the Princess (later Queen) Anne.⁷⁵ At seventeen, Trotter made her debut as a dramatist on the London Stage, with her first tragedy, an adaptation of Aphra Behn's tale "Agnes de Castro," which was acted at the Theatre Royal and published anonymously in 1696.⁷⁶ She wrote five plays that we know of, four of which were performed. Clearly ambitious, she made the acquaintance of Congreve and sought his advice on dramatic writing. She also had a number of female writers as friends.⁷⁷

Not confining herself to drama, Trotter adopted the voice of "Calliope" to contribute to the Dryden memorial volume, *The Nine Muses* (1700). A falling out with Delarivière Manley, who in *The New Atalantis* (1709-1710) accused Trotter of lesbian relations with her friend Lady Sarah Piers, hurt her reputation.⁷⁸ As her career as a

⁷⁴Qtd. in the "Life," *The Works of Mrs. Catharine Cockburn, Theological, Moral, Dramatic, and Poetical*, ed. Thomas Birch, 2 vols. (London, 1751) i-xlvii: xl.

⁷⁵This from the *DNB*. Germaine Greer states that "with the death of Charles II [Trotter's] widow was left without a pension." Greer, "Briscoe," 35.

⁷⁶"Agnes de Castro" was published by Sam. Briscoe, who also produced posthumous editions of Behn's works. In 1693 Briscoe had published a slim volume titled *Letters of Love and Gallantry*, the stock in trade of which was a 14-year old virgin calling herself Olinda, who was thought by some to be Catharine Trotter. In 1718 Briscoe identified Olinda as Trotter, but "there is no record of Trotter actually owning herself to be Briscoe's Olinda." Greer, "Briscoe," 45.

⁷⁷Both Mary Pix and Delarivière Manley had their debuts as dramatists in the season of 1695-1696.

⁷⁸Manley, *The Novels of Mary Delarivière Manley*, ed. Patricia Koster. 2 vols. (Gainesville, Fla: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971) 43. Manley included Trotter among the ladies who "seek their Diversion in themselves," according to "the devices of old Rome reviv'd." There is considerable internal evidence in her

dramatist waned, Trotter's interest in philosophy grew, and for a brief time she converted to Roman Catholicism. Her marriage to the Reverend Patrick Cockburn in 1708, a growing family, and limited means left her little time for literature, but she did publish various treatises and letters in defence of Locke. Patrick Cockburn was curate first of Nayland, Suffolk, then of St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street. He objected to taking the oath of allegiance after the accession of George I, and maintained his family by teaching in an academy. When he did eventually take the oath he became minister of a Scottish Episcopal church at Aberdeen in 1726, where the family settled in 1737.

In 1747 Catharine Cockburn proposed to publish her works by subscription, and she made some progress in organizing her writings for this purpose, but her husband's death in January 1748-9 was followed swiftly by her own on 11 May 1749. Thomas Birch did much to keep her name alive by editing her *Works*, accompanied by a long life of the author, in 1751. Produced in both large and regular paper, the book boasts a long subscription list. The first of the two volumes consists of her philosophical letters and treatises. The second contains one play, *Fatal Friendship*, followed by a section of thirteen "Poems on Several Occasions," six of which the editors of *PEL* reproduced in the anthology.

Duncombe's *Feminiad*, while enthusiastic about her philosophical studies, evinced in 1754 indifference toward Cockburn's promising beginnings as a dramatist:

Yet Scotland now shall ever boast thy fame,
While England mourns thy undistinguish'd name,
And views with wonder, in a female mind,
Philosopher, Divine, and Poet join'd!⁷⁹

The footnote is somewhat more helpful, with a hint at dramatic arts, though there is no suggestion that the woman was born and raised in London, or that she wrote plays for

own writings, and in a volume of letters written by Piers to Trotter, to suggest that such a relationship existed. See Kathryn Kendall's "From Lesbian Heroine to Devoted Wife: Or, What the Stage Would Allow," *Journal of Homosexuality* 12 (May 1986) 9-21, and "Catharine Trotter Cockburn and Me: A Duography," *The Intimate Critique: Autobiographical Literary Criticism* (Durham, NC: Duke UP 1993) 273-282.

⁷⁹Duncombe, *Feminiad*, 14: ll.129-138.

performance. She “was the wife of a clergyman, lived obscurely, and died a few years ago in an advanced age in Northumberland; her works on dramatical, philosophical, and sacred subjects have been lately collected and generally admired.” A great deal of time had passed since Cockburn’s success as a dramatist; the inclusion of only one of her plays and a handful of her poems in Birch’s edition of her works obviously influenced Duncombe’s impression that Cockburn was primarily a writer of prose. Birch had provided his own explanation of his editorial agenda in the preface to the *Works*. Of her writings he admits a “preference. . . given to those in prose, as superior. . . and of more general and lasting use to the world.”⁸⁰

The first poem by Cockburn in *PEL* refers directly to Dryden and makes clear Cockburn’s role as one of *The Nine Muses*. “CALLIOPE’S DIRECTIONS *how to deserve and distinguish the MUSES Inspiration*” is accompanied by a footnote making the connection: “Mrs. Cockburn having join’d with eight other Ladies to write on Mr. Dryden’s death, under the several names of the *Nine Muses*; she was some time after addressed from *Ireland*, as to a *Muse*, desiring her Inspiration: to which these Verses were sent in answer.”⁸¹ This information is gleaned from Birch’s edition of the *Works*, where apparently the footnote was written by Cockburn herself, as there it appears in the first person: “Having joined with others of my own sex. . . I was sometime after addressed.”⁸² In this later piece, Calliope emphasizes the ‘divine’ nature of poetry, and the necessary virtue that must be in place for its creation. Here, as in Mary Jones’s letter, love is a negative passion: Among “Ambition, love, or hate, revenge or pride. . . not least pernicious” is love.⁸³ Barash reads this poem as a surrendering to the new limits being set upon women writers: “Whereas, in 1700, Trotter. . . and several other women had used Dryden’s death as an occasion to assert new rules about poetic order and the importance of women’s voices in empowering male poets (the muses were, after all, in the position to

⁸⁰Birch, “Life,” xxvi.

⁸¹*PEL*, I: 229.

⁸²Qtd. in the *Works*, I: vi.

⁸³“Calliope,” ll.27, 30.

instruct and guide men), a decade later Cockburn strictly disallows writing for fame, pleasure, or profit, the motives behind her earliest literary ventures, including the playful and ambitious *Nine Muses*.⁸⁴

Certainly the later *Calliope* poem is not playful, but the fact that Cockburn continued to harbor poetic ambitions is something that comes through in another poem. "A Poem, Occasioned by The Busts set up in the Queen's Hermitage," was intended as a vindication of Locke, and composed for presentation to the Queen Caroline, George II's consort. The occasion for its composition was the appointment of Stephen Duck as librarian and custodian of the hermitage. Here, Duck, "a daring bard. . . By art unaided, and by want depress'd," is a model for the female poet.⁸⁵ In the 1751 *Works* Thomas Birch explains that the lines, written in 1732, were never presented to the queen, as the poet had hoped. Birch's explanatory footnote to the poem is reproduced in *PEL*. Readers of the anthology knew, therefore, that Cockburn's poem had been an abortive attempt at gaining royal recognition.⁸⁶

The enforced seclusion of Scotland's "northern climes" on the poet is an irritant and a deterrent (her location at a distance from London is also highlighted in Duncombe's praise of her). Cockburn's identification of herself as a poet is tempered by a humility that characterizes her writings, now, as being for a greater good. Here she requests: "If not the work, give the attempt applause, / And patronize in her the sex's cause."⁸⁷ Like Chudleigh's poem on behalf of the ladies, Cockburn's appeal to the queen is on behalf of their shared gender. The poem is both self-protective and a foray into new territory. What Barash identifies as a retreat from a position of strength is clearly shaped by a genuine fear:

⁸⁴Barash, *English Women's Poetry*, 257.

⁸⁵*PEL*, I: 234-238, ll.21-2.

⁸⁶Poems to or about Duck often had such an agenda, including Swift's "On Stephen Duck, the Thresher and favourite Poet," (*Poetical Works*, 475) and Dodsley "An Epistle on Stephen Duck," where Dodsley notes of royal generosity that it is "the means to purchase happiness." *The Muse in Livery. A Collection of Poems*, (London: pr. for T. Osborne and John Nourse, 1732) 10-14.

If some adven'trous genius rare arise,
 Who on exalted themes her talent tries,
 She fears to give the work, though prais'd, a name,
 And flies not more from infamy than fame.⁸⁸

Once burned as a young playwright, Cockburn is twice shy as an older poet and supplicant to the queen: "Would royal Caroline our wrongs redress."⁸⁹ The request, however, is itself remarkably courageous, and it is not difficult to see why this poem was not presented to Caroline. At times it seems that Cockburn is asking for her own bust in the hermitage, at others, retreating to speak for women writers in general: "Admitted by thy choice a place to have, / Though in the lowest class, of *Merlin's* cave." The female world would be improved, if:

Learning, with milder reign would more enlarge
 Their powr's, and aid those duties to discharge;
 To nobler gain improve their vacant hours:
 Be *Newton, Clarke, and Locke*, their mattadores.⁹⁰

The date that accompanies this poem is suggestive. The queen appointed Stephen Duck to the Hermitage in 1735; for some reason Cockburn's poem was not presented to the queen. In May 1737 the poem appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and Cockburn moved with her family to Aberdeen, where her husband had been officiating since 1726. Possibly Cockburn was hoping for royal favour, and failure to obtain it forced her to join her husband in exile in Aberdeen.⁹¹ Although the poem was intended to accompany Cockburn's essay in defence of Locke, the philosopher is little mentioned, here. Christopher Fox argues that it is wrong to see Locke as an unconventional, "safe" writer

⁸⁷PEL, I: 236, ll.66-67.

⁸⁸PEL, I: 236, ll.54-57.

⁸⁹PEL, I: 236, l.58.

⁹⁰PEL, I: 237-38, ll.100-103.

⁹¹Revd. Cockburn was a Scot, and the failure of Cockburn to get her poem presented may have been linked to the Porteous riots in Edinburgh in 1736, when Caroline was Regent during the absence of George II at Hanover (from May to December of 1736). These serious disturbances were reflected in English feeling toward all of Scotland (as Walter Scott illustrated in *The Heart of Midlothian*).

in the early decade of the century.⁹² The philosopher's reputation was a shifting, political thing. Having vindicated Locke in her essay, Cockburn, who also experienced a mixed reputation, here employs his name to vindicate herself.

The editors of *PEL* also chose four light "Songs" from Cockburn for the anthology. The first of these, "The Caution," begins with a typical warning: "Soft kisses may be innocent, / But, ah! too easy maid, beware" and contains some compelling diction (e.g. "When sliding down a steepy way" conveys the difficulty of recovering from love).⁹³ In another, "The Needless Deceit," the female speaker concludes that she cannot resist loving an unfaithful swain:

Why should you aim still to deceive,
That have a surer pow'r?
My wrongs I felt, and must believe;
But could forgive you more.⁹⁴

The song does speak to a type of womanly softness and sweet submission that Colman and Thornton seemed to find appealing. In general, however, the editors avoided the more licentious of Cockburn's songs, pieces whose Behn-like celebration of female sexuality most likely date them to Cockburn's youth (two of these, "The Relapse" and "The Fair Insensible," speak to overt female longing). Obviously a young woman whose first play was based on Behn's "Agnes de Castro" was strongly influenced by the English Sappho, and a pastoral like "The Fair Insensible" reflects this era and this influence. The omitted poem is sensual, concluding on a note of pleasurable capitulation of which Behn would have approved: "Neglect their wounds, nor feel the pain / Pleas'd in the chace t'expire."⁹⁵

⁹²Christopher Fox, *Locke and the Scriblerians: Identity and Consciousness in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 8.

⁹³*PEL*, I: 232, ll.1-2; 11.

⁹⁴*PEL*, I: 234, ll.13-16.

⁹⁵Cockburn, "The Fair Insensible," *Works*, II: 571. The order of categories in Thomas Birch's title is itself indicative of priorities and the playing down of the poetical relative to the theological. Colman and Thornton, though, sought to avoid either extreme; the last poem in Cockburn's *Works*, and the only other

The decisions made by Colman and Thornton should not go unregarded in light of their selection from Mary Monck. The more severe culling that Cockburn's verses seem to have undergone has its root, I would suggest, in two not mutually exclusive possibilities. One of these is that Cockburn's work came to the compilers of *PEL* with a great deal more mediation than did those of Monck. There can be no doubt that Colman and Thornton had the 1716 *Marinda* collection to hand, whereas their only source for Cockburn "Birch's 1751 edition of her works" contains a preface that downplays her poetry and makes excuses for the youthful exuberance in her verse. This is yet another example (like Ballard deferring to Giles Jacob) of young compilers relying on the estimation of their predecessors. More important, though, is the apparent reluctance of the compilers to include too many pieces that adhered to an old-fashioned genre "the non-satiric pastoral song. In any case, it is entirely possible that in reading poems by Monck Colman and Thornton allowed the impulse toward humour to overshadow that of respectability. Monck's sexually suggestive verse is satiric, and better fits eighteenth-century tastes, whereas Cockburn's leans toward earnest desire. Jeslyn Medoff points out that Cockburn, "like her contemporary the neophyte poet Elizabeth Singer (later Rowe), moved quickly to detach herself from the Behn-Manley 'school' of public personae," since both had come to regret the publications of their early careers.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Catharine Trotter Cockburn's poems seem at times shadows of Behn's, of which the editors of *PEL* had already selected a great many.

IV. ELIZABETH ROWE (1674-1737)

The works of Mrs. Rowe can never perish while exalted piety and genuine goodness have any existence in the world. Her memory will be ever honoured and her name dear to latest posterity.

Cibber and Shiells⁹⁷

piece that Colman and Thornton do not include in *PEL*, is an enthusiastic religious appeal: "The Rapture of an affectionate soul to Jesus on the Cross, composed in Latin by St. Francis Xaverus; paraphrased." The zeal in the title alone would have given any compiler pause, and her choice to paraphrase St. Francis may indicate she wrote the poem during her brief period of Catholicism.

⁹⁶Jeslyn Medoff, "The daughters of Behn," 40.

Elizabeth Singer Rowe was one of the most frequently published women of the eighteenth century. She was the eldest daughter of Walter Singer, a clothier and dissenting preacher, and Elizabeth Portnell, a highly religious woman who died when Elizabeth was sixteen. Like Anne Killigrew, Elizabeth Singer was “blest with the two Sister-Arts. . . Poetry and Painting.”⁹⁸ Her poetry first appeared when she was in her early twenties, in *The Athenian Mercury*, which ran from 24 March 1691- 14 June 1697. This periodical was edited by John Dunton, the founder of the Athenian Society who, in 1696, brought out a collection by Singer entitled *Poems on Several Occasions, written by Philomela*. This was apparently against the poet’s wishes, but the book gained instant recognition and she became known as “the Heavenly Singer.” She had a number of admirers, including Matthew Prior, Isaac Watts, and Dunton himself, who was married, but she fell in love with Thomas Rowe, poet and scholar, five years her junior, and they wed in 1710.⁹⁹ In 1715 her husband died of consumption, and when her father died in 1719, Elizabeth settled at Frome, Somersetshire, where she educated local children and continued to write. Among her many friends were James Thomson and Samuel Johnson.

In the first decade of the century Rowe saw her poems printed in Tonson’s fifth and sixth miscellanies, and her work appeared in numerous anthologies in her lifetime.¹⁰⁰ Rowe died of apoplexy in 1737, and her *Devout Exercises of the Heart*, yet another best-seller, was edited after her death that same year by Isaac Watts. In 1739 her *Miscellaneous Works* were published, together with her husband’s *Poems*, introduced by

⁹⁷*Lives of the Poets*, IV: 340.

⁹⁸Curll, “Introductory Letter” to Pope, *Philomela; or Poems by Mrs. Elizabeth Singer (now Rowe)* (2nd ed. London: [Curll], 1737) iv.

⁹⁹Thomas Rowe wrote the popular *Lives of several ancient and illustrious men omitted by Plutarch* (1728). His uncle, Thomas Rowe, the elder, conducted the Dissenting academy at Newington Green in London, which Isaac Watts attended. Stecher, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe*, 105-7, *passim*.

¹⁰⁰Her own publications were *Friendship in Death, in Letters from the Dead to the Living* (1728); *Letters, Moral and Entertaining*, 3 vols. (1729), and *The History of Joseph* (1736). Lonsdale’s is the best account to date of Rowe’s extensive career. *ECWP*, 45-46, 517-18. Matthew Prior, who is rumoured to have proposed to Rowe, included one of her pastorals, “Love and Friendship,” in his 1709 *Poems*, which was reprinted through to the late fifties. His preface in 1709 expresses a “wish she might be prevailed with to publish some other Pieces of that Kind,” though she had already moved emphatically away from the genre.

a “Life” by her brother-in-law, Theophilus Rowe. The *Works* includes ninety-seven poems, but omits several of the early poems from the 1696 *Philomela* text, some of which had been reprinted by Edmund Curll in the year of her death. Colman and Thornton relied for their selection on the second edition of the *Works*.¹⁰¹

Like Cockburn’s, Rowe’s career in print spans the turn of the century and, again like Cockburn, she became a more obviously pious writer in the eighteenth century than she had been in her youth in the 1690s. Curll’s introductory letter about Rowe to Pope in his 1737 edition of *Philomela* states that Rowe had come to regret her early writings: “She herself, is pleased to call them her *early Essays*, and charge them with *Vanity* and *Impertinence*.”¹⁰² Nevertheless, Rowe’s intense spirituality had been evident from the beginning of her career, as she traveled in dissenting circles.¹⁰³ In *Lives of the Poets* Cibber approved highly of Rowe. Margaret Ezell describes Cibber as “a defender of errant dramatists,” however, it is Rowe “on whom he lavishes the most unconditional praise,” discussing “her early poetic genius in tandem with her early piety.”¹⁰⁴

According to Samuel Johnson, “The attempt to employ the ornaments of romance in the decoration of religion, was, I think, first made by Mr. *Boyle*. . . but *Boyle’s* philosophical studies did not allow him time for the cultivation of style; and the completion of the great design was reserved for Mrs. *Rowe*.”¹⁰⁵ Certainly, Rowe, often prefaced by “The Pious” was a well-known name at mid-century. The print history of *Devout Exercises of the Heart* is impressive, with at least one edition each decade following its publication in 1737 and one each year of the 1790s. She was also an inspiration to younger writing women like Elizabeth Carter.

For all this, only eight of Rowe’s poems are reproduced over ten pages in *PEL*. This is six fewer poems than are culled from the works of the comparatively unknown

¹⁰¹See Chapter Three.

¹⁰²Curll, Intro. *Philomela* (1737) xiv.

¹⁰³The 1696 collection contains a paraphrase on the Song of Songs, chapters one through six, in addition to a number of other biblical paraphrases and translations of passages from Tasso’s *Jerusalem*.

¹⁰⁴Ezell, *WWLH*, 90.

Mary Monck. The relative sparsity most likely testifies to the numerous existing editions of Rowe, and the confidence of Colman and Thornton that their readers would be familiar with, and many already possess, her work. No collection of verse by eminent ladies could be complete without verse by Rowe, but she was not considered by the editors to be a principal attraction of the anthology. Perhaps, too, they did not admire her work.

Accusations of enthusiasm and at times fanaticism sometimes accompanied Rowe's name at mid-century.¹⁰⁶ John Duncombe's *Feminiad* praised "the warbled notes of ROWE's ecstatic song," but the footnote, which testifies to her large readership, is enigmatic in its comment on her personality: "the character of Mrs. Rowe and her writings is too well known to be dwelt on here. It may be sufficient to say, that without any previous illness she met at last with that sudden death for which she had always wished."¹⁰⁷ Thomas Amory, second cousin of Thomas Rowe and correspondent of Elizabeth, felt the need to defend her as "an upright Christian, and however she might incline to *vision*, was, to my knowledge, very far from any thing of the *partie amoureuse* in her piety. . . ."¹⁰⁸ In their introduction to Rowe, Colman and Thornton warn that "As she had always the strictest regard to virtue and religion, her poems are chiefly of the serious kind, and on religious subjects."¹⁰⁹ The adjective "serious," here, may reflect an editorial desire to distance Rowe from the enthusiasm with which her work was sometimes labeled. They are probably trying to avoid any suggestion that Rowe's pious poems have the slightly erotic devotional note (which they sometimes do). It is difficult to speculate beyond this, since Rowe's popularity had not decreased significantly at mid-century. In any case, it is reasonable to infer that the intense piety that Rowe represented was not the dominant note that the editors wanted to strike in their compilation.

Colman and Thornton did not always choose Rowe's best work. A case in point is the first poem by Rowe in the anthology, "In Praise of Memory," a relatively weak

¹⁰⁵Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, I: 312.

¹⁰⁶Fanny Burney was disgusted by Rowe's *Letters from the Dead* which she found "romantick," *ECWP*, 46.

¹⁰⁷Duncombe, *Feminiad*, 16.

¹⁰⁸Amory, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, 69.

effort; the concluding triplet is especially disappointing, and overall the piece is much inferior to one on the same theme by Laetitia Pilkington printed earlier in the anthology, which I discuss in the next chapter.¹¹⁰ A more interesting piece is the “Dialogue between The Fallen Angels and a Human Spirit Just entered into the other World.” The agonized soul is welcomed “to the regions of despair” by the damned who have engineered his fall:

Thou could'st the thirst of wine or wealth controul,
And no malicious sin has stain'd thy soul;
But for the joys of one forbidden love
Hast lost the boundless ecstasies above.¹¹¹

The voice in this poem is sympathetic, but not forgiving. Each party takes turns addressing the other, the fallen angels in triumph, the soul in mortification. The “one forbidden love,” never clearly defined, is obviously sinful, yet a moment’s tantalizing hesitation is introduced when the human spirit admits (in a nice bit of chiasmus) that “all was freely, freely all was lost,” and regrets that loss, but not the love: “But yet this fatal, this enchanting dream, / I should, perhaps, beyond ev’n heav’n esteem, / Were it as permanent; but, ah! ‘tis gone.”¹¹² This sort of sad damnation reads as antithetical to some of the sentiments that Behn (and others) express in the anthology. Rowe’s message is do *not* gather ye rosebuds. If page allotment counts for anything, the influence of Behn’s verse carries more weight, but Rowe’s depiction of damnation is a fairly strong incentive to choose restraint for the good of the soul. As a dialogue about choice, this piece is also reminiscent of Cavendish’s “Mirth and Melancholy.”

In “Despair,” a poem about the rejection of worldly values that borrows from the pastoral tradition, Rowe’s sense of both consonance and dissonance is impressive. As she recreates in words the darkness and solemnity that weigh her down, the poet longs for some deep grove,

¹⁰⁹ *PEL*, II: 270.

¹¹⁰ Rowe’s description of her friend “Clarinda” in this poem as one who “softens my lyre, and tunes its warbling strings” (l.22) may have inspired Duncombe’s use of “warbled notes” to describe Rowe’s writing.

¹¹¹ “Dialogue,” *PEL*, II: 274-277, ll.19, 24-27.

There, in a melting, solemn, dying strain,
 Let me all day upon my lyre complain,
 And wind up all its soft, harmonious strings,
 To noble, serious, melancholy things.¹¹³

Three other poems by Rowe in the anthology which convey the poet's urgency to escape are hymns, all composed in quatrains of forceful iambic tetrameter. Both the first, titled "Hymn to the Deity" and the one that follows it, "Hymn on the Sacrament," share a zealous attitude toward the life to come, and the renunciation of worldly treasures. She desires to experience "bright heav'n" and willingly pledges to "contentedly resign" all the glories of the world. The second hymn ends on a similar note: "let 'em parcel out the earth," she asks of her saviour "while heav'n and thou art mine."¹¹⁴

Her "Hymn of Thanks On my Recovery from the Small-Pox" is (as it would have to be) more positive toward life. Most appealing in this poem is the poet's sense of the inadequacy of language to speak her adoration: "What words of men can reach the theme? / What human eloquence express thy praise?"¹¹⁵ More typical of Rowe is "Revelation," a paraphrase of chapter xvi from that book of the Bible, which effectively conveys apocalyptic terror. The narrative present tense, from the startling first word "Already," along with end rhymes like *flood* and *blood*, *ray* and *decay* carry the momentum of the awful event when "hov'ring souls their former mansions take."¹¹⁶ The work is good, but the poet's ecstasy is indeed almost overwhelming at times.

¹¹²ll.28, 30-32.

¹¹³"Despair," *PEL*, II: 277-278, ll.96-99.

¹¹⁴"Hymn to the Deity," *PEL*, II: 272-273, ll.14,19-20; "Hymn on the Sacrament," 273-274, ll.19-20.

¹¹⁵"Hymn of Thanks," *PEL*, II: 280-281, ll.9-10.

¹¹⁶"Revelation" *PEL*, II: 279-280, l.44. Isaac Watts (1674-1748), a fellow dissenter, was an important person in Rowe's life. Of the many passages in Watts that mirror Rowe's sentiments is the opening of "Assurance of Heaven, or a Saint Prepared to Die":

Death may dissolve my Body now,
 And bear my Spirit home;
 Why do the Minutes move so slow,
 Nor my Salvation come?

English Hymns of the Eighteenth Century, ed. Richard Arnold, (NY: Peter Lang, 1991) 57, ll.1-4.

The 1696 *Philomela Poems*, or even Curll's much altered, 1737 edition of the same, offer a greater variety of verse than does Rowe's collected *Works*.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately, Theophilus Rowe's sanitized edition, the source for *PEL*, omits a good deal of the more interesting verse, such as a piece in the original *Philomela*, titled "Platonick Love," which begins an exchange of poems and ideologies between a woman and a man that likely occurred between Elizabeth Singer and John Dunton. At least here the reader can sense some struggle within the poet "if only to negotiate the quicksand of unwanted male attention" rather than the certainty her more overtly spiritual poems evinces.¹¹⁸

The last of Rowe's poems printed in *PEL* was probably her most popular: "On the Death of Mr. Thomas Rowe." This piece had in part inspired Pope to write "Eloisa to Abelard" and, like a version of Finch's "Answering to the foregoing Verses," was first printed in Pope's 1717 *Poems On Several Occasions*.¹¹⁹ Calling her husband "Alexis," Rowe styles herself a supplicant to the muses who must help her speak to him, as Finch did in her own request to Parnassus. Rowe's request is a sad one, because her spouse will not return. Here the classical tradition is a means of approaching unspeakable grief. The most striking line of the poem appears early on, and seems to resonate as an important maxim to recall in reading all of Rowe's work: "In grief for him there can be no excess."¹²⁰ As restrained as she is in some respects, in mourning her husband, in gratitude

¹¹⁷Curll's explanation for the many differences between the first and second editions of *Philomela's* poems is amusing in its grasping at logic. He explains to Pope in his introduction that Rowe's works "are faithfully Reprinted from the Copy published in 1696, except a little *Reformation* in the Numbers of some of them, and the *Addition* of a few *later* Compositions substituted in the Room for others which the *Writer's Friends* were desired of having omitted, as favouring a *Party-Reflection* and the *Heat of Youth*, since cooled by stricter Judgment, as you have, yourself, experienced." Curll, Intro. *Philomela* (1737) xvii.

¹¹⁸Whereas her later verse has little to do with worldly relationships, "Platonick" suggests that the poet must convince a specific reader of her own convictions:

So Angels Love and all the rest is dross,
Contracted, selfish, sensitive and gross.
Unlike to this, all free and unconfin'd,
Is that bright flame I bear thy brighter mind.

"Platonick Love," *Philomela*, 1696, 1, ll.1-4.

¹¹⁹*Poems on Several Occasions* (1717, rpt. 1935) 30-34; Lonsdale prints the poem from Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard* (2nd ed. 1720 [for 1719]), where it was titled "To the Memory of Thomas Rowe, Esq." Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 49. Greer argues that "Eloisa to Abelard" was influenced by Rowe's elegy: "he was well aware that the comparison would prove that he made a better woman than she did." *Slip-shod*, 51.

or adoration for her saviour, and in longing for the life to come, there can be no excess. Herein lies much of Rowe's appeal for readers. The poet wishes that she had never been torn from Thomas Rowe's "breathless clay." Her vow: "For thee all thoughts of pleasure I forego, / For thee my tears shall never cease to flow,"¹²¹ reads like something close to despair in her longing for death. Yet the final line of her commemorative verse refuses to reject divine love. She promises "spotless faith," conflating religious faith and spousal fidelity, body and soul. Despair and hope are reconciled in "On the Death of Mr. Thomas Rowe." The poem offers a puzzle and an answer that justifies Rowe's appearance in *PEL*.

* * *

In Elizabeth Rowe's publication history we witness the limits imposed by texts preceding *PEL*, which in turn highlights the process of selection and rejection that often went into the creation of a supposedly complete collection of even a single author's work. The effects of this pre-selection are evident in *PEL*'s representing Catharine Cockburn not as a Restoration playwright but as a serious-minded essayist and poet, and Elizabeth Rowe as a widow, whereas with only one exception Mary Monck appears as a younger self, girlish and precocious.

Three of the four poets in the following chapter were personally connected to Swift, and the writings of all of them reflect Pope's more general influence as a poetic model. They, too, were concerned about subject, style, and self, as the women who published at the turn of the century had been. For the most part, however, these poets of the seventeen-thirties and -forties had a very different social status from that of the eminent ladies I have explored thus far. Whereas they too adopted and adapted defensive

¹²⁰"On the Death of Mr. Thomas Rowe," *PEL*, II: 281-284, l.10.

¹²¹ll.78-79.

strategies, their self-protective tactics were inseparable from an awareness of the literary world as a marketplace in which they sold their wares.

CHAPTER SIX

Counting Words, Subscriptions, and the Cost to Reputation:

Mary Barber, Laetitia Pilkington, Constantia Grierson and Mary Leapor

One merit I presume to boast,
 And dare to plead but one at most:
 The Muse I never have debas'd;
 My lays are innocent at least;
 Were ever ardently design'd
 To mend and to enlarge the mind.
 This must be own'd a virtuous aim.
 The praise of wit — let others claim.

Mary Barber¹

Mary Barber wrote clever and humorous verse, but she knew whereof she wrote in this passage condemning “wit” and locating her “merit” elsewhere. The four women discussed in the present chapter published in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and their concerns with constructing acceptable writing persona were related to their positions in middling or lesser ranks of society. Roger Lonsdale notes that the 1730s especially proved a decade in which the literary market was opening up with such possibilities as subscription publication, though as I have noted, these were subscriptions on a less prestigious level than Prior and Pope in the 1710s and early 20s. It was also an era in which the burden of the past (those who had written “matchless” poetry, and others who had “debased the muse”), a greater moral rectitude, and the fictions of the present (such as various satiric depictions of scribbling women) came together to create a tension in the writing process that is manifest in the verses these women wrote in the period roughly between 1725 and 1745. Although this group is not entirely unlike the poets previously mentioned — Behn and Cockburn, certainly, wrote for income² — the poetry produced by the women I discuss in the present chapter evinces a different attitude toward the activity of creating verses for public consumption.

¹“To a Lady, who commanded me to send her an Account in Verse, how I succeeded in my Subscription,” *PEL*, I: 46-50, II. 127-134.

²Especially in the theatre, the one place where, with luck, a writer could net immediate and substantial gain.

Mary Barber, Laetitia Pilkington, and Constantia Grierson were hardworking middle-class Irish, and Mary Leapor was labouring-class English.³ These four women had grown up in marginal positions, outside of what they perceived to be both economic and cultural centers. Anne Finch, for example, allowed her publishers to profit from her publication, whereas the money that Mary Barber earned was important for the maintenance of her family. Laetitia Pilkington, whose reputation was already damaged when she published her *Memoirs*, made clear her dual motivation for doing so --money and spite. The third Dublin poet, Constantia Grierson, seems not to have written for publication, appearing in print only posthumously. Mary Leapor, a domestic servant, was encouraged by genteel friends to publish in order to keep herself and her father from penury.

In *PEL* we witness “to different degrees somewhat in proportion to motivations for writing and the likelihood of publication” a poetics of heightened, often confining, self-awareness. Harriet Guest refers to most of the poetry written by women between 1730 and 1760 as “usually slight, occasional, almost self-consciously private and inconsequential.”⁴ The now unfashionable word “persona” may, I think, be applied with impunity still to women who could seldom *publish* with impunity. Mary Barber styled herself a matron who wrote poetry only to please her children, even long after these children were grown. Laetitia Pilkington occupied herself with self-portraiture that combined vulnerability and a bravado that doubtless was part of her personality, but belied the consequences of the difficulties in which she frequently found herself.

Poets like Mary Barber knew that they had to tread carefully in their efforts to earn money by writing, while avoiding accusations either of “nonsense” or of “wit.” It was a fine line to walk on the journey to publication. They had little authority behind them, and this group of women evinces more direct influence from male writers, like

³ I have strayed from the chronological pattern that I followed thus far to include Mary Leapor in this group of women, because her financial and social status (or lack thereof) place her more closely within the context of the poets discussed in this chapter. I have included Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in the fifth and final chapter because most of her writings only became known after 1755.

⁴ Harriet Guest, “A Double Lustre: Femininity and Sociable Commerce, 1730-60,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23, 4 (Summer 1990) 479-501: 490.

Locke and Gay, but especially Swift and Pope, than did those in previous chapters. Swift befriended and encouraged all three Dublin poets; Margaret Anne Doody argues that although Swift has been accused of misogyny from all sides, “the effect of Swift’s humour is not to silence the woman but to force her into utterance.”⁵ Mary Leapor was profoundly influenced by Pope’s work. Although the two never met, Richard Greene argues that “repeatedly through her work Leapor asserts her allegiance to Pope; she sees in him a genius thoroughly misunderstood.”⁶

I. MARY BARBER (1690?-1755?)

How I succeed, you kindly ask;
Yet set me on a grievous task,
When you oblige me to rehearse
The censures past upon my verse.
Mary Barber⁷

Colman and Thornton could not have been personally acquainted with Mary Barber, because they introduce her in the past tense: “The ingenious Authoress of the following Poems. . . was the wife of a tradesman in the city of Dublin,” although she was still living when the anthology appeared.⁸ Nevertheless, Barber’s name is more intricately linked to *PEL* than that of any other poet in the anthology, because she comes first alphabetically, and in the anthology. The erroneous close connection between Barber and the anthology is traceable to the late nineteenth century, to old catalogues at the Bodleian,

⁵Margaret Anne Doody, “Swift among the Women,” *Yearbook of English Studies*, 18 (1988) 68-92: 71.

⁶Greene, *Leapor*, 182. Ellen Pollak argues that Pope incorporated women in his verse as a foil to a persona which “is stabilized by the opposing inscription of a woman as absence, lack,” whereas in the verse of Swift, “no such unifying equilibrium is ever comfortably achieved.” *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1985) 67. Leapor evidently saw something in Pope that Pollak and Margaret Anne Doody do not.

⁷“To a Lady,” *PEL*, I: 46, ll. 1-4.

⁸The date of Barber’s death is problematic, however. Bernard Tucker, in his edition, *The Poetry of Mary Barber* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1992), Roger Lonsdale in *ECWP*, and other sources claim that she died in 1757, but A. C. Elias notes that the *Dublin Journal* reports her death two years earlier, on 14 June 1755. See “Editing Minor Writers: The Case of Mary Barber and Laetitia Pilkington,” *1650-1850 Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, vol. 3 (1997) 129-147:144. If, as it appears, this is the

and to the *DNB*, in whose pages *PEL* is often attributed to her.⁹ Verses by Mary Monck, for example, are said to be “printed in Barber’s collection of ‘Poems by Eminent Ladies.’”

The misattribution likely arose from a number of factors. First, nowhere on the title page of the first edition or the Dublin edition printed the same year do the names Colman or Thornton appear, nor do they affix their names to their Preface in the first volume. Moreover, unlike the rest of the poets’ verses, Barber’s poems are preceded by the letters from Swift and Mary Jones in approbation of her. What these materials actually indicate is a strategy on the part of the editors to include something by Swift in the text, immediately followed by the sanction and definition of good women’s poetry from another eminent lady. The letters function as signs that what the editors are offering the public in this anthology is atypical women’s verse; it is good and she is good. To complement these commendatory letters, Mary Barber is one of the better-represented poets in the anthology. Twenty-eight of her poems are included in *PEL* (she is third after Behn, with forty-nine, and Mary Leapor, with thirty-three). This represents approximately a quarter of the total number of the poems printed in her own 1734 volume.¹⁰ Ezell argues that “the entries in the 1755 edition [of *PEL*] amply illustrate Mary Jones’s praise of Barber’s clear good sense and her control over diction.”¹¹

Nothing is known of her parentage, but Mary Barber was probably born in Dublin, where she spent most of her life. There she married a linen draper, previously believed to have been named John, but in fact Rupert.¹² She mentions three of her children in her works, but A. C. Elias argues the possibility that she had several more. From the drapery shop in Capel Street, Barber would walk down to St. Patrick’s and visit Swift at the

right Mary Barber, her death therefore occurred a great deal closer to the publication of *PEL* than assumed; June, however, is still later than May, and it is safe to assume she was alive when *PEL* appeared.

⁹Not, interestingly, in the *DNB* article on Barber herself, but in those of several of the other women in *PEL*, e.g. Monck.

¹⁰Of the one-hundred thirty-three poems in her own book, six were by Constantia Grierson, five supposedly “by” Barber’s son, Con. though this is difficult to ascertain, one by Elizabeth Rowe, and five by others.

¹¹Ezell, *WWLH*, 114.

¹²Elias, “Editing Minor Writers,” 140.

deanery. This was during the period of Swift's "exile" in Ireland after 1714, when he wrote sometimes bitter letters to Pope complaining of a lack of intelligent friends, though he also found admirers who were willing to put up with his increasing eccentricities. For a time Swift, his friend Doctor Patrick Delany, Laetitia Pilkington, and Constantia Grierson would meet at the deanery or at Delany's seat, Delville, to discuss and correct poetry.¹³ It is not clear whether this process of correction affected the poetry either of Grierson or Pilkington; neither was then attempting to bring out a volume of verse.

Such close associations between Swift and these three women make the inclusion of their verse in *PEL* understandable. To some extent the trio represent the Irish Swift in the anthology; each mentions him affectionately in her verse. In the *Connoisseur's* vision of Parnassus Mr. Town records that Mary Barber "was assisted in getting upon the saddle by Swift himself, who even condescended to hold the stirrup while she mounted."¹⁴ This courtesy on Swift's part suggests more than the usual support from male poets in the essay, most of whom simply assist their favorite lady into the saddle. Whether the condescension indicates Swift's willingness to correct Barber's verse, or his efforts toward gaining subscriptions for her book is unclear, though the latter seems more likely. Before the appearance of Barber's *Poems on Several Occasions* in 1734, Swift played a significant part, not only in shaping her poems, but also in recommending her to would-be subscribers in Ireland and in England, where she first traveled in 1730.¹⁵ Swift himself subscribed for ten copies and the poems acquired commercial value after this first edition was distributed. The two, highly unusual non-subscription editions that followed illustrate her rise to minor fame.

An enthusiastic invitation in verse from Doctor Delany to the Dublin coterie in order to help edit Barber's poems concludes with the hospitable couplet: "Flow Wit to her

¹³Delany's wife was the Mrs. Delany (formerly Mrs. Pendarves) in whose correspondence is recorded her reading of Ballard's *Memoirs*, and favourable response to the poems of Anne Finch.

¹⁴*Connoisseur* #69.

¹⁵Barber spent about three years in England, for the most part at Bath, Tunbridge Wells and London, attempting various financial schemes like taking in lodgers and selling Irish linen, without much success.

Honour, flow Wine to her Health, / High rais'd be her Worth, above titles or Wealth."¹⁶ Barber could not hope for wealth, but some form of financial reward for her writing was always behind the corrections at Delville and the deanery, and she took seriously the growth of her subscription list. Indeed, the linen draper's wife had first gained recognition and an introduction to Swift when she wrote "The Widow Gordon's Petition" to help obtain a pension for an officer's widow.¹⁷ This poem is printed in *PEL*, and represents one of several references on Barber's part to financial concerns. The number of subscriptions she was able to obtain "over nine hundred" greatly exceeds the usual numbers that W. A. Speck has calculated for the period.¹⁸

As I mentioned in my first chapter, when a collection of poems such as Barber's appeared in print, the motivations that were expressed in the preface to justify publication often involved complex negotiations between poet and reader. In the case of publication by subscription, this meant negotiations between the writer and her multiple patrons. She had to please them personally as well as with her writings (if not always *in person*, then with a reputation for modesty and virtue). Swift, in his efforts to promote Barber's work, prioritized her qualities in order to play down her ambition: "She has so many friends of great quality who encouraged her to print her poetical works by subscription. . . . I believe few people have met with more considerable friends and Patrons than She; and very well deserves their favour, by her Virtue, her humility, Gratitude and Poetical Genius."¹⁹ Although Barber spent a considerable amount of time away from her spouse, usually with the children in her custody, she was praised as a helpmeet to her husband to offset what might have been considered immodesty in light of her intellectual pursuits. The rhetoric of Swift's dedicatory letter to Lord Orrery defines her as a commercial man's wife: "I am

¹⁶Untitled poem by Patrick Delany, ca. 1730, qtd. in *Memoirs of Mrs. Pilkington*, 3 vols. *Swiftiana*, 17-19 (NY: Garland, 1975 facsimile of London vols. I-III, 1748-1751 editions) II: 66. All further references to Pilkington's *Memoirs* will be to this edition. Barber's "Petition" is reprinted in *PEL*, I:14.

¹⁷Swift to Pope, 20 July, 1731, *Swift's Correspondence*, III, 479.

¹⁸"Of 750 subscription lists between 1700 and 1750, as many as 627 contain fewer than 500 names, while 90 have from 500 to 1000, 28 over 1000 and only five over 2000." W. A. Speck, "Politicians, peers and publication by subscription 1700-1750," *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Isabel Rivers (Leicester: St. Martin's Press, 1982) 47-68: 66.

assured, that no woman was ever more useful to her husband in the way of business.”²⁰ Swift also explains that Barber deserved Orrery’s “protection on account of her wit and good sense, as well as of her humility, her gratitude, and many other virtues,” and the editors of *PEL* repeat the same qualities in their brief biography of her.²¹ Mary Jones, who did not know Barber personally, reinforces this notion of humility in her letter to Miss Lovelace.

Evidently, gratitude and humility were requisite characteristics for the woman who sought subscriptions as a “poetess”; she could so easily become an irritation. Barber met Pope when she went to England. He was then ill, and she annoyed him with a request that he “correct” her poems.²² She may even have been one of those clamouring for a subscription against whom he railed in the “Epistle to Arbuthnot.”²³ Pope was not alone in resenting such petitions. Speck records numerous complaints (particularly from the nobility) of being obliged to subscribe for some text or another. Considerable pressure was put into place in Barber’s appeal. Mrs. Conduit of Dublin wrote in 1733 that “the town has already been so long invited into subscription, that most people had already refused or accepted.”²⁴ More serious is an attack on Dr. Delany that I have found in a Dublin broadside from 1729 or 1730. The poem is virulent, addressing Delany as

¹⁹Swift to Andrew Fountaine, 30 July, 1733, *Correspondence*, II: 186.

²⁰In fact, Mr. Barber is conspicuously absent from correspondence by and about his wife. If Swift’s depiction of marital helpfulness was true in the thirties, it was no longer the case, at least in 1755, when Mary Delany wrote to her sister: “Mr. Barber. . . cares not a pin for any of his family, who, if they had not met with friends better than himself, might have starved.” *Delany at Court and Among the Wits*, III: 221. letter to sister, 16 February, 1755. There is confusion of identities in the scholarship on Mr. Barber, as Lonsdale suggests that he died in 1733, which would fit with a subscription publication the following year. *ECWP*, 118-119. There is no mention in Barber’s 1734 *Poems* of widowhood, however.

²¹Swift, “Dedicatory Letter,” *Barber’s Poems* (London, 1734) 5, 4. By including this letter, Colman and Thornton were also acknowledging a friend. John Boyle, Earl of Orrery (and of Cork, after 1753), had contributed a number of essays to the *Connoisseur*. In printing this reminder of Orrery’s intimacy with Swift, the editors of *PEL* were reminding the public of a relationship that preceded Orrery’s controversial *Memoirs* of the aging Swift (1752). These relationships also explain the inclusion of Barber’s occasional (and unremarkable) piece, “To the Earl of Orrery, on his promise to sup with the Author,” *PEL*, I: 39.

²²“Mrs. Barber desires that I would correct her Verses, truly I should do it very ill, for I can give no attention to anything.” Pope to Swift, 20 March, 1731, *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956) III: 184.

²³On Swift’s recommendation, Pope and his mother did subscribe to Barber’s volume of poems.

“Patrick” and “Paddy” and criticizing his boastfulness of his friendship with Lord Carteret, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (“Think you these honours to your Merit due? / What equal Honours can reflect from you?”) Most significant is the conclusion, which may refer to Delany’s preferment of Mrs. Barber and his support of her appeal for subscriptions:

Attend some one at least, and quit Glas-nevin²⁵
Which will destroy your Credit, if you live in
Let B-r-b-r tho’ polite, at Counter wait,
Nor longer be caress’d in Pomp and State,
Quickly do this, or you may some provoke
To say, you mean to fleece, not feed the Flock.²⁶

The complaint, though aimed at Delany, clearly takes issue with Barber’s own social aspirations as well. The phrase “caress’d in Pomp and State” signals the writer’s disapproval of Barber’s association not simply with Delany, but likely with Lord Carteret, to whom Barber did write familiar verse that testifies to a friendship with the Carterets. In any case, from the criticism linking Barber and Delany, we get a sense of the extent to which her literary reputation was intertwined with the lives of the doctor and the Dean.

This attachment may be reflected in one of the two fables by Barber which appear in *PEL*. “The Oak and its Branches. A Fable. Occasion’d by seeing a dead Oak beautifully encompassed with Ivy” is an arboreal tale that glorifies self-sacrifice. The branches complain that their “parent” allows the ivy to climb its trunk and limbs, but the mighty tree will not “gratify” its offspring’s “pride,” instead opting for a long-term glory: “Whilst I’m alive, You crown my Head; / This graces me alive, and dead.”²⁷ The poem

²⁴Mrs. Conduit to Swift, 29 November, 1733, *Correspondence*, IV: 214.

²⁵Delville, Doctor Delany’s seat, was a villa near the town of Glasnevin, outside Dublin.

²⁶“Letter of Advice to the Rev’d D-r. D-la-y,” BL. MS 1890.e.5 (92). Mary Barber also worked behind the counter at her husband’s shop, and it is most likely that it was Mrs. Barber’s subscription list referred to in the complaint about Delany “fleec[ing]” his Flock. In 1729 Delany, always a consummate host to his friends, published an overblown solicitation to Lord Carteret requesting additional funds. Outraged, Swift replied with a number of satiric epistles in which he advised Delany: “To Your Ambition put an End.” See Joseph R. McElrath Jr. “Swift’s Friend: Dr. Patrick Delany,” *Eire-Ireland*, Autumn 1970 vol. 3: 53-62.

²⁷*PEL*, I:34-35, ll.27-28.

lacks logic in the unwillingness to admit the ivy's contribution to the oak's death, but the notion that greatness can be attained through altruism dominates this piece, as it does much of her work. Barber may not have been thinking along strictly familial lines, here, since the ivy is not kin to the oak. Rather, the symbiotic relationship the poet noticed in nature may have seemed to her reflective of the patronage she herself received from others, principally Swift. Like Finch's works, Barber's fables demonstrate that women writers are drawn to the genre. Although the Irishwoman's tale seems mild in comparison with Finch's fables, "The Oak and its Branches" reinterprets in interesting ways the genre that Jane Elizabeth Lewis calls "the only literary form in which the principal characters regularly devour one another."²⁸ Here, plants engage in a kind of botanical commensalism rather than the parasitic relationship one would expect from the ivy's dependence on the oak.²⁹

Fables reinforce the persona that Barber chose to inhabit in her verse, that of the earnest mother: "I am sensible that a Woman steps out of her Province whenever she presumes to write for the Press," she admits in the "Preface" to her *Poems*, "and therefore think it necessary to inform my Readers that my Verses were written with a very different View from any of those which other Attempters in Poetry have proposed to themselves: My Aim being chiefly to form the Minds of my Children. . ."³⁰ She uses her awareness of her place to justify overstepping her bounds. There is a tension in this preface, as if the market can bear only so much; she has hit upon her own tactic, a unique persona, and it is every other "attempter at poetry" for themselves.

Barber was able to wed her concern with money to the fabular (a fitting genre for a writer who composed to instruct her children). The first sample of verse in *PEL* is Barber's "A True Tale," which lavishly praises John Gay's *Fables* (1727-8) and suggests

²⁸Jane Elizabeth Lewis, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture 1651-1740* (Cambridge UP, 1996) 8. The theme of Barber's other fable in *PEL*, "Jupiter and Fortune" (I: 25) anticipates Finch's "The Decision of Fortune." (II: 308).

²⁹Ivy was known to be deadly. See Philip Miller's *Gardener's Dictionary*, 2 vols. (4th ed. London: Rivington, 1743) I: *Hedera*, The Ivy-Tree: "It is a parasitic Plant, sending forth Roots or Fibres from its Branches, by which it fastens to either Trees. . . and from there receives a great Share of its Nourishment."

that Gay deserves a handsome “Recompence” from “the Queen,” Caroline.³¹ From the outset, Barber iterates her maternal inspiration, both for reading and writing, beginning with “A mother, who vast Pleasure finds / In modelling her Childrens Minds. . . .”³² This poem is a fascinating initiation into *PEL*, because it seems to exist in a liminal space, between the “fiction” created by the act of writing and presenting the self as a poet, and the “truth” upon which the title insists. *Her* tale is like a fable, complete with a moral. “A True Tale,” which Colman and Thornton refer to as “the elegant little poem at the head of this collection,” is likewise important because it echoes the names of some of the male writers mentioned in the preface to the anthology.³³ In addition to Gay, Dryden is quoted in Barber’s poem, Addison and Pope are mentioned, as is Swift, “the Draper.”

The poem also emphasizes to the reader of the anthology the relationship between publication and profit. It is phrased in part as a conversation with Barber’s son, Con., who asks his mother how she would reward Gay if she were queen. Her answer seems more than the hyperbolic enthusiasm of a grateful mother: “At least, a thousand Pounds a Year.”³⁴ She is able to adopt a sort of maternal authority akin to that of the monarch in making this imaginary decree, which in turn highlights the distance between reality and her wishes. This hypothetical philanthropic stance, which seems to instruct the queen on what she should do for Gay, is curiously coupled with a demonstration of Barber’s own humility. Regardless of her ostensible reasons for composing poetry “to instruct her own children and others” money is one of the most important subjects of much of her verse, in which she both emphasized her own financial constraints, and chastized the ungenerous.

“An Unanswerable Apology for the Rich,” for example, describes a wealthy young man who says that he wants to help the poor, but claims that he cannot afford to do

³⁰Barber, Preface, *Poems*, xxvii. As Lonsdale notes, however, “she had in fact published several poems in Dublin in the 1720s.” *ECWP*, 118. See Chapter Three.

³¹See Chapter Three. Barber’s poem appeared in Dublin and Philadelphia editions of Gay’s *Fables* beginning with a 1737 Dublin edition. Ernest L. Gay, “Mrs. Barber’s ‘A True Tale,’” 24.

³²“A True Tale,” *PEL*, I: 7-10, //1-2. It is worth noting that by the time Barber published her *Poems*, Constantine Barber was an adult. Lonsdale give his birth date as c.1713.

³³Intro. to Barber, *PEL*, I: 2.

³⁴“A True Tale,” 188.

so. The scepticism in the concluding couplet is not original, but it is heartfelt: “Wou’d heav’n but send ten thousand more, / He’d give just as he did before.”³⁵ Another ironic poem, “A Letter for my Son to one of his School fellows,” is written as if by her son, but most of the lines are devoted to quoting his mother’s objection to his learning versification in school, because the activity is not lucrative. “A fine way of training a shop keeper’s son! / ‘Twould better become him to teach you to dun:” she exclaims. Maternity and materialism, the twin incentives behind her verse, come together beautifully in this poem, where the vocabulary is unlike any that we encounter from the poets from an earlier era in *PEL*: “You may rhyme til you’re blind, what arises from thence? / But debtor and creditor brings in the pence.”³⁶ Though not a comment on her own activity, these lines have relevance to it.

Barber’s “On sending my son as a present to Dean Swift, on his birth-day” signals the close friendship that existed between Barber and the Dean, and insists that Ireland would give Swift a statue, if only it could afford to do so. As an alternative, Barber offers her own son. As a symbol of Ireland’s gratitude, Barber’s offspring represents her own appreciation, and the poet is herself identified with the green isle, as both mother and motherland bestow the gift on the man who would be Hibernia’s laureate. She further aligns herself with the Dean in describing Ireland as an impoverished land of poets in “An Invitation to Edward Walpole,” where, again, poetry and pounds are inseparable: “From the lands of Parnassus the rents are ill-paid, / And England has cruelly cramp’d us with trade.”³⁷ As in *Connoisseur* #69, Parnassus is an ironic place. Unlike the seat of poetry in the essay, however, it is here insufficiently independent.

Ezell argues that the best poems by Barber that are included in *PEL* are those in which she “cast[s] an ironic eye on Irish society.”³⁸ Ireland represents “otherness” on a number of levels. She depicts her country affectionately as Hibernia, less developed,

³⁵*PEL*, I: 12-14, ll.41-42.

³⁶“A Letter for my Son,” *PEL*, I: 28, ll.7-8; 20-21.

³⁷*PEL*, I: 43, ll.15-16.

³⁸Ezell, *WWLH*, 114.

poorer and more fragile, but also less corrupt than England. When she is in England, Ireland is her home, that which sets her apart. In “Written upon the Rocks at Tunbridge Wells, on seeing the names of several persons written there,”³⁹ she takes note of names that have been written literally on the rocks. She then writes figuratively upon her inability to add her name to theirs. When she is in Ireland, however, it is the entire island that is outside of the center which England represents.

Barber also casts “an ironic eye” on English society. In “To a Lady, who commanded me to send her an Account in Verse, how I succeeded in my Subscription,” Barber criticizes those who would not subscribe, like *Servilla*, who “*hate[s] a Wit*,” and *Sylvia*, who has “no Taste / For women’s Poetry, at least.” Of *Albino* referred to sarcastically as a British “patriot,” she says he will not subscribe to her poems, but is willing only to support a subscription to retain Italian opera singers in England: “To keep dear **Carestini* here; / Not from a narrow party view; / He doats on **Senesino* too. . .”⁴⁰

Oppression and a sense of “otherness” are issues that apply not only to nationalism, but also to gender in Barber’s verse. Readers of *PEL*, encountering her patriotic sentiments in the midst of verse that deals with marriage, motherhood, and the constraints of writing, may have sensed an affinity between Irishness and femaleness which I believe the poet intended. Another instance in which her occasional verse gives Barber the opportunity to comment on larger issues is “To Mrs. Strangeways Homer.” The poem describes a proud moment for Barber as a mother, in which her son asks her to accept the prize for learning he has won. The event draws her into the problems of Hibernia, which again reflect back on her, the wife of a tradesman.

Nor see an isle, by nature bless’d
By ill-judg’d policy oppress’d”
Her trade usurp’d by foreign lands:
Whilst *Albion* fast ties up her hands⁴¹

³⁹*PEL*, I: 38.

⁴⁰*PEL*, I: 46-50, ll.45-47. The footnote that accompanies the asterisks identifies these “*Two famous Italian Singers, zealously supported by dissenting parties.*” Barber’s poem would have struck a note of personal history with Colman. His father, Francis, had secured for London opera the castrato singer Senesino, who captivated British audiences in 1730. Page, *Colman*, 5.

As Margaret Anne Doody observes, “with her son as a pretext, Barber could write upon Irish topics.”⁴² Certainly, one of Barber’s most effective rhetorical devices is the mention of her son, “Con,” as recipient of her advice or, more frequently, as the speaker of what she has composed. This allowed her to adopt her son’s voice and comment subtly on women’s issues from a perspective that could not simply be labeled the product of womanly “spleen.” The best of these is a poem on the constrictions of clothing. In “Written for my Son, and Spoken by him at his first putting on Breeches” the boy objects to poor circulation and shoes that cramp the feet, as well as tight sleeves, hatbands, and cravats. The sentiment behind the aggravations of clothing might easily be a woman’s complaint, although Barber places the responsibility for customary fashion with women themselves:

What is it our Mammias bewitches
To plague us little Boys with Breeches?
To Tyrant Custom we must yield,
Whilst vanquish’d Reason flies the field.⁴³

Throughout her verse, Barber reasons for a correspondence between the education of children (particularly sons) and women. “Written for my son, and spoken by him at school, upon his master’s first bringing in a rod” opposes corporal punishment, and praises John Locke’s emphasis on learning through play. Like Catharine Cockburn, Barber aligned herself with Locke and with his ideas on education. The “common-sense” that Swift recognized in Barber, and which she incorporated into the persona she created for herself, seems in part a response to Locke’s complaint about basic instruction for boys: “And would it not be very unreasonable to require of a learned Country-School-master. . . to teach his Scholar to express himself handsomely in *English*, when it appears to be so little his Business or Thought, that the Boy’s Mother (despis’d, ‘tis like, as

⁴¹ *PEL*, I: 40-43, ll.29-32.

⁴² Doody, “Swift among the Women,” 74.

⁴³ *PEL*, I: 10-12: ll.1-4.

illiterate for not having read a *System of Logick and Rhetorick*) out-does him in it?"⁴⁴ Barber's "Conclusion of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. C---" argues for the education of women in terms of the happiness such learning will afford men. Here her son urges his mother to write "a poetical letter," though she knows that the reverend "thinks it a crime in a woman to read." Further, she imagines Mr. C--- exclaiming with a reflection on her marriage: "I pity poor *Barber*, his wife's so romantic: / A letter in rhyme ! --- Why the woman is frantic!"⁴⁵ The argument the poet makes, however, is phrased as advice to her son on his own choice of a wife:

Chuse a woman of wisdom, as well as good breeding,
With a turn, at least no aversion, to reading:
In the care of her person, exact and refin'd;
Yet still, let her principal care be her mind:
Who can, when her family cares give her leisure,
Without the dear cards, pass an ev'ning with pleasure;
In forming her children to virtue and knowledge,
Nor trust, for that care, to a school, or a college:
By learning made humble, not thence taking airs,
To despise, or neglect, her domestick affairs:
Nor think her less fitted for doing her duty,
By knowing its reasons, its use, and its beauty.⁴⁶

Again, the responsibility for the formation of a family's character rests with the woman. The key question is not how will the educated woman benefit, but rather who *else* will benefit from a woman's education?⁴⁷ It is an apt topic for an anthology titled *Poems by Eminent Ladies*.

⁴⁴John Locke, *Some Thoughts concerning Education* (1693) ed. John W. and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989):§188, P, 243

⁴⁵"Conclusion," *PEL*, 1:22-25, ll.4, 7, 9-10. In "The Female Right to Literature" (1748) Thomas Seward again paraphrased this unreasonable attitude: "Shield me, propitious powers, nor clog my life / With that supreme of plagues a learned wife." rpt. Dodsley (1758) II: 309-315, ll.105-6.

⁴⁶"Conclusion," ll.49-60.

⁴⁷In the last decade of the century John Burton was still asking the same rhetorical question: "whether a woman who is ignorant and uninformed will be more pleasing in her manners, be better qualified to instruct her children, and manage the affairs of a family, than, one, who is sensible and intelligent." Burton, *Lectures on Female Education and Manners* (London, 1793) vol. I: 109.

The antithesis of the woman who was “by learning made humble” was the stereotypical woman who personified vanity. Barber’s “Stella and Flavia” contrasts substance and vanity in two maidens. The concluding quatrain is typical, hopeful:

Then boast, fair *Flavia*, boast your face,
 Your beauty’s only store:
 Your charms will ev’ry day decrease,
 Each day gives *Stella* more.⁴⁸

There is a conventional contrast here, between learning linked with virtue, and frivolous accomplishments, such as dancing and painting. In 1697 Mary Astell contrasted virtue to more ephemeral charms by stating that virtue would “impress such a loveliness on your Minds as will shine thro’ and brighten your very countenance; enriching you with such a stock of Charms, that Time. . . shall never be able to decay. . .”⁴⁹ Aside from the educational aspect, however, “Stella and Flavia” is also the comforting murmur of the mother’s voice; the voice that we all want to hear condemn the other girl, the prettier one.⁵⁰

While she wrote verses that were supportive of her friends, she offered her readers the other side of the coin, as well. “To a Lady, who valu’d herself on speaking her Mind in a blunt Manner, which she call’d being sincere,” chastises a woman (probably for criticizing Barber’s poetry, though this is not certain). The poem is pithy, as well as catty, and the conclusion a lesson in tact:

To be *sincere*, then, give *me* leave;
 And I will frankly own,

⁴⁸PEL, I: 36-37, ll.13-16.

⁴⁹Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, 2 vols. (London, 1697; NY: Source Book Press, 1970) II: 52.

⁵⁰It is unfortunate that Colman and Thornton did not include the only poem in Barber’s book that addresses her daughter, Mira. “A Letter written for my Daughter, to a Lady who had presented her with a Cap” is similar in tone to the verse on the uselessness of rhyming for her son, although it is composed as if by the daughter. “A Letter” emphasizes the daughter’s unworthiness of the gift, though “This Day to please my Brother Con, / She let me put your Present on.” This “She” is the mother, the real writer. The conclusion of the poem is important, because Barber never allows her reader to forget that she is a citizen rather than gentry: “. . . it best becomes us Cits, / to dress like People in their Wits.” Barber, *Poems* (1735) 55.

Since you but this *one* virtue have,
 'Twere better you had *none*.⁵¹

Righteous indignation compels Barber to utterance, but she also sees humour in her own need to find a voice. Another piece, "The PRODIGY: A letter to a Friend in the Country," describes the poet's pain with her teeth, and the uproar caused in Dublin by the fact of a woman not speaking. She writes again in stereotypes here, and the poem addresses the maxim: "the last thing that dies in a woman's her tongue." The absurd lengths taken by the city in response to this silence ("the guards were all doubled" and "the militia drums beat a perpetual alarm") are very funny.⁵² The conclusion explains the anxiety with a proverb: "It seems it was sung by a *Druid* of old, / That the *Hanover* race to *Great Britain* should come; / And sit on the throne, till a woman grew dumb."⁵³ Barber's sense of humour permeates her gentle satire. Her ability to amuse, together with her connection to Swift, would have made her verse an appealing prospect to Colman and Thornton. A poem on which Swift and Barber may have collaborated is "Apollo's Edict."⁵⁴ Here Barber praises Swift, and pokes fun at common poetic diction: "No simile shall be begun / With *rising*, or with *setting sun*."⁵⁵

One of the most significant of Barber's poems within the context of the anthology as a whole is one in which she does not have recourse to humour, and one where it seems that she falls short as a friend. This is titled "Occasioned by seeing some verse written by Mrs. Grierson, upon the death of her son." The poem provides some context to the little-known Grierson's life, and anticipates the younger woman's voice in the anthology.⁵⁶

Of the many other poems by Barber that Colman and Thornton did not include in *PEL*, most are highly occasional and specific to friends "many at Bath" which makes them less accessible than the poems about motherhood and Swift.

⁵¹"To a Lady," *PEL*, I: 45, ll.-8.

⁵²"The Prodigy," *PEL*, I: 17-20, ll.72-73.

⁵³ll.85-86.

⁵⁴Both Swift and Barber printed this poem in their works in slightly altered forms. See Oliver W. Ferguson, "The Authorship of 'Apollo's Edict'," *PMLA* LXX: 3 (June, 1755): 433-40.

⁵⁵*PEL*, I: 30-32, ll.11-12.

After describing her friend's extraordinary learning and wisdom, Barber acknowledges the inadequacies of philosophy to this tragedy: "See Nature triumph o'er the boasted art, / Ev'n in a *Solon's*, and *Constantia's* heart."⁵⁷ The poet then offers somewhat cold comfort to the grieving mother: her infant has escaped through death "the dangerous paths of youth," as well as sorrow, distempers, guilt, and "the dire calamities of age."⁵⁸ Barber's answer is in the same vein as Ben Jonson's poem on his first daughter ("At sixe monthes end, she parted hence / With safetie of her innocence").⁵⁹ Nevertheless, she fails to address in any meaningful way a parent's earthly loss. Barber's poem is "occasion'd" not by the boy's death, but by verses on the death. Both the distinction and the distance invite inquiry, as the poem is inadequate to the task.

In an effort to emphasize the pathos in the manuscript poem by Grierson on the death of her son, A. C. Elias deprecated it, awkwardly positing that "infant mortality was a fact of life in the eighteenth century. It should not have bothered sensible parents unduly."⁶⁰ I would argue that Grierson was not exceptional in her sorrow; rather, this fact of life did "bother" parents, though "unduly" is a strange choice of diction. Women, who arguably suffered the larger grief, were generally unlikely to have means of recording their grief. In an affecting poem titled "To an Infant Expiring the Second Day of its Birth," Mehetabel Wright (1697-1750) begged her dying child:

Ere thy gentle breast sustains
Latest, fiercest, vital pains,
Hear a suppliant! Let me be
Partner in thy destiny!⁶¹

⁵⁶ *PEL*, I: 33.

⁵⁷ ll.9-10.

⁵⁸ ll.22-28.

⁵⁹ Ben Jonson, "On my First Daughter," *The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson*, ed. William B. Hunter Jr. (NY: Norton, 1963) 11, ll.-6.

⁶⁰ Elias, "A Manuscript Book of Constantia Grierson's," *Swift Studies*, 2 (1987) 33-56. Grierson's first child, was smothered, "overlaid and kill'd through the carelessness of the Nurse." *Dublin's White-Hall Gazette*, 22 September, 1727 (Elias, "Manuscript Book," 45).

⁶¹ ll.17-20, *GM* (1733) 542, rpt.. in Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 115.

Death-bed verses and lines on a departed husband seem more amenable to the philosophy of endurance that Barber urged on Grierson. Grierson's manuscript poem adopts at times a tone similar to the despair of Wright: "Yet long on Earth I first on Earth must wretched be / . . . Depriv'd at once of all those joys and thee / Doom'd in this Vale of Sorrows to remain."⁶² Perhaps any attempt at comfort in such circumstances would be fruitless. Regardless of their limited empathy, Barber's lines are the only ones on the death of a child in *PEL*, and it seems fitting that the most overtly motherly poet in the collection offers this comfort to another woman.

Mary Barber's reputation had been preserved in references by George Ballard (who relied on her for information about Grierson) in Mary Jones's letter, in the three editions of her *Poems* and elsewhere. By including the prefatory letters on Barber's modesty and success the editors of *PEL* acknowledged that this particular woman lit upon a persona that worked, one founded upon modesty and motherhood. Swift had borne witness to this persona. It had sold well twenty years before, and Colman and Thornton hoped it would help sell their own collection of women's verse.

II. LAETITIA PILKINGTON (ca. 1708-50)

I have been a Lady of Adventure, and almost every Day of my Life produces some new one: I am sure, I ought to thank my loving Husband for the Opportunity he has afforded me of seeing the World from the Palace to the Prison; for had he but permitted me to be what Nature certainly intended for me, a harmless household Dove, in all human Probability I should have rested contented with my humble Situation, and, instead of using a Pen, been employed with a Needle, to work for the little ones we might, by this time, have had.

Laetitia Pilkington⁶³

⁶²Qtd. in Elias, "Manuscript Book," 45, ll.9-11. Poems on this subject did appear in other collections. For example, the inappropriately titled *Humorous Miscellany; or, riddles for the beaux* (London, 1733) attributed to Elizabeth Boyd (1730-44) contains Boyd's "On the Death on an Infant of five Days old, being a beautiful but abortive Birth," as well as the anonymous "On an Infant's lying some Days unburied, for Want of Money."

This passage touches on many of the contradictions of Laetitia Pilkington, who considered herself a poet and emphasized her own proficiency with the pen, yet denied that she was ambitious; who, at the time of writing this already had three children living, and had undergone an ecclesiastical separation from her husband before moving to England. The one claim that does come through in this passage from Pilkington's *Memoirs* is that she was forced to venture into the press as an alternative to starvation, and that she had not anticipated the circumstances in which she found herself.

Born in Dublin, Laetitia was the only living daughter of John Van Lewen, an obstetrician of Dutch descent, and a mother whose maiden name was Meade, distantly related to Irish nobility. She was married young, to the Reverend Matthew Pilkington, and the couple became friends with Jonathan Swift, who enjoyed witty repartee with the "little poetical parson and his littler poetical wife."⁶⁴ Matthew, who published his own *Poems on Several Occasions* in 1731, was unfaithful while working in London, though it was eventually he who was granted a judicial separation (*a mensa et thoro*) in the spiritual courts in 1738 on the grounds of adultery.⁶⁵ Swift wrote to Pope, disassociating himself from the couple by styling Dr. Patrick Delany "a very unlucky recommender," and dismissing the Pilkingtons thus: "he proved the falsest rogue and she the most profligate whore in the kingdom."⁶⁶ Laetitia left for London, in the hopes of earning her

⁶³Pilkington, *Memoirs*, II: 152.

⁶⁴Swift to Lord Bathurst, October 1730, *Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, III: 411-412. Pilkington's anecdotes became the chief (until fairly recently, unacknowledged) source of information about Swift during the period in which she knew him. See Emile Pons, *Swift* (Strasbourg: Alsacienne, 1925) 9. A. C. Elias records that Irvin Ehrenpreis found Pilkington to be remarkably accurate where he could check her facts, whereas Louis Landa believed that the serious scholar "simply could not rely on her." Elias comes down somewhere in between, arguing that in regard to other anecdotes about her own life, particularly the time spent in London, "we are just as likely to find her sources in literature as in life." See "Laetitia Pilkington on Swift: How Reliable is She?" *Walking Naboth's Vineyard: New Studies on Swift*, ed. Christopher Fox and Brenda Tooley (Indiana: U of Notre Dame P, 1995) 27-142:128.

⁶⁵Pilkington, *Memoirs*, I: 230. Laetitia explained her seemingly inappropriate conduct by saying that she had borrowed a book from the gentleman in question, but that he would not leave it with her, so that she was forced to read it while he sat in her bedchamber. This ecclesiastical divorce meant that neither party was allowed to marry again. Matthew Pilkington tried to, however, claiming that Laetitia had died.

⁶⁶Swift to Pope, 12 June, 1732. *Correspondence of Pope*, III: 293. Not only Pilkington's accounts testify to her previous closeness to Swift. Mary Delany, in October 1731 wrote with excitement to her sister that she had "just begun an acquaintance among the wits ~Mrs. Grierson, Mrs. Sycan, and Mrs. Pilkington; the latter is a bosom friend of Dean Swift's. . ." Delany, *Autobiography and Correspondence*, I: 299-301.

living by her pen. Aside from a few initial publications in the *Gentleman's Journal*, her verses were first printed scattered through her three volumes of *Memoirs*. She had hoped to produce a book of poetry, and continually solicited subscriptions for it, but it never appeared. Doody approves of the poet's choice: "instead of stringing them together as a conventional 'Poems on Diverse Occasions', she makes them so many plums in a lively prose pudding,"⁶⁷ but Pilkington had wanted just such a conventional volume of verse. Her choice was essentially an economic one: no one would subscribe for her poems (she blackmailed individuals who paid *not* to appear in the *Memoirs*). Colman and Thornton chose twenty-three poems of the sixty-four originally interspersed throughout these three volumes.

Beginning with this generation of writers, Colman and Thornton could not always rely on their usual sources for information about every poet in the anthology. With Pilkington, there were additional issues. Although she was deceased, George Ballard does not include her among his learned ladies (he did not favour women with questionable morals—Behn had been omitted. And Pilkington died only two years before Ballard's book was published; considering her own efforts at immortalizing herself, what was there for him to write?) Cibber and Shiells refer to her as "this unfortunate poetess" and "a poetical mendicant,"⁶⁸ and Duncombe named her in the *Feminiad* only to identify her as a woman not worth mentioning.⁶⁹ Pilkington's controversial posthumous reputation is reflected in *Connoisseur* #69, where she is the last woman tested in Mr. Town's dream. She is also the poet whose ride is allotted the longest paragraph in the article, following that of Mary Barber:

Another lady, a native of the same kingdom, then briskly stepped up to

⁶⁷Margaret Anne Doody, "I am an irregular verb," rev. of *The Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, ed. A. C. Elias, *London Review of Books*, 22 January, 1998, 22-23: 22.

⁶⁸*Lives of the Poets*, V: 315.

⁶⁹Duncombe, 15n. Having censured the writings of dramatists Manley, Centlivre, and Behn, Duncombe compared the Irishwoman to two other memoirists, in describing an apparent impossibility: "As soon might Phillips, Pilkington and V--- / Deserv'd applause for spotless virtue gain." Bad publicity may be better than none at all when it comes to posthumous canonical reputation. Mary Barber was not mentioned at all in Duncombe's list of modern female geniuses.

Pegasus, and despising the weak efforts of her husband to prevent her, she boldly jumped into the saddle, and whipping and cutting rode away furiously helter skelter over hedge and ditch, and trampled on every body who came in her road. She took particular delight in driving the poor horse, who kicked and winced all the while, into the most filthy places; where she made him fling about the dirt and mire, with which she bespattered almost every one that came near her. Sometimes, however, she would put a stop to this mad career; and then she plainly convinced us, that she knew as well how to manage Pegasus as any of the females, who had tried before her.⁷⁰

The Pegasus trope becomes confused in this description of Pilkington, even more so than with Behn, as the ride becomes not merely a test of poetry, but also of autobiography, a genre in which (at least in Pilkington's case) the name of anyone near the writer is sullied. It is a judgment not only of how Pilkington wrote, but of how she lived, and it reinforces the opinion given in her biographical note in *PEL*: "But as this lady has been her own biographer, we shall refer the curious reader, for further particulars concerning her, to her own *Memoirs*: and shall only observe, that it is a pity this Lady was not bless'd with discretion, and, we may add, good fortune, in some proportion to her genius."⁷¹ It is important to note that the *Connoisseur* article, which revels in Pilkington's wild behaviour, captures these various poets from different ages in an ageless moment, immortalizing them in a mythical place. A different sort of editorial accountability seems to be at work in *PEL*, however, where the mortality of most of the writers is emphasized, biographically as well as in the poems Colman and Thornton chose.

Mr. Town had something else to add to his vision. When he learns the identity of the rider, he satisfies his curiosity by drawing near, and offering to help her down from her seat: "methought she returned my civility with such an uncourteous slap on the face, that (though I awaked at the instant) I could not help fancying for some time, that I felt my cheek tingle with the blow."⁷² There is an undertone of sexuality in the description of Pilkington's equestrian escapade, in which she is linked to Aphra Behn. The horse and

⁷⁰*Connoisseur* #69, 120.

⁷¹*PEL*, II: 234.

⁷²*Connoisseur*, # 120.

rider image may have been exclusively a metaphor for the harnessing of reason and verse in the passages on Katherine Philips, Anne Killigrew, and Mary Barber, but all the filth, mud and mire on this occasion are more than that, especially following Barber's stately ascendance. It is worth noting that Pilkington is the only character in the vision who uses a whip on the horse.

The jest that Mr. Town makes of Pilkington's ride, and the fact that the Irishwoman is situated at the end of the essay, testify to what Colman and Thornton saw as the marketability of her questionable reputation. Her works had attracted considerable attention, particularly the anecdotes of Swift, which were widely pilfered by newspapers and magazines. Along with the first edition of Pilkington's third volume, a third edition of the first two volumes had appeared in 1754. Significantly, Richard Baldwin was selling both *PEL* and Pilkington's *Memoirs* at the same time.⁷³ Elias lists the offshoots of the *Memoirs* which testify to their popularity: In 1749 *The Ladies Advocate*, "retold the saga of the fair 'Pilkemena' and her villainous spouse 'Pilkmenon'."⁷⁴

Like Barber's section (and unlike the poems from the poets of an earlier, less accessible period) several of Pilkington's poems are epistolary and occasional. Again, one of this poet's selling points is her friendship with Swift. As they were intended to do in her own *Memoirs*, poems such as "To the Rev. Dr. Swift, On his Birth-Day," and "Sent with a Quill to Dr. Swift, Upon hearing he had received a Book and a Stand-Dish," remind the reader of her association with Swift, though they are not as densely layered as Barber's addresses to him. Others, like "To Mr. Cibber. On his asking for something entirely New," and "To his Grace The Lord Archbishop of York" testify to the poet's wide acquaintance and the time she spent in England.

⁷³*Books Printed for, and Sold by, Richard Baldwin* (London, 1755?). As well as notoriety, therefore, there were solid commercial reasons for including Pilkington. This may also in part explain Ralph Griffiths' unenthusiastic response to *PEL* in the *Monthly Review*, since he had published the early London editions of Pilkington's *Memoirs* at The Dunciad, also in Paternoster row. Baldwin was the competition.

⁷⁴*The Ladies Advocate: Or, Wit and Beauty a Match for Treachery and Inconstancy* (London, 1749). After *PEL* came a book of largely unrelated jokes and anecdotes, titled *The Celebrated Mrs. Pilkington's Jest* (1759). Pilkington's son, John, published his own memoirs late in the decade, first in 1758 as "The Adventures of Jack Luckless," son of "The Ingenuous Mrs. Pilkington," but later published as *The Real Story of John Carteret Pilkington* (London, 1760). Laetitia's *Memoirs* were reprinted in Dublin in 1776.

There are also poems that speak to a time prior to her travels. The voice in the poem titled “Carte Blanche” by Colman and Thornton is innocent, charming. It was supposedly the first paper of verses that Pilkington wrote as a young girl, for her brother.

O spotless Paper, fair and white!
 On whom, by force, constrain'd I write,
 How cruel am I to destroy
 Thy purity, to please a boy?*

It is a poem about its own creation, and the brotherly pressure provides justification for the act of writing. There is also an anxiety about writing here that seems more grown-up, about more than the purity of the paper; already there are hints at the cost to reputation risked by the act of versification.

Though “Carte Blanche” was the first poem that Pilkington wrote, *PEL* follows the order in which she included her poems in the *Memoirs*. The first piece by Pilkington in *PEL* is “The Petition of the Birds to Mr. Pilkington, on his return from shooting.”⁷⁶ Its inclusion is in keeping with the editorial tendency to reprint poems composed to or for husbands, and “The Petition” is more interesting than most. The occasion of its composition is given by the poet as her honeymoon, when her new husband insisted on spending the days hunting rather than with her. In 1937 Lord Ponsonby naively called this piece “quite a pretty little child’s poem,” but it is significant that the poet herself refers to it as her “first Attempt at Poetry that was not quite childish.”⁷⁷ Here, her humanitarian plea ostensibly claims a kinship between birds and mankind. Sacrifice and gratitude are qualities possessed by the winged creatures, and the poet seems in fact to be likening men and women rather than birds and men: “Admire not if we kindred claim, /

⁷⁵*PEL*, II: 247, ll.1-4. Along with this asterisk Colman and Thornton include a footnote in Pilkington’s own voice from the *Memoirs*: “My brother teized me one evening to write some verse as a school-exercise for him, I asked him what I should write upon; why, said he pertly, what should you write upon but the paper? so [sic] taking it for my subject, I wrote the following lines.” *Memoirs*, I: 109.

⁷⁶*PEL*, II: 235-236.

⁷⁷Lord Ponsonby, “Letitia [sic] Pilkington (1712-1750)-- A Curiosity of Literature,” *English*, 1: 4 (1937) 297-306” 298; Pilkington, *Memoirs*, I: 38.

Our sep'rate Natures are the same."⁷⁸ The *Memoirs* give no indication that her request to spare the "plum'd Inhabitants of Air" was taken seriously, but it does comment on the newlyweds. Certainly, Colman and Thornton would have recognized the birds as symbols of eroticism and fertility. The personification of the birds makes the appeal almost fabular, while the circumstances of the poem's composition juxtapose violence and death at a moment of emergent sexuality in the poet's life.

Youth and experience are intertwined in Pilkington's writings, as she is constantly trying to assert two things --a conflict that Virginia Woolf identified as "her duty to entertain" and "her instinct to conceal."⁷⁹ While Pilkington emphasizes her own lack of education, for example, and knew no Latin, she "translated" odes of Horace from other English translations, two of which appear in the anthology. One of these, "The Seventh Ode of the Third Book of Horace paraphrased," is subtitled "Written in the Absence of her Husband" in *PEL*, which illustrates an editorial interest in associating Pilkington's verse with her personal life, as she did. Pilkington's is the most personal selection in the anthology; the poems constitute a highly occasional part of the anthology, and that occasion is the deterioration of a marriage. The poem, "Sorrow," written after her divorce, bemoans the loss of "the tender names of daughter, mother, wife." Here, again, Pilkington likens herself to a bird, this time, maternal: "Thus the poor bird, when frighted from her nest, / With agonizing love, and grief distres'd, / Still fondly hovers o'er the much-lov'd place."⁸⁰ Each of these birds, including the "household dove" that Pilkington could have been, is a victim, and Mr. Pilkington is always, implicitly, the hunter.

⁷⁸ "Petition of the Birds," *PEL*, II: 235, l:7-8. Pilkington, too, was likely familiar with Locke's writings. About children prone to cruelty the philosopher wrote: "They often torment, and treat very roughly young Birds, Butterflies, and such other poor Animals. . . . the custom of tormenting and killing Beasts will, by degrees, harden their Minds even towards Men; and they who delight in suffering and destruction of inferiour Creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate or benigne to those of their own kind." Locke, *Some Thoughts*, 180.

⁷⁹Virginia Woolf, "Lives of the Obscure," *The Common Reader*, 1st series (1925; rpt.. London: Hogarth Press, 1962) 146-67: 161.

⁸⁰"Sorrow," *PEL*, II: 255, ll. 43-45. Wordsworth included Pilkington's "Sorrow" in an album of women's verse that he compiled for a friend. *Poems and Extracts from the works of Anne, Countess of Winchelsea and Others. Compiled by William Wordsworth for an album presented to Lady Mary Lowther*, Christmas, 1819, ed. Harold Littledale (London: H. Frowde, 1905). See Chapter Eight, p. 288.

Doubtless she did feel abused, but Laetitia Pilkington was also creating her own rhetorical stance, as Mary Barber had done, though the younger woman tapped into a wider variety of imaginative sources for her persona.

A more cynical commentary on male-female relations is Pilkington's allegorical narrative of male infidelity, "The Statues: Or The Trial of Constancy. A Tale. For the Ladies."⁸¹ The poem, which Margaret Anne Doody identifies as "one of the first anti-masculinist satires by a woman in an age over-rich in anti-feminist satires by men,"⁸² was written while she was still married, and motivated, as Laetitia Pilkington notes, by Swift and Matthew Pilkington "eternally satyrizing and ridiculing the *Female sex*," which incited in her "a very great inclination to be even with them, and expose the Inconstancy of Men."⁸³ Here she narrates the meeting of a young man and a princess "Poseidon's daughter" to whom he promises constancy. They marry, and when the woman must go to see her father, the youth is tempted by another woman, succumbs, and is transformed into a statue in the midst of a garden of statues that were once living men.

Pilkington acknowledges that she "borrow[ed] a Hint from a Story in the *Peruvian Tales*," which here refers to a collection of stories from Incan folklore with an *Arabian Nights* flavouring, translated from an anonymous French text by Thomas Simon Guellete.⁸⁴ The tale the poem retells is that of "The History of the Second Traveller," and the changes the poet makes are significant. Most importantly, the man in her version is given a choice about marrying though he knows the penalty for adultery, whereas no choice is offered the man in the original tale. Secondly, Pilkington's fallen hero is

⁸¹ "The Statues" was the first poem that Pilkington had printed during her stay in London. Dodsley gave her five guineas for the piece and it appeared in folio early April, 1739. Pilkington also claims in her memoirs to have authored another poem: "An Excursory View on the Present State of Men and Things. A Satire" anonymous in Foxon, Cat. E601. See Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 137.

⁸² Doody, "Swift among the Women," 73.

⁸³ Pilkington, *Memoirs*, I: 92.

⁸⁴ Elias, *Pilkington's Memoirs*, II: xxvi. Yvonne Hann argues that the poem is adapted from a text by Samuel Humphreys and published in *The Novelist's Magazine* in 1734. See "Rediscovering Laetitia: A Text of *The Statues*," *TransAtlantic Crossings: Eighteenth-Century Explorations*, ed. Donald W. Nichol et al. (St. John's: Dept. of English, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1995) 31-38: 32. See also the note on this poem in Chapter Three, p. 101.

transformed into a statue as punishment for adultery. In the original, his hand is cut off. At 214 lines, the poem is one of the longest in the anthology. The language is dissonant, the message, bleak:

Thy changeful Sex in Perfidy delight,
 Despise Perfection, and fair Virtue slight,
 False, fickle, base, tyrannic, and unkind,
 Whose Hearts, nor Vows can chain, nor Honour bind:
 Mad to possess, by Passion blindly led:
 And then as mad to stain the nuptial bed. . . ⁸⁵

From what we discover of the personality she reveals in her autobiography, Pilkington would have enjoyed this kind of poetic justice, doled out by a powerful woman to a man who has proven unworthy of her. Although this piece was composed prior to her divorce, it comments nicely on the process of disillusionment in marriage that she describes in her *Memoirs*. As a contribution to a collection titled *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, the poem stands out as a tale about an eminent woman, male deceit, and retribution. Within the anthology as a whole, “The Statues” reiterates the message of Behn’s *Voyage to the Isle of Love* that a man must prove his worth in order to win fair maiden. The moral of Pilkington’s story, however, is that no man can. In contrast to Chudleigh’s “To the Ladies” and “The Ladies Defence,” Pilkington’s poem (sub-titled “for the ladies”) removes the gender conflict in the earlier pieces from a conventionally moral setting to a fabular universe. It is not a poem about minds or souls, but essentially about bodies. All of the whimsical songs written by earlier writers, like Cockburn’s assertion that she would still forgive an unfaithful lover, are undermined by this poem. The princess loses her prince, but he is only her latest, not her last.

In her *Memoirs*, Pilkington prided herself on her memory, and “Memory,” a poem in triplets, begins with an inquiry not wholly unlike that made by Finch to the spleen: “In what recesses of the brain, / Does this amazing pow’r remain, / By which all knowledge we attain?”⁸⁶ Although puzzled, she demonstrates confidence in the “surprising

⁸⁵“The Statues,” *PEL*, II: 245, ll. 185-190.

storehouse" which facilitates art and understanding. That this poet should evince such faith in "the sacred stores of learning" is interesting, because she expended so much effort in remaking herself. The title that Colman and Thornton gave her earliest poem, "Carte Blanche," may refer not only to the purity of the unspoiled page, but also to the possibilities presented by John Locke on the changeable nature of humanity, and the possibilities of the personality as a *tabula rasa*. Such an association would have been particularly fitting for the generous selection of Pilkington's poems that Colman and Thornton include in *PEL*. In "The Statues" and other pieces, she is both witty and strong. However, in "The Petition of the Birds," "Consolatory Verse to her husband," "Sorrow," and "Expostulation," she is a harmless household dove, much maligned and incapable of self defense. Whereas some readers would accuse her of prevaricating or posturing, Pilkington, more than any other woman in the anthology, stands as an argument that a person is never quite the *same* person at any two points in her life.

In Pilkington's section we witness the clearest indication of an editorial preference for ladylike subjects. Significantly, in the poems that Colman and Thornton chose not to include from the *Memoirs*, Pilkington comes off as much nastier. For example, while they include a fairy poem by her titled "Queen Mab to Pollio," which here echoes Cavendish's poems, the editors do not reprint the bold attacks on those who have wronged her, which at times illustrate her wrath with Swift-like scatology.⁸⁷

The final poem in Pilkington's section in *PEL* is the last poem she wrote, and one which the editors were certain to include. Colman and Thornton tended to end other selections with pieces on death (often in imitation of their sources), and with Pilkington they again achieve a strong sense of closure. This is "Written on her death-bed," three couplets of pathos, rather than wit:

My Lord, my Saviour, and my God,

⁸⁶"Memory," *PEL*, II: 249-50, ll. 1-3.

⁸⁷I.e. "Or on the Orifice all Day / Thy nether End expose, / By whose inspiring Fumes you may / New Systems yet compose," from "To Mr. Taaffe, sung to the Tune of Chevy Chase," *Memoirs*, I: 256-58, ll. 41-44. Other pieces that Colman and Thornton omitted were specific addresses to lesser-known individuals, such as "To Miss Betty Pl--kett" and "To the Honourable Mr ***." Many of these were hack work she had written on behalf of others.

I bow to thy correcting rod;
 Nor will I murmur or complain,
 Tho' ev'ry limb be fill'd with pain;
 Tho' my weak tongue its aid denies,
 And day-light wounds my wretched eyes.⁸⁸

Pilkington's final poem precedes the intensely religious verses of Elizabeth Rowe. In instances such as this "the juxtaposition of the ultimate resignation of a disreputable, "spiritually divorced" adventuress, and a widow who longed enthusiastically to join her husband in death" the anthology manufactures teleological order. The introduction to Pilkington, which notes a disproportion between her "discretion" and her "genius," together with her own death-bed lines, is reminiscent of Behn's tombstone, quoted earlier in *PEL*: "Here lies a proof that wit can never be / Defence enough against mortality."⁸⁹

III. CONSTANTIA GRIERSON (1706-1732?⁹⁰)

There are three Citizen's wives in this town; one of them whose name is Grierson, a Scotch Booksellers wife, She is a very good Latin and Greek Scholar, and hath lately published a fine Edition of Tacitus, with a Latin Dedication to the Lord Lieutenant and she writes *carmina Anglicana non contemnada*.

Jonathan Swift⁹¹

Constantia Grierson, who wrote "English songs not to be despised," had a more reliable husband than either Barber or Pilkington, though her life was considerably shorter than that of either friend; according to Barber, she died at the age of twenty-seven. Her maiden name was either Crawley or Crowley, and she had been brought to Dublin

⁸⁸"Written on her Death-Bed," *PEL*, II: 268.

⁸⁹*PEL*, I: 58.

⁹⁰Barber claims that Grierson died in 1733, but Elias, whose 1987 article on Grierson remains the best source of information on her to date, notes that from the *Dublin Journal* and the *Dublin Evening-Post* we learn her death occurred December 2, 1732. According to a letter in Elias' possession, Grierson may have suffered from tuberculosis. Elias, "Manuscript Book," 45.

⁹¹Swift to Alexander Pope, Dublin, Feb. 6th, 1729, Swift's *Correspondence* II: 369.

from her home in Kilkenny (possibly by her future husband) to study midwifery under Dr. van Lewen and met the maiden Laetitia at about the age of eighteen.⁹² Pilkington rhapsodized in her *Memoirs* that Grierson was “Mistress of *Hebrew, Greek, Latin and French*, understood the *Mathematicks* as well as most Men: And what made these extraordinary Talents yet more surprizing, was, that her Parents were poor illiterate Country People.”⁹³ Unlike the multi-lingual Mary Monck, who translated poetry for her own amusement, Grierson’s talents were put to practical, lucrative use once she married George Grierson, a Scottish printer working in Dublin. Constantia edited and corrected the proofs of works by Tacitus, Virgil and Terence. It seems that only one of their four children survived to adulthood, George Abraham Grierson, who became a friend of Johnson’s.⁹⁴

What is most curious about Grierson’s reputation is not that the woman described is too talented and virtuous to believe, but rather that she maintained a reputation at all with so few poems attributed to her and no printed collection of her own. Only eight poems certainly composed by Grierson are extant in print, six in Barber’s *Poems on Several Occasions* and two (apparently copied out from memory) in Pilkington’s *Memoirs*.⁹⁵ *PEL* prints all of these. The encomiastic descriptions from Barber and Pilkington did much to preserve their friend’s memory, though George Ballard, who included her as the last learned lady in the *Memoirs*, complains that Barber did not supply him with sufficient information about the younger woman. He reiterates her reputation for a virtue that matched her knowledge: “she was too learned to be vain, too wise to be conceited, too knowing and too clear-sighted to be irreligious.” Ballard added that she

⁹²Grierson’s maiden name has been discovered from a nasty poem calling her “dear *Pug-nasty*” with “Face of *crab*.” Jarrell et al. “Mrs. Constantia Crowley (Crowley?) Grierson,” *N & Q*, 12 (1965), 19-20.

⁹³*Memoirs*, I: 27. Mary Delany doubted the Hebrew, and Barber does not mention Hebrew or French as being among her friend’s languages. She does add that Grierson knew history, divinity, and philosophy.

⁹⁴Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, II: 116-17.

⁹⁵Grierson may have written a poem titled “The Art of Printing,” printed as a broadside, though the authorship of this piece is not certain. Myra Reynolds argues that “The Art of Printing” was actually a poem by Henry Brookes, written as “a eulogy of Mrs. Grierson.” Reynolds’ *The Learned Lady in England: 1650-1760* (Boston and NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1920).

was exemplary “particularly in her behaviour to her husband.”⁹⁶ Thomas Amory wrote hyperbolically of having “passed a hundred afternoons” at tea with Mrs. Grierson but gives no real account of her.⁹⁷ Cibber’s *Lives* and *PEL* both echo Ballard’s paltry information. It is as if the paucity of verse by Grierson allows for a projection of values onto her name.⁹⁸ The editors of *PEL* translate Grierson’s own, cultivated talents into a familiar, succinct, explanation: “she acquired this great learning merely by the force of her own genius, and continual application.”⁹⁹ Swift and her own husband, among others, played a part in Grierson’s learning. But here, again, we are reminded of the Preface of *PEL*, wherein the editors state that “most of these Ladies (like many of our greatest male writers) were more indebted to nature for their success, than to education.”¹⁰⁰

The editors of the anthology wisely printed Grierson’s verse chronologically, rather than according to the publication dates of the volumes of verse in which each poem occurred. Grierson’s selection therefore begins with the two poems she composed “To Miss Laetitia Van Lewen” when they were young. The first, written while Laetitia was away at a country assize, speaks to their friendship. In its disparagement of lawyers, the piece may have amused George Colman, the erstwhile student at law.

But beaux! they’re young attorneys sure you mean!
 Who thus appear to your romantic brain.
 Alas! no mortal there can talk to you,
 That love or wit, or softness ever knew:
 All they can speak of ‘s *Capias* and the law,
 And writs to keep the country fools in awe.
 And if to wit, or courtship they pretend,
 ‘Tis the same way that they a cause defend;
 In which they give of lungs a vast expence,

⁹⁶Ballard, *Memoirs*, 394.

⁹⁷Amory also states that “Mr. Ballard’s account of [Grierson]. . . is not worth a rush.” Amory, *Memoirs*, xxvii-xxx.

⁹⁸Grierson is included in Janet Todd’s *Dictionary of British Women Writers*, even though the better-known Pilkington is overlooked.

⁹⁹*PEL*, I: 240.

¹⁰⁰*PEL*, I: iv.

But little passion, thought or eloquence. . . ¹⁰¹

The first line of this playful poem (in Grierson's usual iambic couplets) compares Pilkington indirectly to winged creatures: "The fleeting birds" are more likely to swim in the ocean, than Laetitia to be content in that lonely forest with "serious matrons." Although bird metaphors were common in verse of the period, in *PEL* Grierson's comparison anticipates the avian tropes that Pilkington later used to describe herself on her honeymoon and as a mother.

The piece that follows, prefaced by Colman and Thornton with the explanation "To the same on the same Occasion" allows some insight into the intrigues at which the young women played with their beaux. "George" is mentioned here, as is "the lovely Damon" (Matthew Pilkington) who, much like the Baron in "The Rape of the Lock," "languishes and dies / Nor can revive, but by your charming eyes." The final couplet is charming and youthful: "But I forgot --- Mamma these lines must see, / So shall you hear no more of him from me." This abrupt, amused ending lends to this piece of occasional verse a wider appeal. They contain a joke, but also remind the reader that even the poets in this collection who did not intend their verse for publication were aware of the potential for the sharing of texts within a family and, consequently, the limits of candor even in the most personal poetry.¹⁰²

The remaining poems by Grierson were written by an adult, and appeared first in Barber's *Poems* --most of which are verse tributes with which the older woman "reinforced the presentation of her poetic credentials."¹⁰³ One, which speaks to Mary Barber's talent, is titled "Written as from a Schoolfellow," and was composed when

¹⁰¹"To Miss Laetitia Van Lewen (Afterwards Mrs. Pilkington) at a Country Assize," *PEL*, I: 242, ll.33-42. The phrase "Afterwards Mrs. Pilkington" was added by Colman and Thornton. In 1761 George Colman described himself as "the lively student at the inns of court [who] has too sublime a turn of mind to follow his profession." 11 June, 1761, essay in the *St. James' Chronicle*, rpt. *Colman's Prose on Several Occasions*, 3 vols. (London, 1787) I:17.

¹⁰²For a broader discussion of social conventions "which protected middle-class women from immoral texts," see Helen Molitor's "Women in the Reading Circle," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 13: 3 (November, 1989): 9-77.

¹⁰³Ezell, *WWLH*, 107.

Grierson learned that Barber's son had spoken "Latin in School to less Advantage than English." Adopting the voice of another boy, she states that Con Barber's uneven performance proves Mrs. Barber responsible for her son's assignments in English. "Yet now thy undeceiv'd companions see, / The Muse, thy mother, only speaks in thee." The confusion between muse and female poet, discussed previously in connection with *The Nine Muses*, is here evident. Barber is both; a few lines later the reader encounters the many talents that the muses have bestowed upon the Irishwoman, but Grierson has already labeled *her* a muse.

Equally interesting is Grierson's emphasis on language acquisition in this poem, for the one thing denied Barber is the education that her son is in the process of gaining. Grierson addresses the schoolboy with an accusation that functions as a compliment to his mother: "In learned languages had she been skilled, / Still with your praises had our school been fill'd."¹⁰⁴ The scenario is that Phoebus has grown jealous of Barber's skill, and angry with the muses who inspire her. Though she may compose "With Virgil's purity, and Ovid's Ease," Phoebus vows, "Yet I'll their universal tongue deny." Grierson concludes by flattering Barber that, had she the "universal tongue," she would shame both Virgil and Ovid. This argument again conforms to those theories of primitivism which glorify the "untutored genius," and which, Richard Greene notes, "explained and even sentimentalized those who lacked education or economic security."¹⁰⁵

That the trope of Phoebus' jealousy and the punishment he doles out originates with one of the best linguist in *PEL* is more curious, and reads like part of a larger discourse. It may be that the two Irishwomen explored languages as a topic of conversation, since Barber's consolatory verses on the death of Grierson's son begin with the mention of linguistic achievement: "This mourning mother can with ease explore / The arts of *Latium*, and the *Grecian* store:" Grierson was probably aware of Barber's own sense of awe, or insecurity *vis-à-vis* these languages. Clearly, Grierson was praising her friend and perhaps consoling her, as well, for her lack of learning. As eminent ladies in the anthology, Grierson and Barber therefore complement one another. Grierson's

¹⁰⁴*PEL*, I: 246-248, ll.7-8;13-14.

flattery rationalizes the disparity between the education of men and women. It is rhetoric, but well-meant. Unlike the editors she does not mention “pieces, which too plainly betrayed the want of learning”; she merely suggests that Barber’s potential would be greater yet with the benefit of more education.

Other poems by Grierson seem to participate in a dialogue with those of Barber, even when they do not address her. One of the poems originally printed in Barber’s book is Grierson’s “To the Hon. Mrs. Percival, On her desisting from the *Bermudan* Project,” which iterates the same kind of anxiety that Barber evinced on the subject of Ireland’s subjugation to England. The title refers to the unrealized scheme of George Berkeley (1685-1753) to found a college in Bermuda for the education of young colonists and native Americans. She argues that Ireland needs help first: “Our gold may flow to *Albion* with each tide.”¹⁰⁶ The righteous indignation in this phrase, like that in the Irish verses of Barber, evokes again the memory of Swift in *PEL*. For Grierson, Swift’s impact would have been less direct, but their relationship must also have been less fraught; Swift was not helping her with a subscription, nor did she fall from favour as that “profligate slut” Pilkington did. Grierson was a reader, and a friend.¹⁰⁷

Another poem addressed to Mary Barber reveals Grierson’s enthusiasm for her friends, though now with a more serious approach to versification than that with which she earlier addressed Pilkington. “To Mrs. Mary Barber, Under the Name of Sapphira” was “occasioned by the Encouragement She met with in England to publish her Poems by Subscription.”¹⁰⁸ Here, Grierson praises Barber’s choice of topics, and explains that “If

¹⁰⁵Greene, *Leapor*, 159.

¹⁰⁶*PEL*, I: 248-249, l.23.

¹⁰⁷Elias posits that the conclusion of “To Mrs. Mary Barber” was actually written by Swift: “The last four lines strike me as the sort of thing Mrs. Grierson would have liked to have written, but did not.” (“Manuscript,” 44). These are:

Thus the great Father of the Hebrew state,
Who watch'd for weary'd strangers at his gate;
The good he thought conferr'd on men unknown,
He found to more exalted beings shown. (*PEL*, I: 246, ll.57-60.)

If this were by Swift, it would be yet another instance in which a male voice is insinuated into the anthology; however Elias is working on mere conjecture.

¹⁰⁸*PEL*, I: 244-246. This “encouragement” contradicts the way Barber wrote about her own subscription.

all triflers had not writ,” on the once-noble subjects of heroism and virtuous love, these might still be subjects worthy of verse. This is no longer the case. To Barber: “Far different themes we in thy verses view; / Themes in themselves alike sublime and new:” These new themes are beneficence (a reference to Barber’s “The Widow Gordon’s Petition”) as well as education: Barber’s are “justest thoughts in purest stile exprest” because “‘Tis not to wound, but to instruct, she writes,” implying that others do intend such wounds.

One of the most powerful moments in *PEL* occurs in this poem from one eminent lady to another, where the poet’s prescription for writing moral literature is accompanied by dire examples:

Cou’d *** , or *** from the tomb,
Which shades their ashes till their final doom,
The dire effect of vicious writings view,
How wou’d they mourn to think what might ensue!
Blush at their works, for no one end design’d,
But to embellish vice, and taint the mind!
No more their dear-bought fame wou’d raise their pride;
But terrors wait on talents misapply’d.¹⁰⁹

Grierson did not live long enough to see Barber’s *Poems* published, nor to pass judgment on the application of talent in Pilkington’s *Memoirs*, and some readers of the anthology may have chosen to place Pilkington in Grierson’s category of writers who ought to blush at their works.

Rich possibilities arise in this anthology, where Pilkington’s and Barber’s poetry is printed together for the first time. Although at one time friends, Barber evidently refused to subscribe to the book that Pilkington had been hoping to produce, and Pilkington referred to Barber’s verse as “dull” in the *Memoirs*. Grierson’s lines to her friends predate this animosity, however, and they serve a function here that is broader than the representation of one woman’s skill. Twice removed from the context in which they were written, used first to help fill the pages of her friends’ publications and to puff

their reputations, in *PEL* Grierson's poems become additional biographical material on Pilkington and Barber – much as Barber's poem informs us of the death of Grierson's son, along with something of his mother's unscholarly reaction to the loss. Most important, the anthology brings the verse of the unmarried Miss Crawley and the mature Mrs. Grierson together for the first time. The collection of all but one of Grierson's extant poems in *PEL* allows for a fuller reading of the different stages and facets of her personality than did the selections in only one or the other of the editors' sources.

IV. MARY LEAPOR (1722-1746)

John Duncombe testifies to what Mary Leapor, who died eight years before he published *The Femiuiad*, came to represent in terms of the standards set for female poets:

Now in ecstatic visions let me rove,
 By Cynthia's beams, thro' Brackley's glimm'ring grove;
 Where still each night, by startled shepherds seen,
 Young LEAPOR's form flies shadowy o'er the green
 Those envy'd honours Nature lov'd to pay
 The bryar-bound turf, where erst her Shakespear lay,
 Now on her darling Mira she bestows;
 There o'er the hallow'd ground she fondly strows
 The choicest fragrance of the breathing spring,
 And bids each year her fav'rite linnnet sing.¹¹⁰

Like the three poets discussed above, Leapor also knew much of hard work and want, and of writing in the hopes of remuneration, having worked as a kitchen maid at a large home, Weston Hall, and probably another, Edgcote House. Her mother, Ann, died in 1744, and at some point Mary returned to keep house for her father, Philip, at Brackley in Northamptonshire.¹¹¹ She was encouraged by a gentlewoman, Bridget Freemantle, the 'Artemisia' in Leapor's later poems, who became her mentor and worked tirelessly to

¹⁰⁹*PEL*, I: 244-246, II.27-34. Elias suggests that the asterisks here replace the names of Restoration playwrights Wycherly and Etherege.

¹¹⁰*Femiuiad*, 20-21, II.213-222.

acquire subscriptions for the publication of her verse. Leapor's death at the age of twenty-four was due to measles, and her posthumous *Poems on Several Occasions* was eventually published for the benefit of her father, the first volume appearing in 1748 with nearly six hundred subscribers, followed by a second volume in 1751.¹¹²

Of Swift's three female protégés "Barber, Pilkington, and Grierson" Bernard Tucker notes that "the tone of their poems is generally self-mocking, self-satirical and self-dismantling," a tone reflective of their humble circumstances, since "they were not 'blue stockings' separated from society in wealthy homes with wealthy husbands."¹¹³ Mary Leapor's situation was even further removed from the privilege afforded the bluestockings, and her verses reach new heights of self-mockery. From her position she was able not only to 'dismantle' the barriers according to which she was pigeonholed as a servant, but also to cast both light and shadows on the pretensions of the gentry, and to earn a place among Colman's and Thornton's eminent ladies.

Although influenced poetically by the Scriblerians, Leapor is one of the few women in the anthology whose eminence did not in part originate either in the acquaintance of a well-known man (as in the case of Killigrew, with Dryden, Rowe with Dunton, and the Irish women discussed above, with Swift) or a title (as with Cavendish and Finch) or notoriety (Behn, Pilkington). Colman and Thornton must have been impressed with Leapor, and considered her name a selling point, for there are more pages devoted to her poems than even to those of Aphra Behn. Because of this, and because her work follows only the brief selection by Killigrew at the beginning of the second volume, Leapor's verse dominates this second half of the anthology.

As Richard Greene notes, the young labouring-class poet emerged at a time when the cult of the primitive was increasing in popularity.¹¹⁴ Doubtless, both Mary Barber and

¹¹¹Greene, *Leapor*, 10-14.

¹¹²Colman and Thornton culled verses from both volumes. See Chapters Three and Six.

¹¹³Bernard Tucker, "Swift's 'Female Senate': Three Forgotten Poets," *Irish Studies Review*, 7 (Summer 1994) 7-10: 8.

¹¹⁴Greene, *Leapor*, 157-185.

Laetitia Pilkington would have heard about the kitchen-maid-cum-poet,¹¹⁵ who followed in the footsteps of the thresher Stephen Duck and Mary Collier in attempting the pen, when neither her formal education nor her station encouraged her to do so.¹¹⁶ Like Duck and Collier, Leapor became something of an “untutored” *cause célèbre*, though in her case publication and popular approval were posthumous.

Greene notes that William Cowper, a member of the Nonsense Club, considered Leapor “the single natural poet whose work had proved durable. . . . Mary Leapor was therefore an enthusiasm of this group as well as of Richardson’s circle.”¹¹⁷ We know that Cowper was responsible for the inclusion of the poems by his aunt, Judith Madan, in *PEL*. His influence may again be evident in the generous selection of Leapor’s verse printed in the anthology. Other members of the Nonsense Club also espoused “the rising fashion of the period. . . in which a new emphasis on imagination, with its attendants, untutored genius and inspired spontaneity, was giving birth to Young’s *Conjectures on Original Composition*, Collins’ odes, and Macpherson’s treks through the Highlands in search of Ossian.”¹¹⁸

In their introduction to Leapor, Colman and Thornton play up the pseudo-myth of minimal formation that constitutes one aspect of primitivism by informing their readers that, though she enjoyed reading verse, Leapor “had few opportunities of procuring books of that kind: her whole library consisted of sixteen or seventeen odd volumes, among which were parts of the works of Mr. Pope, her greatest favourite, *Dryden’s* fables, some

¹¹⁵Freemantle sent Leapor’s first play to Colley Cibber, who later subscribed to the *Poems* but did not have the play produced. Greene, *Leapor*, 21. The rejection is referred to in Leapor’s poem, “Upon Her Play Being returned to her, Stain’d with Claret,” *PEL*, II: 133-134. Pilkington’s friendship and continued correspondence with Cibber may have been a source of information for the Irishwoman about Leapor. Moreover, Dr. Patrick Delany of Dublin subscribed to Leapor’s first volume.

¹¹⁶Duck also subscribed to the first volume of Leapor’s *Poems*.

¹¹⁷Greene, *Leapor*, 32. As noted in Chapter One, Samuel Richardson was an important figure to this generation of women writers. Not only did he write the highly regarded *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, he also printed the second volume of Leapor’s verse, as well as Mary Barber’s *Poems*. He also lent Pilkington money when she was desperate. The cases are very different, but the notions of literary favour, charity and gratitude play some part in each situation.

¹¹⁸Bertelsen, *Nonsense Club*, 51.

volumes of plays, &c.”¹¹⁹ Echoing the introduction to Leapor’s first volume, in which Leapor is framed by the assertion that the poet is born, not made (“*Poeta nascitur, non fit*”¹²⁰), this sentence brings to bear two canonical names, and hints at the enormous impact these writings must have had on the young girl. Greene has demonstrated that Leapor’s reading and education were under-represented in order to position the poet more neatly within the cult of primitivism. She certainly read more books than she owned, likely borrowing from Bridget Freemantle’s library, and from the houses where she worked.¹²¹

Leapor was at times complicit with the kind of rhetoric that underlined her lack of worldly knowledge. For example, the city is corrupt and fearsome in a poem about the prodigal play that is returned to her “stain’d with Claret.” In motherly tones she asks her play “Hast thou not climb’d the monument? / Nor seen the lions, nor the king?”¹²² The question, touching on tourist attractions in London, highlights the writer’s provincialism. Unlike most women in the anthology, she is a stranger to the city.

Whereas Stephen Duck’s anti-pastoral thresher poem had negated poetic convention (“No Fountain murmurs here, no Lamkins play, / No linnets warble, and no Fields look gay”¹²³), Leapor’s poetics describe her own secluded environment chiefly from a domestic sphere confined by walls, rather than fences. She depicts the mock-heroic tribulations of the kitchen in “Crumble Hall.” Here, characters with names like Sophronia and Colinettus make cheese and heartily devour lunch, and the poet’s descriptions evoke the tangible to an extent not found elsewhere in *PEL*. If Barber stands apart for her frank musings about pounds and pence, Leapor’s selection is distinguished by more physical aspects of domesticity – descriptions of food, for example (“brown bowls were crown’d with simpring ale”) and the body (“stretched girdles” and “knuckles”

¹¹⁹*PEL*, II: 16.

¹²⁰“Letter to the Reader,” *Leapor’s Poems on Several Occasions*, (London, 1748) I: A2

¹²¹Greene, *Leapor*: 157-185, 10, 20.

¹²²*PEL*, II: 123.

¹²³Stephen Duck, *The Thresher’s Labour* (1736) Augustan Reprint Society, 230, (1985) II.58-59.

digging into “pliant dough”). Her poetry is accessible because there is much to see and taste and touch, and she fares well by comparison to the ethereal sentiments in some of the other poetry in *PEL*.

Whereas Pilkington occasionally feigns innocence in her writings, Leapor’s verses show that the wise poet can feign experience. In both “The Mistaken Lover” and “Strephon to Celia. A modern Love-Letter,” the voice is world-weary and knowing. In the first, a modern and modish marriage results in the newlyweds despising one another, and agreeing to live apart. In the “modern love-letter,” Strephon admits that the greatest of his beloved’s charms is her ten thousand pounds. Despite the sub-title of the latter, these sceptical pieces are, from one in Leapor’s position, not so much lamentations about *tempora* and *mores*, but rather a condemnation of avarice among the wealthy. The ease with which Leapor conveys the pettiness of a world far removed from her own, the fashionable flummery of the beaux and the meaningless adulation may reflect her experienced reading of such texts as “Three Hours after Marriage,” or Swift’s “Strephon and Celia.” The fact that she worked in a large home, however, suggests that the opportunity to witness such scenarios was less remote than might at first appear.

The idyllic and the real collide in “Corydon. Phillario. Or, Mira’s Picture. A Pastoral,” which describes a shepherd and a gentleman walking and discussing the charms of various young ladies. They notice “Mira” (Leapor’s sobriquet), and comment with distaste upon her slouch, her soiled linen, her freckles, and her squint, the effect of reading and writing. The appearance of “Mira” ruins the expectations of pastoral. The concluding quatrain, an apparent change of subject, signals that Mira threatens the desirable order of things:

No more, my friend! for see, the sun grows high,
And I must send the weeders to my rye:
Those spurious plants must from the soil be torn,
Lest the rude brambles over-top the corn.¹²⁴

¹²⁴*PEL*, II: 123-126, ll.63-66.

Greene, who calls the poem “counter-pastoral” with an “underlying vision. . . of disharmony,” suggests that “presumably Mira is such a spurious plant, unwelcome, and best plucked out.”¹²⁵ Leapor’s willingness to poke fun at a grotesque depiction of herself reflects on the way others might see her, rather than her own self-image. Obviously she is writing from a position of self-confidence, the source of which is outside the perimeters of everything she is supposed to be. If she is a “weed,” she does not seem to be very troubled by it. Her inclusion in *PEL* argues that Colman and Thornton were not troubled by her lack of status, either.¹²⁶

Edmund Blunden notes that Leapor’s “being a poet is a fact which itself often impels her verse.”¹²⁷ While the same could be said for most poets in the anthology, for Colman, Thornton, and their readers, a labouring woman writing good poetry was news. Leapor herself recognized this. “Crumble Hall” is one of many pieces in which she describes her versifying in terms of splenetic symptoms. In *PEL*, it counters Finch’s insistence that writing itself did not cause attacks of spleen:

With low’ring forehead, and with aching limbs,
Oppress’d with head-ach, and eternal whims,
Sad *Mira* vows to quit the darling crime:
Yet takes farewell, and repents in rhyme.¹²⁸

Another poem, “The Inspired Quill,” describes the many incarnations of a roving spirit who has been a miserly squire, a foolish beau, a lap-dog, a lawyer, a cow, and, finally, a quill. This last is the worst, as his “new mistress is a poet”:

¹²⁵Greene, *Leapor*, 95.

¹²⁶The gallant editors, taking Freemantle’s cue, assert in their introduction to Leapor that, “her person was indeed plain, but the reader must not form an idea of it from the poem call’d *Mira’s* Picture, for though she has there made very free with herself, yet her appearance was by no means disagreeable.” *PEL*, II: 16.

¹²⁷Blunden’s appreciation of the English countryside and pastoralism was both innocent and shrewd after his experience of loss and deprivation in a world war. He recognized the benefit derived from the first hand experience of nature in Leapor’s verse, though not, perhaps, as much as he should have. Blunden, *A Northamptonshire Poetess: Mary Leapor*, (rpt. from *The Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society*, vol. xxviii, no. 215, June, 1936) 68.

¹²⁸*PEL*, II: 126, II.3-6

Then how shall I, who still inherit
 A tincture of the lawyer's spirit;
 How shall I bear from time to time
 To scrawl unprofitable rhyme?¹²⁹

Most of these incarnations are characterized by wealth, or the lack thereof. The squire was a usurer, and the beau's decline toward death commenced at the moment his "gold began to fly." As in Barber's remonstrative poem to her son, poetry is clearly not profitable in "The Inspired Quill." Interestingly, gender was not an issue in Barber's poem, nor is Leapor's gender necessarily a factor in this pragmatic view of poetry. Leapor's quill would simply prefer an attorney (something Colman would have appreciated) rather than have a poet of either gender for an owner.

A long poem that appears later in the anthology, "Mopsus: Or, the Castle-Builder," is one which Greene reads as a satire on the poet's own ambitions and on literary patronage --an arrangement which Leapor mistrusted a great deal more than Barber and Pilkington did. The piece is sophisticated in its narration of an ambitious bumpkin, who leaves his simple country home for the city, falls in with charlatans and prostitutes, and squanders his father's money.¹³⁰ After many tribulations, Mopsus finds both repentance and contentment, and Leapor concludes the poem with scriblerian chiasmus: "No more delusions in his fancy rise, / Grown grave by sorrow; by experience wise."¹³¹ It is like Johnson's many warnings about the urban world (*London*) and difficult lessons (*The Vanity of Human Wishes*). Some readers of *PEL* would have picked up on the literary aspect of the poem, while those less astute would have read it merely as a general allegory about usurping one's place (like Aphra Behn's "Jemmy," who "languished to be king"). Certainly, although Mopsus is an object of ridicule, there are

¹²⁹*PEL*, II: 67-71, ll.95, 96-99.

¹³⁰Greene, *Leapor*, 145-147. In a letter, quoted in the second volume of her verse, Leapor writes: "I am to confess, that I have drawn my own Picture in many Places where I have described this unlucky Hero." Leapor, *Poems*, II: 316.

¹³¹*PEL*, II: 103-122, ll.565-56. See my discussion of Mary Jones's rewriting of the same poem in Chapter Seven.

moments in the poem that hint at noble aspirations. Most striking of these is the couplet describing architectural limitations: “But these low buildings that his limbs confin’d, / Were much too base to hold his lofty mind.” Ironic as they are, these lines hint at more, and speak directly to “castle-building” in the title. Nowhere does Leapor explain the castle metaphor to her readers, though most would recognize it as a reference to illusions and hopes unrealized. Part of the origin is biblical, as in Matthew vii, 26-27: “a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand,” which Pope paraphrased in the *Wife of Bath’s* prologue.¹³² Pope wrote also of imaginary castles in the *Dunciad*: “Hence the fool’s paradise, the statesman’s scheme / The air-built castle and the golden dream.”¹³³

While Pope’s influence colours much of *PEL*, no woman in the anthology brings more of Pope to the text than Leapor. What Betty Rizzo identified as Leapor’s anxiety for Pope’s influence would have been evident to most readers of the anthology.¹³⁴ Her “Epistle to a Lady,” for instance, returns to a number of the same ideas in Pope’s “Epistle to Arbuthnot” and to some extent rewrites it.¹³⁵ In Leapor’s poem, fame is too difficult to attain, whereas for Pope, who had already received acclaim when he wrote the epistle, fame was tiresome. And her “Essay on Happiness” opens on a note that the reader could not help but associate with Pope’s own “Epistle to a Lady”: “Nothing, dear madam, nothing is more true, / Than a short maxim much approv’d by you.”¹³⁶ The poem goes on to explore contentment and ambition as being mutually exclusive, and concludes with the conventional consolation: virtue and friendship are the only sources of true joy.

John Duncombe’s footnote to his rhymes on Leapor weds the theory of “natural genius” to that of poetic influence. Leapor “has lately convinced the world of the force of unassisted nature, by imitating and (perchance) equaling some of our most approved poets by the strength of her own parts, the vivacity of her own genius, and a perpetual

¹³²“Oft wou’d he say, Who builds his House on sands,” Pope, “Wife of Bath: Her Prologue,” *Poems*, 98-110, l.346.

¹³³*The Dunciad Variorum*, iii: 1. 9

¹³⁴Betty Rizzo, “Molly Leapor: an Anxiety for Influence,” *The Age of Johnson*, 4 (1991) 313-343.

¹³⁵*PEL*, II: 30.

pursuit after knowledge.”¹³⁷ She did not meet or have her verse corrected by Pope, but she found assistance in his poems. Although much of Leapor’s work seems entrenched in the Scriblerian tradition, she was still young when she died, and her formation as a poet was incomplete. A sublime sensibility informs her poem, “Winter,” for example, and in the serious piece, “The Cruel Parent. A Dream,” a young woman dies, “persu’d by famine and a father’s rage.” The imagery here, a dark wood, a crumbling castle and imprisonment, tends toward the gothic, as did Pope’s “Abelard to Eloisa,” but the voice is Leapor’s own.

Like other poets in the anthology, Leapor brings to *PEL* a fable: “The Libyan Hunter. A Fable. . . inscribed to the memory of a late admired author.” This again is Pope, whom she defends harshly against “Shoals of Critics,” from whom even “the Regions of the Dead” are not “secure.”¹³⁸ Well-read as she is, it is Pope’s verse which, Greene suggests, “has for Leapor a significance second only to scripture.”¹³⁹ That she is recognizably one of the best poets in the collection lends authority to her defense of Pope, regardless of her social status. In “The Libyan Hunter,” the muses grow envious of “Sylvius,” whose song surpasses their own: Thalia complains that she and her sister Graces cannot “hope to charm the partial prince of day, / While heav’nly accents breathe from mortal clay.”¹⁴⁰ A sense of foreboding inhabits this piece. We know that Sylvanus will be made to quit this “mortal clay,” and eventually Cynthia does shoot an arrow, “Feather’d vengeance” into his heart. The violent death, in which “reaking blood came bubbling through the wound,” is striking, and Leapor’s own sense of loss at Pope’s death is one of the most affecting moments in the poem, despite the conventionality of the images: “Hear, *Sylvanus*, hear, they cry; and all around, / Hear *Sylvanus*, hear, the hollow rocks resound.”¹⁴¹ Phoebus/ Apollo revenges the death, burns “the trembling victims”

¹³⁶*PEL*, II: 40, ll.1-2.

¹³⁷*Feminiad*, 20, n.9

¹³⁸*PEL*, II: 74-80, ll.8, 12.

¹³⁹Greene, *Leapor*, 182.

¹⁴⁰*PEL*, II: 75, ll.51-2.

whom he addresses curiously as “ye impious men,” and restores Sylvanus to life. What complicates the appearance of “The Libyan Hunter” in *PEL* is that Sylvanus’ death is brought about by the machinations of a horde of powerful women (Cynthia, Delia, Diana). Curiously, although Leapor does not mention Orpheus in this poem, here we find another likening of Pope to a mythical singer who is killed by women. In this memorial allegory, the event is tragic.

The nymphs are representative of critics, whom Leapor skewers in several of her poems, as in “The Proclamation of Apollo,” where the god, observing the throngs of poets on Parnassus, “sent forth a troop with caps and spears. . . To part the croud, and give them places.”¹⁴² Some of the bards grow unhappy with their places, but they are warned against petty arguments. Leapor is very funny in this poem:

Let wits shake hands with one another,
And ev’ry dunce embrace his brother,
From batter’d bards with ne’er a shoe
To those who strut about with two;¹⁴³

All agree to share their dinner of “Parnassian bread” and “dishes make of Homer’s song,” and go forth into the world with gifts of goose quills, “With ink that into metre runs, / and charms against the fear of duns.”¹⁴⁴

Clearly, Leapor is generously represented in the anthology, but it is surprising that Colman and Thornton did not reprint her excellent poem, “Man, the Monarch,” or her “Essay on Woman,” either of which would have especially complemented Mary Chudleigh’s feminist poems, and Pilkington’s “The Statues.” The exclusion of these important complaints by Leapor is perhaps the strongest indication that Colman and Thornton did not want strictly “feminine” subject matter. At least, they did not want the collection (or, by implication, readership) characterized by a large number of satires

¹⁴¹*PEL*, II: 78, ll.117; 131-2.

¹⁴²*PEL*, II: 33-37, ll.15, 18.

¹⁴³ll.87-90.

¹⁴⁴ll.133-4.

against men. Instead, they choose to balance social satire with some serious, religious pieces, like Leapor's ode on "The Crucifixion and Resurrection," and "On Mr. Pope's Universal Prayer," a somewhat embarrassing rhapsody, as well as "A Prayer for the Year 1745," also inspired by Pope's prayer poem. Another piece, "Job's Curse, and his Appeal," is a paraphrase of which Elizabeth Rowe would have approved. Indeed, Leapor's spiritual writings take precedence over Rowe's in this anthology, because her section is more formidable. There is logic in the editors of *PEL* providing their audience with less accessible works, since Rowe's poems were constantly being reprinted, and were already owned by many readers, whereas Leapor's had appeared only in her own two volumes and some in brief reviews. It is also a measure of Leapor's talent that Colman and Thornton considered so much of her verse worthy of inclusion. Leapor stands out in *PEL* as one of two women in the collection who had produced two volumes of printed verse.¹⁴⁵ She is the poet with the least financial or social standing in the collection.

She seems, paradoxically or not, to have been one of the most intellectually independent, as well. Mr. Town's Parnassian vision of Pegasus reiterates the humble poet's solitary quest for knowledge, and in this case is respectful: "Among the rest I could not but wonder at the astonishing dexterity, with which the admired Mrs. LEAPOR of Brackley guided the horse, though she had not the least direction or assistance from any body."¹⁴⁶ The assistance she does receive here is the permission to ride the horse in the dream of the 'censor-general'. For no one was the favour of publication more incongruent with her life than Mary Leapor. Her appearance in the anthology as an eminent lady was highly complimentary, and she had earned her reputation.

* * *

¹⁴⁵The other was Mary Masters. Aphra Behn had printed one volume of her own verse, and was the editor of two others, to which she contributed heavily.

¹⁴⁶*Connoisseur*, #69.

Margaret Ezell argues that *PEL* “makes no direct attempt to survey the history of women’s writing in English or to offer a narrative linking the authors’ lives or works in a coherent critical statement.”¹⁴⁷ The links that do exist are not narrative, but thematic, and subtle. They occur in the subjects that the poets chose to write upon (such as unequal relationships between men and women, England and Ireland, the getting and spending of money, and the composition of verse itself). The connections between poets in the anthology also reflect editorial choices – the decision to privilege the Irish poems that mention Swift over those that do not, for example, and those in which Leapor most closely emulates (or honours) Pope.

The five women whose verses make up the rest of *PEL* did not all belong to the same generation, and their social positions and life histories differed in myriad ways; some wrote for profit, others abhorred the notion of doing so. What they do have in common is that they were all still writing (though not necessarily for publication) when *PEL* appeared. Their own histories in print point to a greater level of control over their poems than many of the writers whose works I have discussed thus far. For one reason or another, the women whose experience extended into the second half of the eighteenth century saw new possibilities for their talent, and more options for how to live their lives.

¹⁴⁷Ezell, *WWLH*, 112.

CHAPTER SEVEN

At Mid-Century: Mary Wortley Montagu, Judith Cowper [Madan]

Mary Masters, Mary Jones, and Elizabeth Carter

And yet you'd have me write! ——— For what? for whom?
 To curl a fav'rite in a dressing room?
 To mend a candle when the snuff's too short?
 Or save rappee for chamber-maids at court?
 Glorious ambition! noble thirst of fame! ———
 No, but you'd have me write ——— to get a name.
 Alas! I'd live unknown, unenvy'd too;
 'Tis more than Pope, with all his wit can do.

Mary Jones¹

Among those for whom *PEL* was a contemporary text are the five writers under discussion in this chapter, women whose reputations were both reflected, and possibly influenced by the anthology.² For these poets, prefatory details are given in the present tense, rather than the memoir-like introductions to the others that the reader encounters in *PEL*.³ Three are mentioned in Duncombe's *Feminiad* (one unfavourably) but Colman and Thornton could no longer rely on Ballard, or Cibber and Shiells for information about these poets. Though all five were older than Colman and Thornton, most were still writing.⁴ Verses by each of these authors were also still appearing sporadically in magazines in the 1750s, which made their names recognizable as current authors to many readers of the anthology.

The influence of, or at least links to Alexander Pope remain evident in this final group of writers, as do conscious departures from his long shadow. Mary Wortley

¹"An Epistle to Lady Bowyer," *PEL*, I: 255-259, ll.12-20.

²As noted in the previous chapter, Mary Barber was still living when *PEL* was published, but the editors believed her deceased.

³One notable exception is the absence of an introduction to Mary Wortley Montagu, which I discuss below.

⁴Both Elizabeth Carter and Mary Jones would publish books of new verse after *PEL*; a new volume of

Montagu, born a year before Mary Barber, was a near-contemporary to some of the Scriblerians. I include her in the present chapter because her longevity (she died in 1762, long after Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, and Gay) places her among those still living in 1755. Due to her birth and marriage, she was the most socially eminent living poet in *PEL*. Her friendship with Pope is alluded to in a footnote by Colman and Thornton, but the notorious enmity that followed the friendship is not. It did not have to be; readers knew. Judith Cowper Madan, who was no longer writing for publication at mid-century, had been favoured with Pope's encouragement, and responded to his verse with her own. Most obviously a wishful protégé of Pope is Mary Jones, who may have enjoyed a special connection to the anthology and its editors. Mary Masters, who published early and defiantly, regardless of parental disapproval, developed her own voice and her own vision; nevertheless, Pope's *Essay on Criticism* resonates throughout Master's construction of herself in her work. Four of the five women in this group were also acquainted with Johnson. Elizabeth Carter, especially, heralds in *PEL* the rise of sensibility and the development of a new kind of professional female author.

I. MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU (1689-1762)

“Do not be offended at the word Poet; it slipped out unawares.”

Mary Wortley Montagu⁵

She was the eldest child of Evelyn Pierrepont⁶ and his wife Lady Mary Fielding, who died when her daughter was three. Mary was then raised by a governess, and in 1712 she eloped with Edward Wortley Montagu, a lawyer and MP, with whom she had a son and a daughter. They settled in London in 1714, where she met and corresponded with wits such as Steele, Pope and Gay (and wrote the “Town Eclogs”). In 1716 she

writings by Mary Masters was published shortly before the anthology, and Lady Mary's *Embassy Letters* would be printed after her death, as would Carter's correspondence.

⁵Letter to Sir James Steuart, 5 Sept. 1758, *The Complete Letters of Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965-67) III: 173.

survived smallpox, though there were scars. Later that year Edward was appointed Ambassador to Turkey; there, and on their travels she wrote her *Embassy Letters* (published posthumously). They returned to England in 1718, with their young children. In 1739, her marriage one in name only, she moved to the continent alone and spent more than twenty years there, chiefly in France and Italy.⁷ Among her many friends were Robert Walpole, Mary Astell, and Voltaire, though at some point she quarreled bitterly with Pope, who seems to have been (according to his letters) inappropriately fond of her prior to their falling out. Afterwards he wrote of her as a diseased and repellent Sappho.⁸ She returned to London in January, 1762, and died of breast cancer the following August.⁹

She abhorred the notion of persons of quality appearing in print, and most readers would not have thought of her primarily as an author, though she was known as a wit, a sometime-friend of Pope turned enemy, and primarily as the champion of inoculation against smallpox. That said, a number of her poems had appeared in print, including the eleven that Colman and Thornton reproduced in *PEL*, and some had been published several times.¹⁰ Edmund Curll published three of these in 1716, and Horace Walpole arranged to have *Six Town Eclogs. With Some Poems* printed by Dodsley in 1747, from a manuscript copy of the poems that Pope had owned. Colman and Thornton in turn copied all of the poems by Montagu that had appeared in Dodsley's 1748 *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*.¹¹

⁶Pierrepont became Earl of Kingston in 1690, Marquess of Dorchester in 1706, and Duke of Kingston in 1715.

⁷Her husband also lived for several years on the continent. Although they corresponded faithfully, they did not meet again.

⁸Best known, of course, is the line from "The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated": "pox'd by her love, or libell'd by her hate." (1733), *Pope*, 613-618, l.84.

⁹I refer the reader to Isobel Grundy's recent biography of Montagu, the most comprehensive source of information about her life. *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) henceforth *LMWM*.

¹⁰Montagu's "In Beauty or Wit," for example, had which appeared in the 1720 *New Miscellany* (or "Hammond's Miscellany") Grundy, *LMWM*, 197.

¹¹The poems were also reprinted in the poetry column of the *London Magazine* (partly controlled by Dodsley) and in the 1753 anthology *The Lover's Manuel[sic]*. Grundy, *LMWM*, 518. Grundy notes that the

Montagu would later complain to her daughter of “the vexation arising from the impudence of Dodsley” when she encountered a misattribution regarding her poems in the sixth volume of his *Collection*, though there is no reference in her surviving correspondence to the appearance of eleven pieces by her in *PEL*.¹² It is possible that she was not apprised of the anthology, as she was living in the Italian town of Lovere in 1755 (she did not see her poems in Dodsley’s *Collection* for a number of years) though while abroad she remained in close contact with her daughter, and her correspondence testifies to her continued interest in new English books. In 1756-57, she wrote to her daughter that the English newspapers and magazines she received were full of publisher’s advertisements.¹³ Given the many notices of *PEL* in the *Public Advertiser* and the *Daily Advertiser*, it is possible that *PEL* was one of the texts advertised. It is also worth remembering that these notices always listed the eighteen poets.¹⁴

If Montagu had learnt of *PEL* she might not have been entirely displeased with the company. Isobel Grundy testifies to her extensive reading of other women authors, including three large volumes of Margaret Cavendish that she left in her library at her death, among others: “Though she does not, like her father, own a text of Sappho edited by a woman, she has among her best represented authors Scudery with eight titles, and Behn and Eliza Haywood with five each. Though she lacks Anne Finch (except in manuscript) and Elizabeth Thomas (except in prose) she has Astell’s *Serious Proposal to the Ladies*. . . also John Dunton’s *Ladies Dictionary*. . . The library has *something* by

London Magazine “took more account of the upper classes and the capital” in its “policy to publish only work by geniuses ‘of establish’d Character’, not obscure Persons, or. . . Authors of no Name in the Commonwealth of Learning.” 518. The *London Magazine* also published many women poets.

¹²See Grundy, *LMWM*, 580-81 n. 18. “There is no sign that she knew of her inclusion in Colman and Thornton’s *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, 1755. . .” See note 35, below, for the source of MWM’s irritation at Dodsley.

¹³Grundy, *LMWM*, 559.

¹⁴In addition to the *Public* and *Daily* advertisers, the *Gentleman’s Magazine* advertised *PEL* in May, 1755. James Tierney suggests that book advertisements in newspapers reached their zenith in the 1740s and ‘50s in Britain. By the agency of daily advertisers and their thrice-weekly counterparts, “notice of a new book radiated to half a million readers the very week it appeared on the market.” In 1745 and 1755, for example, book advertisements accounted for over half the advertisements in the *London Evening Post*. Tierney, “Book advertisements in mid-18th-century newspapers: the example of Robert Dodsley,” *A Genius for Letters*, 103-122: 107-110 *passim*.

every one of the English mothers of fiction who preceded Defoe: Behn, Manley, Haywood, Jane Barker, Mary Davys, Penelope Aubin, and Laetitia Pilkington (whom, however, Lady Mary dignifies with the note “as good Poetry as Popes”).¹⁵ This last is wonderfully hyperbolic, though given Montagu’s attitude toward Pope by the time Pilkington’s *Memoirs* appeared, not inexplicable. In any case, it suggests that Montagu might not have been averse to seeing her poems in a miscellany with those of Pilkington, along with verse by Aphra Behn and Anne Finch. In her youth she had, like Behn, composed a “Golden Age” poem inspired by Scudery, and wrote a verse-and-prose romance, “The Adventurer,” modeled on Behn’s *Voyage to the Isle of Love*.¹⁶ Grundy notes, moreover, that one of the “entirely cryptic” memorandums in Montagu’s notebook is simply “Lady Chudleigh.”¹⁷

Despite her long absence from England, Lady Mary remained a controversial figure in the early 1750s. Like Behn and Pilkington, she was criticized in the *Feminiad* (1754), where Duncombe alludes to Lady Mary as one for whom the muse “grieves to see One nobly born disgrace / Her modest sex, and her illustrious race.” Grundy notes that this 1754 poem “coincided with the exploitation of her name for advertising hype by a new generation of inoculators.”¹⁸ This notoriety, combined with the important fact that her father was a Duke, make it less surprising that, unlike the selections from every other poet in *PEL*, Montagu’s poems are given no biographical introduction.¹⁹

¹⁵Grundy, “Books and the Woman,” I:13. Perhaps the three volumes of Cavendish that Montagu possessed were those that Pope saw and referred to in the *Dunciad*.

¹⁶Grundy, *LMWM*, 16, 18. “Montagu kept among her papers five [ms.] poems either by or about Mary Monck, and was later friendly with several of her relations.” *LMWM*, 24. Montagu also owned Carter’s *Sir Isaac Newton’s Philosophy Explain’d for the Use of the Ladies*, a translation of the work by Francesco Algarotti, with whom Montagu was in love when she left for the continent in 1739. Indeed, when MWM was herself young she made a translation of *Epictetus*, as Elizabeth Carter would do. Grundy, *LMWM*, 556.

¹⁷Montagu also saw letters from Judith Cowper to her suitor Madan, and satirized these in “Miss Cooper to —” in Oct.-Nov. 1723. *Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy*, ed. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy, 216-24, II.3-6, from H MS. 81. 41-2, Harrowby Manuscripts Trust, Sardon Hall, Stafford.

¹⁸*Feminiad*, II.143-44. This is Grundy’s identification. *LMWM*, 518. Montagu is not identified by name in Duncombe’s work.

¹⁹No internal bibliographical evidence suggests that the omission of an introduction is a mistake, or the result of a hurried insertion. Page numbering, gatherings, and catch-words are all in order in the pages

Montagu was a wise choice for inclusion in *PEL*, despite the set of negative associations attached to her name (though fuelled, too, by this notoriety). Aside from the quality of her writing, her verses pick up on a number of themes that other poets raise throughout the anthology, and give a different perspective to such recurring topics as love, marriage, sexuality, and womanhood. Her “A Receipt to Cure the Vapours,” for instance, when reprinted in *PEL* becomes a companion piece for one of the best, and better known poems in the anthology, Anne Finch’s “Ode on the Spleen.” Unlike Finch’s complex complaint, in which the protean illness is aggrandized by an ode, Montagu’s poem simplifies the problem with brief stanzas. She focuses on the conventional notion that women are more subject to splenetic disorder than are men, and her advice is practical: marriage calms the savage breast.²⁰ Montagu did not write “Receipt” to counter Finch’s well-known ode, but a kind of dialectic occurs in *PEL* that telescopes time, and the second half of Montagu’s recommendation seems to counter Finch’s angst with a good old-fashioned recommendation of regular sexual activity:

I, like you, was born a woman,
 Well I know what vapours mean:
 The disease, alas! is common,
 Single, we have all the spleen.

All the morals that they tell us
 Never cur’d the sorrow yet:
 Chuse, among the pretty fellows,
 One of humour, youth, and wit.

Prythee hear him every morning,
 At the least an hour or two;
 Once again at night returning,
 I believe the dose will do.²¹

devoted to her. Nor did the publisher of the 1757 Dublin edition of *PEL* correct the lacuna by inserting biographical material on Montagu, even though the table of contents of this later edition listed for the first time each “account” of the poet as prefatory to the poems under her name. Montagu’s name, and therefore her selection of verse, do not occur in strict alphabetical order. Poems by “The Hon. Mary Wortley Montagu” precede, rather than follow, those of Mary Monck. It is difficult to speculate whether this aberration is accidental, or deliberate in recognition of Montagu’s rank.

²⁰Nevertheless, in 1758 she was gratified to learn that the medical authority Sydenham had demonstrated men’s ‘wise honourable spleen’ to be no different from women’s ‘vapours.’ Grundy, *LMWM*, 577.

In Montagu's poem, a husband is essentially entertainment — one of the suggested remedies for spleen that Finch dismissed in her ode. For Finch, the ailments of melancholy and anxiety were insurmountable, whereas for Montagu, there are alternatives. The *double-entendre* of “hear him every morning” and “once again at night returning” is risqué; she advocates neither wisdom, religion, nor stoic philosophy.

By contrast, women are otherwise empowered in her “Epilogue to [the play] *Mary, Queen of Scots*,”²² where Montagu privileges Elizabeth I, the woman who desires power, rather than the other who wants love. The opening reiterates the eighteenth-century obsession with sway: “What could luxurious woman wish for more, / To fix her joys, or to extend her pow'r?” In part, this piece provides a royal context for the conventional poem about virtue versus physical beauty (as in Mary Barber's “*Stella and Flavia*”). Queen Mary's beauty is shown to have been ephemeral, versus Elizabeth's “wisdom, council, pow'r, and laws.” The “Epilogue” ventures into more interesting territory with a piece of advice: “If you will love, love like Eliza then; / Love for amusement, like those traytors men.” Her rhetoric is convincing:

Trust me, dear ladies, (for I know 'em well)
They burn to triumph, and they sigh to tell:
Cruel to them that yield, cullies to them that fell.
Believe me, 'tis by far the wiser course,
Superior art should meet superior force:
Hear, but be faithful to your int'rest still:
Secure your hearts--then fool with whom you will.²³

Again men, who are initially dangerous “traitors,” are ultimately troped as amusement.

Montagu's six “*Town Eclogues*” are short, mock-pastoral poems on each day of the week except Sunday. Montagu told Horace Walpole that the eclogues “were first thought of in company with Pope and Gay,” and the extent of their contribution to

²¹“A Receipt to Cure the Vapours,” *PEL*, II: 21, ll.13-24.

²²This was for a play never completed, by the Duke of Wharton, c. 1726. Halsband and Grundy, *Essays and Poems and Simplicity*, 240. .

²³“Epilogue,” *PEL*, II: 182-183, ll.35-41.

Montagu's work is not entirely certain.²⁴ Neither Pope nor Gay was the principal author of any of these poems, although it was said they had composed one each. Colman and Thornton believed these attributions, and explain their omission of two of the eclogues in a footnote to "Saturday":

We have purposely omitted the two Eclogues, entitled *Thursday*, *The Bassette-Table*, and *Friday*, *The Toilette*, because, though hitherto published among this Lady's pieces, she is really not the author of them. *The Toilette* was written by Gay, and is printed among his poems, and Pope was the author of *The Bassette-Table*, which is inserted in the edition of his works published by Mr. Warburton.²⁵

Since the attributions were supported by the author in one case (Gay) and by a powerful authorized editor in the other (Warburton), Colman and Thornton were behaving responsibly in offering their readers this explanation.

Montagu's eclogues are scriblerian verse, confident in tone and based on a descriptive rhetoric similar at times to that of the characterizations in Pope's "Epistle to a Lady." More striking is the way that these poems complement *The Rape of the Lock*. This is particularly noticeable in the first eclogue, "Monday," where Roxana bemoans having fallen out of favour with the princess, and complains of the corruption she has undergone at court:

Was it for this, that I these roses wear,
For this new-set the jewels for my hair?
Ah! Princess! with what zeal have I persu'd!
Almost forgot the duty of a prude.
Thinking I never could attend too soon,
I've miss'd my pray'rs to get me dress'd by noon.²⁶

²⁴Walpole, "Appendix 5. Anecdotes of Lady Mary Montagu," *Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis et al. 48 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1937-38) xiv: 242-248: 242.

²⁵*PEL*, II: 169. Grundy has examined Montagu's annotated 1758 copy of Dodsley's *Collection*; in the margin at the beginning of the eclogues, Lady Mary wrote "mine wrote at 17" "a questionable age, but a convincing claim to authorship. Pope's own transcript of "Thursday" attributes it to Lady Mary, and Gay's version of "The Toilette," printed among his *Poems on Several Occasions* in 1720, is essentially a different poem which shares with Montagu's eighteen of the same lines.

²⁶"Monday. Roxana, or, The Drawing-Room," *PEL*, II: 159-161, ll.7-12.

The similarities to Pope's mock epic --Belinda's toilet and her dismay at wasted effort-- leave the reader of *PEL* wondering, not for the first time, about the extent of collaboration between one of the women in the anthology and a male poet, although the influence (if any) could have gone the other way.²⁷

The following eclogue, "Tuesday," is set in "St. James' Coffee-House," and consists of a competitive discussion between two vain beaux -- Silliander and Patch -- as to who has been more scorned, or favored, by the women they pursue.²⁸ Colman and Thornton, young men about town, were of course familiar with the coffee-house milieu, and would have appreciated the poem. In Patch's description of gaining access to a snuff-box from a countess we find some of the most sexually explicit lines in the anthology:

She laugh'd and fled, and as I sought to seize,
With affectation cram'd it down her stays:
Yet hop'd she did not place it there unseen,
I press'd her breasts and pull'd it from between.²⁹

These are satiric, rather than seriously suggestive, unlike Aphra Behn's subtle references to sexual activity and impotence printed earlier in the anthology. Also in contrast to Behn's earnest allusions, the conquests that Montagu describes link sexual favors to material gifts. This poem is not about love. Nor, more importantly, is it about a wretched swain who would seduce an innocent: these countesses and duchesses are far from that. Rather, its physicality is something of a novelty in the anthology, even as it is a testament to Montagu's knowing more than most of the other women admit to knowing. Silliander's "enchantress," we are told, leaned across a chair, ostensibly to talk to a friend and "While the stiff whalebone with the motion rose," a "thousand Beauties to [his] sight arose." Patch's Coelia "Reaching the Kettle, made her Gown unpin, / She wore no

²⁷See Chapter Three regarding Swift (and/or?) Barber's "Apollo's Edict."

²⁸See Halsband's and Grundy's notes on the background and the real identity of the characters in the eclogues: *Essays and Poems and Simplicity*, 182-204.

²⁹"Tuesday. St. James' Coffee-House," *PEL*, II: 162-165, ll.56-59.

Waistcoat, and her Shift was thin.”³⁰ These are shared games, and mutual pleasure, the likes of which are found nowhere else in the anthology, and it is important to recall that they were written for manuscript circulation. Although these lines were not shocking within the period and social circle in which they were written “certainly they are more innocent than many of the lines that Pope and Swift wrote” in *PEL* they do shock.

Women are often the more vulnerable sex in Montagu’s poems. “Saturday. The Small-Pox” is a predictable complaint by “Flavia” at the loss of her beauty. It is also a reminder of the trials that Montagu herself underwent, of which most readers of *PEL* would have been aware.³¹ Another vulnerable woman appears in “Wednesday. The Tête a Tête,” the most sophisticated of the eclogues, where “Dancinda” insists that she must deny her suitor: “You, cruel victor, weary of your flame, / Would seek a cure in my eternal shame.”³² Sadly virtuous, complaining that Love is “a God indeed to womankind,” Dancinda voices well-founded fears, telling ‘Strephon’ that “The wretched she, who yields to guilty joys, / A man may pity, but he must despise.” Strephon remains unsatisfied, and he leaves, but not before it is revealed that Dancinda is in fact a married woman, whose “fond uncautious heart” has clearly betrayed her into a deeper quagmire than the reader had assumed:

----Begone, she cries, I’m sure I hear my lord;
The lover starts from his unfinish’d loves,
To snatch his hat, and sneek his scatter’d gloves:
The sighing dame to meet her dear prepares,
While *Strephon* cursing, slips down the back-stairs.³³

The alliteration of *s* in the third line seems onomatopoeic, suggesting that this Strephon slithers, is sneaky. The failure of the iambic pattern in the final line echoes Strephon’s

³⁰*ll.* 66-67, 74-74.

³¹It is also a reminder of Pope’s cruel jibe in the *Dunciad*. Family tradition has it that Lady Mary wrote “Saturday” while convalescent. Grundy, *LMWM*, 100 n.

³²“Wednesday,” II: 165-168, *ll.* 29-30.

³³*ll.* 88-92.

own failure. The final word, “back-stairs,” is especially clever, and ends the preceding discussion on an appropriately sinister note; these are deeds which must remain hidden. Aphra Behn wrote of Love as a god in “Voyage to the Isle of Love,” but in Montagu’s tale it is an unreliable god especially destructive to ‘womankind’.

Before Strephon and Dancinda part, the woman recites a pretty, little speech:

Has love no pleasures free from guilt or fear?
Pleasures less fierce, more lasting, more sincere?
Thus let us gently kiss and fondly gaze,
Love is a child, and like a child it plays.³⁴

This is a longing after innocence that would require a retreat from knowledge. The passage also serves in retrospect as an appeal for sympathy to this woman who is on liminal, and dangerous, ground. *PEL* alerts the reader as to how far verse reflections on love have come, from Behn’s exaltation of Cupid, in songs that might have ended with a similar analogy to a child at play, to Montagu’s surprisingly sympathetic telling of this sordid, back-stairs tale. Interestingly, Montagu, a female scriblerian who enjoyed wealth and unusual personal freedom, wrote verse which has much in common with Mary Leapor’s tongue-in-cheek depiction of false love, though it is also telling that in Leapor’s “Strephon to Celia,” for example, the primary goal is money, whereas in Montagu’s imaginative depiction it is sex.

Next in the anthology we encounter Montagu’s poem, “The Lover. A Ballad,” originally composed for Maria Skerrett, Montagu’s friend and the mistress of Robert Walpole.³⁵ The piece reads like the recipe for the ideal man, who “would value his pleasure, contribute to mine”:

³⁴ll.73-76.

³⁵ The title of “The Lover. A Ballad” was expanded by Horace Walpole, followed by Dodsley and then Colman and Thornton, to include the sub-title “To Mr. C-----.” Horace resented Montagu’s friendship with his father’s mistress, and the support that Montagu gave Skerrett when she became Robert’s second wife. In Montagu’s annotations of Dodsley she replaced “To Mr. C” with “to a Lady, to the Tune of My Time O ye Muses.” Grundy, “The Politics of Female Authorship: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s reaction to the printing of her poems,” *The Book Collector* (Spring, 1982) 19-37: 29.

No pedant, yet learned; not rake-helly gay,
 Or laughing, because he has nothing to say;
 To all my whole sex obliging and free,
 Yet never be fond of any but me.³⁶

In this scenario, love is a private antidote to public life, and the speaker longs to retire at the end of the day with “champagne and a chicken.” The Epicurean zest of this passage stands out among the poems in the anthology.³⁷ Here, love is the balm rather than the irritant—a notion we have encountered elsewhere in the anthology, though in Behn’s poems it is fleeting, and in poems by Philips and Finch it is married love that offers this solace.

In comparison with most other works in *PEL*, sexuality permeates Montagu’s verse. Her “Epistle From Arthur Grey, the Footman,” for example, is based on a genuine occurrence, and has Grey explaining in light tones an attempted rape—the only instance of forced sexuality in the anthology. The footman seems a sympathetically bewildered character. When he brought the lady tea earlier in the day he was overcome with her beauty:

I saw the languid softness of your eyes,
 I saw the dear disorder of your bed;
 Your cheek all glowing with a tempting red;
 Your night-cloaths tumbled with resistless grace;
 Your flowing hair play’d careless round your face,
 Your night-gown fastened with a single pin;
 —Fancy improv’d the wond’rous charms within!³⁸

Isobel Grundy argues convincingly that the true story behind this poem, and the rhetorical stance that Montagu presents here, suggest “she did not blame a rape victim but mocked

³⁶*PEL*, II: 176-178, ll.13, 15, 17-20.

³⁷l.26. Lord Byron wrote to a friend about “The Lover”: “There, Mr. Bowles! — what say you to such a supper with such a woman? and her own description too? Is not her “*champaigne and chicken*” worth a forest or two? Is it not Poetry?” qtd. in Thomas Moore, *Letters and Journal of Lord Byron: With Notices of His Life* (London, 1866) 713.

³⁸*PEL*, II: 172-176, ll.75-80.

and goaded a false claimant to chastity.”³⁹ Few if any readers of *PEL* would have been aware of the real people involved in the 1721 incident, however. Removed from its context and the close circle for whom the piece was intended, it does here sound as if the victim is to blame (as in the condemnation of Lady Booby in *Joseph Andrews*, by Lady Mary’s cousin, Henry Fielding).

Montagu’s poems survived in later texts partly thanks to this inclusion by Colman and Thornton. She had written several other pieces, many of which were not satirical, but her small *opus* had been set with these unauthorized printings. Her verses make up one of the most entertaining sections of *PEL*, and her name was yet another connection to Pope and Gay, yet the editors were a loss when it came to introducing Montagu. They were cautious, certainly, because she was an aristocrat. Grundy argues that “the lack of a biographical note [in *PEL*] implies respect for her rank. . . .”⁴⁰ If so, it may have been a fearful respect.

Sixteen years after Lady Mary’s death, a close friend of the editors, Samuel Foote, writing as “Aristophanes,” recorded his memories from his twenty years’ association with actors, playwrights, and the Nonsense Club. At one point Aristophanes makes claims that “Pope quarrelled only with Lady Mary Wortley Montague, because she gave him some pungent reasons to remember her favours. Not knowing the kindness she had rendered him, he obliged poor Martha Blount in the same way. It was the doleful condition, occasioned by the intimate friendship of Lady Mary, which gave rise to the lines on Sappho, that are so lamentably descriptive of the poet’s disorder.”⁴¹ The anecdote reflects on Pope’s own suggestion that anyone close to Montagu would be “pox’d by her love.” The suggestion that diseases were being transmitted among the members of Pope’s circle implies a correlation between the words they were willing to write and their sexual activity. The members of this circle were then deceased and anything could be written

³⁹Grundy argues further that the footman’s complaint was actually about class, rather than about sex, *LMWM*, 226-30.

⁴⁰*LMWM*, 580-81 n.18.

with impunity (especially hidden behind a pseudonym). Colman and Thornton chose not to introduce Montagu in 1755 because, although her name was a selling point for their miscellany, and her verse was entertaining, they were themselves “bless’d with discretion.”

II. JUDITH COWPER (afterward Madan, 1702-1781)

Unequal, how shall I the search begin?

Judith Cowper⁴²

Judith Cowper Madan was born the fifth child and only daughter of Judge Spencer Cowper and his wife, Pennington Goodere. She wrote verse from the age of about fifteen, though after her marriage in 1723 to Colonel Martin Madan she wrote little that is extant. As I noted in chapter two, it was probably from fellow Nonsense Club member, William Cowper, that Colman and Thornton learnt of Cowper’s aunt, still living and described in *PEL* as “a Lady, who, among her other excellent qualities, has fine talents for poetry.”⁴³ In this introduction to Judith Cowper Madan, Colman and Thornton indicate an editorial zeal, supposedly a testimony to their comprehensive research: “The following original pieces will, we doubt not, make the reader long for more by the same hand, with which indeed we should be glad to oblige him: but this Lady, notwithstanding her extraordinary genius, could never be prevailed to commit any thing to print.”⁴⁴

⁴¹*Aristophanes, Being a Classic Collection of True Attic Wit* (London, 1778) 34. This was printed for Robert Baldwin (nephew to Richard) who took over 47 Paternoster Row, and published the *St. James Chronicle*.

⁴²“The Progress of Poetry” l.1. *The Flower-piece* (London, 1731)

⁴³*PEL*, II: 136. William Cowper was a barrister and resident of the middle temple in 1755. Although his aunt is referred to in *PEL* as “Mrs. Madan (Formerly Miss Cowper),” I refer to the poet as Cowper to avoid confusion when discussing the poetry of her maiden years, as other modern sources tend to do, since she wrote almost all of her verse before her marriage.

⁴⁴ Whether or not she “committed it to print,” Cowper wrote a poem in memory of dramatist John Hughes in 1720 which was reprinted more than once. “The Progress of Poetry” was printed anonymously in *The Flower-piece* (1731). It echoes other progress poems, and anticipates Thomas Gray’s own “Progress of

Colman and Thornton seem not to have known about Cowper's longest piece, her "Progress of Poetry." Instead, the biographical introduction to Cowper dwells on the longer of the two poems they print by her "Abelard to Eloisa."⁴⁵ This piece provides yet another obvious connection between an "eminent lady" and Alexander Pope:

A very affecting tenderness runs through the whole epistle from ABELARD, and whether we consider the numbers, diction, or sentiments, it is certainly much superior to all those pieces that have appeared on the same subject: and indeed this Lady's ABELARD is no mean companion to *Pope's* ELOISA.⁴⁶

Such praise picks up on a number of themes that the editors touched on in their "Preface." "Tenderness" of sentiment, coupled with competent metrics and imaginative diction remind the reader of the editorial boast that, while evincing the requisite delicacy and femininity, "this collection is not inferior to any miscellany compiled from the works of men."⁴⁷ That Cowper's poem, written in response to Pope, is not only superior to others along the same vein but that her "Abelard" is "no mean companion" to Pope's poem suggests that Cowper herself is a suitable companion poet to the great man. Readers of *PEL*, who would have owned Pope's *Works*, are hereby alerted to a useful experience: reading Cowper in tandem with Pope. By including both Elizabeth Rowe's lines "On the death of Mr. Thomas Rowe," and Cowper's "Abelard," the editors offered readers both a precursor and a response to Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard."

Judith Cowper went from being an admirer of Pope to a correspondent, and Grundy suggests that the younger woman "promised to fit more snugly into the slot in his life once filled by Lady Mary."⁴⁸ Pope called Cowper "a True & Constant Kinswoman of

Poesy. A Pindaric Ode." Colman and Thornton should have seen mention of "Progress" in *The Femiad*, 19.n.

⁴⁵"Abelard to Eloisa" was first printed alongside Pope's poem in the fifth edition of Lintot's *Miscellany*, Vol. I (1727). See Appendix B for my notes on the print history of this poem.

⁴⁶*PEL*, II: 136.

⁴⁷Preface, *PEL*, I: iv.

⁴⁸Grundy, *LMWM*, 279.

Apollo"⁴⁹ and encouraged her to persevere with her writing, but she did not fulfill her early promise. Valerie Rumbold argues that Cowper did not mature as a poet because she could not successfully envision the poet as a woman: "except for a brief reference to Sappho, she neither refers to any female tradition nor manifests any dissatisfaction at the absence of her own sex from the canon she celebrates. Furthermore, her numerous definitions of excellence in poetry unquestioningly exalt those qualities conventionally gendered as masculine."⁵⁰ Cowper's piece, "The Progress of Poetry," for instance, responds to "The Essay on Criticism," yet Rumbold notes that the young woman's emphasis on inspiration is so strong that she ignores Pope's observations on study and application.⁵¹ These two fundamental difficulties—the construction of the poet as male and a reverence for inspiration—left her nowhere to turn except to silence. Roger Lonsdale, however, offers a more practical motive for Mrs. Madan's falling away from poetry: "most of her verse was written before the age of 30, not surprisingly in view of the fact that she had nine children."⁵² The account of her life written by her descendant, Falconer Madan, does testify to the cares of raising a family while her military husband was almost always absent (and later, ill). Cowper also came under the influence of John Wesley in later years, and though she wrote several religious pieces, these were not for publication.⁵³

The explanations offered by Rumbold and Lonsdale need not be mutually exclusive. Her life did change after her marriage, but her confidence in verse was never quite strong enough before that. Cowper would have been accustomed to seeing good verse by women praised as "manly"; it was conventional to do so. The second half of Cowper's inhibiting construction of the poet, that is, her reluctance to consider poetry as a

⁴⁹Pope to Cowper, *Correspondence*, II: 138.

⁵⁰Valerie Rumbold, "The Poetic Career of Judith Cowper: An Exemplary Failure?" *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*, ed. Donald C. Mell (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1996) 48-66: 49.

⁵¹Rumbold, "Cowper," 50.

⁵²Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 94.

⁵³Falconer Madan, *The Madan Family and Maddens in Ireland and England: An Historical Account* (Oxford UP: printed for subscribers, 1933).

craft, may reflect the early influence of primitivism, which Rumbold does not consider. Although the seventeen-twenties, when Judith Cowper did most of her writing, seems early for this movement, the emphasis on “manly verse” so evident in the late decades of the seventeenth century was increasingly coupled with or replaced by an underlining of the “untutored” and “natural” genius, and may account for the difficulty that Cowper evinced in placing her faith in study and application, in effect, in the veritable *progress* of poetry on an individual level. Whether she was content with the limits of her own natural genius cannot be determined, only that she did not produce a volume of her own writings, unlike every other writer in *PEL* except for the short-lived Constantia Grierson.⁵⁴

As noted above, Colman and Thornton provide signals as to how Cowper’s work should be read: “The curious reader will perhaps look on it as an odd accident, that ELOISA’s Letter should have been put into metre by a man, and that ABELARD’s should at length come to us in elegant verse from the hands of a Lady.”⁵⁵ Certainly, when she chose to compose as Abelard, Cowper adopted a curious persona for a young woman, yet the limitations placed on her male speaker allow for an interesting confusion of gender. Pope sighs and moans for love in the voice of Eloisa, and Cowper, writing as Abelard, a castrated monk, counsels *his* beloved to control *her* passions in order to redeem her soul. Cowper’s Abelard is more religious and less passionate than Eloisa, and seems (fittingly enough) unsexed in Cowper’s poem. It is Abelard’s description of the beauty *he has lost* that is feminized, whereas he has become more masculine (and unattractive) through hardship and denial. He is no longer young and gay. Instead:

The rigid maxims of the grave and wise
Have quench’d each milder sparkle of my eyes;
Each lovely feature of this once lov’d face,
By grief revers’d, assumes a sterner grace:⁵⁶

⁵⁴Montagu at least produced “The Nonsense of Common-sense” during her lifetime, and Walpole printed her *Town Eclogs* and other poems. She seems also to have expected her letters to find their way into print.

⁵⁵*PEL*, II: 136.

⁵⁶*PEL*, II: 137-143, ll.33-36.

It is this lean, pale and haggard mien that would horrify Abelard's beloved were she to witness it. In Cowper's vision beauty is ethereal, not sexual as it is in Pope's poem.

"Abelard to Eloisa" is distinctive among the poems in *PEL*. It is not a prayer or paraphrase of a psalm, though the religious aspect is striking. Nor is it a death-bed poem, though it is close. It is about forbidden love, but is not a pastoral song directed to a swain or a spouse. Like Behn in *The Isle of Love*, the poet adopts a male persona, but it is not the sort of playful male voice we encounter in Killigrew's "Complaint of a Lover" or in Leapor's "Mistaken Lover." Cowper's poem is about sensibility, a halting attempt to express the sublime because, for her, religion will not permit the despair in which Pope reveled.

Slight as her accomplishments are, Cowper is presented in the *Feminiad* as an unqualified success, both in her own right and as a beacon for future women writers. Duncombe praised Cowper as a poet with masculine force, and as profoundly feminine. He refers to her as Cornelia, the model of Roman motherhood. Her efforts are fecund, and have produced not only a worthwhile treatise in verse on the progress of poetry (and, in Duncombe's usual nationalistic rhetoric, British literature), but also as encouragement to other women to attempt the pen:

So female charms and manly virtues grace,
By her example form'd, her blooming race,
And, fram'd alike to please our ears and eyes,
There new Cornelias and new Gracchi rise.⁵⁷

It is, however, not women but a young man whom Cowper encourages in the second and last poem by her in *PEL*. "Verses written in her brother's Coke upon Littleton" is one of two poems in the anthology written to a brother, anticipating Pilkington's "Carte Blanche." Like Pilkington's loosely structured ode to paper, Cowper's poem hints at her own untapped potential. Cowper's poem is more

⁵⁷Duncombe, //205-208. Cornelia had twelve children, including the Gracchi, Tiberius and Gaius, statesmen of ancient Rome. Cicero admired her virtue and her literary accomplishments.

straightforward, however; she has written in her brother's book, advising him on steady application in his study of English law:

O Thou, who labour'st in this rugged mine,
 May'st thou to gold th'unpolish'd ore refine!
 May each dark page unfold its haggard brow!
 Doubt not to reap, if thou canst bear the plough.⁵⁸

Mining for gold or cultivating the soil, the pursuit of legal knowledge is here troped as one rich in rewards. Studying the law is evidently very different from courting the muse.

If Cowper's piece, "The Progress of Poetry," had been reprinted in *PEL*, the section devoted to her work would have been richer for it. As it is, Cowper's first poem in the anthology responds to Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard," reversing the order of his better-known title, and her second poem, written directly on a well-known text, reflects on her learned brother. "Mrs. Madan (formerly Miss Cowper)" is constructed in *PEL* as a writer of palimpsestic verse.

III. MARY MASTERS (?1694-1771)

We cannot conclude without one remark. . . that she is a chaste, moral, and religious, as well as an agreeable and ingenious writer. We mention this circumstance, as certain daughters of the muses have been less eminent for their virtue than their wit; but Mrs. Masters's character, as a WOMAN, is such as must have had a considerable share in inducing her numerous friends to subscribe to the POETESS.

Monthly Review (August 1755)⁵⁹

This review was written in response to Mary Masters's second volume of work, *Familiar Letters and Poems on Several Occasions*, which had appeared in early 1755.⁶⁰ The

⁵⁸*PEL*, II: 143-44, II.1-4. Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634) *The Institute of the laws of England, or Commentary upon Littleton, not the name of the author only but of the law itself* (London, 1628) Like Constantia Grierson's lines to Pilkington, this is another reference to law students (although of a more serious turn) that George Colman would have appreciated.

⁵⁹*Monthly Review*, #13 (August 1755) 155-6.

review is a more complicated piece of rhetoric than most of Ralph Griffiths' evaluations. The emphasis on Masters's character is not unusual in itself, but the reviewer's desire to specify the reasons for *this* woman's 'eminence' seems to speak to the anthology of women writers that came out earlier the same year, in spite of the fact that *The Monthly Review* had all but dismissed *PEL* a month previously, when there was "nothing to say" about the miscellany. This polemical review of Masters's writings asserts that there are different categories of eminence to which women might aspire. There is a hierarchy among these categories, wit being lower than virtue.

Masters's history as a poet is richer than most. Not only did she produce two volumes of verse over twenty years apart, but she did so initially against strong opposition from her father, a poor Norwich schoolmaster who thought women should confine themselves to learning "Household Affairs." His daughter, however, made influential friends with her devotion and talent, and published *Poems on Several Occasions* under her name in 1733. The volume contains a remarkable list of some 1500 subscribers. The title page stresses the importance of natural genius with an epigram from the *Essay on Criticism*: "Nature affords at least a glimmering Light, / The lines, tho' touch'd but faintly, are drawn right."⁶¹ Masters did not marry, and by the 1750s she was dividing her time among three London households: those of Edward Cave, Elizabeth Carter, and the historian, Catharine Graham (later Macaulay).⁶² Samuel Johnson was also a friend.

In their anthology, Colman and Thornton inform readers that Mary Masters is "now living," and quote from the "Preface" to her 1733 *Poems*, inserting the words "she herself informs us" in brackets, to make clear their own distance from the poet's earlier feelings of repression: "Her genius to poetry (she herself informs us) was always brow-beat and discountenanced by her parents; and, till her merit got the better of her fortune, she was shut out from all commerce with the polite world."⁶³ The rest of Colman's and

⁶⁰Masters's book, all new material, was in press by 1752. It was reviewed in *GM*, #37, April, 1755, 190.

⁶¹"Essay on Criticism," ll.21-22.

⁶²*Feminist companion*, 725.

⁶³*PEL*, II: 146, qtd. from *Masters Poems on Several Occasions* (London: for the author by T. Browne, 1733). A2. It seems that she herself penned this Preface.

Thornton's introduction indicates a concern that her writings will not suit every reader: taken seriously is their role as arbiters of wit, and they reiterate the comparison to male writers that appeared in their own Preface:

Her pieces are indeed mostly of a serious cast, and less adapted to the taste of the generality of readers, than those of a more lively turn: but there are in them very evident marks of uncommon talents. And indeed there are few men, that would have wrote so well under the same discouragements, and disadvantages of education.⁶⁴

Colman and Thornton may have come across Masters's poems through Mary Jones, who subscribed to Masters's 1755 volume of letters and poems (as did Johnson and Elizabeth Carter).⁶⁵ There is no evidence that testifies to Masters's opinion of *PEL*, but the anthology could only have been helpful in furthering her reputation at a crucial time in her career, appearing when a book of her new writings had recently been placed on booksellers' shelves. *The Monthly Review* also informs us that Masters's verse should be familiar to readers, "not only from the volume printed in 1733, but by means of the *Magazines*."⁶⁶ Masters's extant letters reveal that, though seldom in London, she was well informed about the latest literary ventures. Her correspondence with the Reverend Mr. Pegge, for example, touches on the latest translation of Ariosto, on meeting Susanna Highmore, Carter's publication of *Epictetus*, Duncombe's second edition of *The Feminead* (new spelling), and Dodsley's *Collection*.⁶⁷ One of the poems in Masters's 1733 volume, not included in *PEL* and titled "To a Gentleman who questioned my being the Author of the foregoing Verses,"⁶⁸ indicates her familiarity with the verse of Anne

⁶⁴*PEL*, II: 146.

⁶⁵Boswell states Johnson "illuminated" Masters's poems "with a ray of his own genius." *Life of Johnson*, IV: 246.

⁶⁶*Monthly Review* #13: 155.

⁶⁷Bodleian MS. Eng. letters d.45 ff.9-12 (undated) and folio 13, July 1758. Lodovico Ariosto (1474-1533) *Orlando Furioso*. A new trans. by William Higgins appeared in 1757; Carter's *Epictetus* (1758); the second edition of *The Feminead* (1757); vols. 5 and 6 of Dodsley's *Collection* (1758).

⁶⁸*Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1733) 44.

Killigrew, and may also have inspired the Preface to Mary Leapor's first volume of verse (*Poeta nascitur non fit*). Masters reminds the reader that poets are born and "never made," attributing to "Nature's strong impulse" her own literary activities: "Whate'er I write, whatever I impart, / To simple Nature unimprov'd by Art."⁶⁹

The first poem by Masters in *PEL* is titled "Defence of Myrtillo." Here, Colman and Thornton include part of her own footnote to provide a context for the occasional piece.⁷⁰ This "Defence" is an attempt to comfort Thomas Scott for the unkind criticism his own *Poems on Several Occasions* (1724) had met with. Masters argues that it is "the critic's delight / To damn the piece they wanted sense to write," whereas she herself finds "Nature and Art" united in Myrtillo's lines. It is a provocative strategy for Masters to have included the "Defence" in her own volume of verse. Her passive aggression is a form of self-defense:

Here I should stop, lest I myself expose
To the resentment of *Myrtillo's* foes.
For what am I, a poor illit'rate maid,
That durst their learn'd authority invade?
Yet had I merit to deserve their hate,
I'd mock their censure, and provoke my fate.⁷¹

The term 'illiterate' here signals that she has not read as widely as those whose "learn'd authority" she challenges. The courageous wish, "had I merit to deserve their hate," continues (or retreats) with the further admission that she is "a foolish thing that's placed below their spleen."⁷² She is posing as humble and unskilled in comparison to the

⁶⁹Masters, "To a Gentleman who questioned my being the Author of the foregoing Verses," *PSO*.

⁷⁰*PEL*, II: 147: "The poems here vindicated make up a small volume published by the Author at 18 years of age, under the title of, *Poems on Several Occasions*, by a Young Gentleman."

⁷¹*PEL*, II: 147-48, ll.13-16. The last six poems in Masters's 1733 collection are by Thomas Scott.

⁷²Masters's impression of the relationship between critics and female poets seems well founded. One 1761 critique, for example, reacts economically to *Poems* by a Mrs. Latter: "Written by a Lady; consequently not the object of severe criticism." *Monthly Review* #24: 232. Frank Donoghue argues that "Reviews evaluated women's writing according to sharply different standards than those they had applied to writing men," and, further, that later in the century, "the appeal of escaping severe criticism from the Reviews was apparently so strong that some male hack writers chose to write as women." *The Fame Machine*, 160-61.

ensorious learned, offering her verse as Mark Antony delivers his speech at Caesar's funeral on his own lack of eloquence. Masters's implicit claim to an authority of taste comes to the fore in the diction she employs to counter critical authority. "Judicious heat" inflames the poet, and "equitable rage" inspires her soul. These adjectives of fairness, albeit to describe anger, put her on an equal footing with the villainous critics. Hers is a righteous indignation, and she must voice her opinion which, in turn, becomes a justification for writing. Like Richardson's Pamela, whose soul is equal to that of a princess, Mary Masters has faith in her own merit as something independent of her modest position.

Spiritual well-being is the focus of much of Masters's writing. Two of her four poems in *PEL* paraphrase psalms, and it is likely these that Colman and Thornton consider "of a serious cast."⁷³ In "Psalm XXXIX," the poet's rhyming couplets do not change the meaning of the original significantly, but Masters's rewriting of this psalm invites further interpretation. As usual, the central theme is the transient existence of man. Yet the poem opens by speaking to personal inhibitions, and its placement alongside "Defence of Myrtillo" in *PEL* makes it a fruitful companion piece to the former.

I Said, I will with strictest caution tread,
And ever jealous my own rashness dread;
Lest happy my unguarded tongue betray
Impatient sense of Providence's sway.
My mouth as with a Bridle I'll restrain,
And wicked men shall watch my words in vain.⁷⁴

The opening of the psalm is a kind of introduction to the psalm proper which follows. Masters's version of this opening does not emphasize the speaker's own capacity for sin as much as the King James version of the psalm, which reads:

⁷³As I noted in Chapter Five, the editors wrote the same sort of thing about Elizabeth Singer Rowe: "her poems are chiefly of a serious kind, and on religious subjects." II: 270. Some of the poems that Colman and Thornton did not reprint from Masters's 1733 *PSO* were even more serious: e.g. "To my Infant Niece, her little Sister dying the instant she was born." p. 136.

⁷⁴"Psalm XXXIX," *PEL*, II: 149-151, ll. 1-6.

I said, I will take heed to my
ways, that I sin not with my
tongue: I will keep my mouth with
a bridle, while the wicked is before
me.

The lines that follow in Master's paraphrase also evince a more sophisticated sense of repression from an outside source, as well as emotional trauma:

Determin'd thus I kept my silence long,
Nor good nor evil issu'd from my tongue.
But secret musings secret pains impart
And grief suppress inflam'd my burning heart;
Till warm reflection kindled in my breast,
And thus my tongue my fervent thought exprest.⁷⁵

Here is a warning that she, like David, must and will speak, a rhetorical warm-up with which to confront the listener. While the rest of the poem is about acquiring humility ("The scanty measures of my years to weigh, / And know my frail affinity with clay,"⁷⁶) the opening lines still frame the piece with a sense of self-worth.

Both of the psalms by Masters iterate the same resentment of being "brow-beat" as the "Preface" to her first volume of verse, and hint at a pride that she seems at other times to deny. "Psalm XXXVII, Inscribed to an INJURED FRIEND," again picks up on the theme of righteous anger in the "Defence of Myrtillo," and nicely links this with divine justice and the brevity of life in the earlier psalm:

Fret not thyself when wicked men prevail,
And bold iniquity bears down the scale.
They and their glory quickly shall decay,
Swept by the hand of Providence away. . .⁷⁷

⁷⁵ll. 7-12.

⁷⁶ll. 15-16.

⁷⁷"Psalm XXXVII," *PEL*, II: 152-156, ll. 1-4.

The King James Bible is itself more poetic on this point: the speaker's enemies "shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." This destructive prediction may have seemed too vindictive for Masters, who instead focuses on Providence, clearly an important aspect of her faith. It is also obvious from her writings, though, that she believed the Lord helps those who help (and who speak for) themselves.

The final poem in Masters's section is the pastoral song, "To Lucinda," which differs from the three preceding pieces. Musing on the impossibility of dissuading lovers from their love, the speaker declares that passion has nothing to do with reason, as "Love is a mighty God. . . / That rules with potent sway." The sentiment is a conventional one (as in Montagu's lamentation about this "god" love) yet the poem is reasoned in its exploration of unreason, and Masters is reciting conventions coolly when she notes that lovers "sigh, and weep, and rave, and die, / Because it must be so." The speaker herself is in love, and cannot be dissuaded by Lucinda, because even if the charms she observes in her beloved "Only exist in thought; / Yet *Cupid*, like the *Mede*'s decree, / Is firm and changeth not."⁷⁸

Should lovers quarrel with their fate,
And ask the reason why,
They are condemned to dote on that,
Or for this object die?⁷⁹

On some level it is a philosophy influenced by the Restoration, but the poet's cynicism about love is less like that of the later cavalier poets than reminiscent of the feigned indifference in verse by an earlier cynic, Thomas Wyatt (who also paraphrased psalms). Masters's assertion that "reason is an useless thing, / When we're commenc'd the lover"⁸⁰ iterates a fatalism attached to romantic love which seems the flip-side of her faith in Providence. Things are as they are; this piece is a poetic shrug. In spite of the ostensible

⁷⁸"Lucinda," *PEL*, II: 151-52; //21-22; 19-20; 6-8.

⁷⁹//16-19.

⁸⁰//11-12.

similarities, both in form and content, between “To Lucinda” and the love songs by Behn or Cockburn, the speaker in this poem is more philosophical than suffering, almost stoic, and her voice contains a distance that does not echo Behn.

The Preface to Masters’s 1733 *Poems* states, with apologetic pride, that her “education rose no higher than the Spelling-Book, or the Writing-Master,”⁸¹ and hers was a more modest social position than that of others in *PEL*. Yet something hard and strong exists at the core of Masters’s poetry, something that Colman and Thornton labeled “serious” and Griffith called “virtue,” but which may in the end have been evidence of uncluttered vision and a poet’s voice. Although Pope’s statements about nature versus artifice helped her in constructing a self to address her readers, she was unlike Judith Cowper, for whom Pope was the source of ideas and the model of a poet. Masters turned her attention further back, to pastoral songs and to the Bible, developing a talent more individual than unfulfilled.

IV. MARY JONES (1707-1778)

The poetry she can say nothing to; it being quite accidental, that her thoughts ever rambled into rhyme.

Mary Jones⁸²

Notwithstanding the originality of their project, Colman and Thornton were followers rather than innovators with their assembly of writers, for *PEL* is not a cabal of scribbling females sprung from their editorial imaginations; rather, as I have argued, they brought together works by women whose names had often been juxtaposed, most strikingly in the first half of the 1750s. In 1752 Ralph Griffiths had linked Mary Jones’s name to those of Mary Leapor and Catharine Cockburn to highlight the quality of Jones’s “ingenious” and “truly admirable” verse. The editor of *The Monthly Review* also praised

⁸¹Masters, *PSO* (1733) A2.

⁸²“Advertisement,” *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (London: Dodsley et al. 1755) vii.

Jones with the most complimentary analogy that a female writer could hope for, styling her superior to “any other female writer since the days of Mrs. Catharine Philips.”⁸³

Jones, too, knew the work of the women to whom she was compared “probably better than Griffiths did. In his emphasis on the poet’s “unspoiled” and “untutored” genius (not synonymous adjectives, surely, yet somehow implied to be so in this type of evaluation), Griffiths co-operated with the modest “Advertisement” in Jones’s own *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (1750). Here, the prefatory denial of ambition and the claim to writings that are “the produce of pure nature only. . . wrote at a very early age” testify to the careful attention Jones paid to the address to the reader as a genre in its own right. We know from her letter to Miss Lovelace, reprinted in *PEL*, that Jones was familiar with Mary Barber’s verses, among others. Jones’s Preface, from her explanation that she must support an aged relative, to her gratitude toward generous subscribers (several of whom had convinced her to publish), seems in its completeness almost a parody of the poet’s apology, and Jones was sufficiently self-aware, and conscious of others’ expectations, to have recognized this. Yet she also understood that it would be difficult for a woman of little means to pen an introduction that could be considered too modest, too grateful, or too needy. More likely, the “Advertisement” is an exercise in one-upmanship in the genre, and prepares the reader for the associations that the poet draws between herself and Pope in her verse. This is an association that Griffiths also voices in his review, by linking Jones’s superiority with her close imitation of the male poet, an affinity which the verses reprinted in *PEL* make manifest.

Jones was born March 1706, in Oxford, the second of four children of Oliver Jones, cooper of St. Aldates, Oxford, and his second wife (probably Mary).⁸⁴ When young, she published some memorial verses anonymously, and her ballad “The Lass of the Hill” appeared as a broadside in 1742, becoming for a time “the Fashion of the Town.” Though anonymous, her authorship was well known, and the ballad was

⁸³Jones expressed her gratitude for the review the same month in a letter to Griffiths, where she called herself “highly indebted to y^e authors of that useful Work, for introducing me to y^e World in so elegant a manner.” She explained that she was most happy with the observations on her moral character, rather than her Literary one. Bodleian MS Add C.89 ff.171-176.

⁸⁴The best account of Jones to date is Richard Greene’s article in *DNB Missing Persons*, 362.

reprinted in her 1750 *Miscellanies*.⁸⁵ A list of some 1400 subscribers “a notable achievement” lends weight, both literal and figurative, to this volume. Throughout 1752, the *London Magazine* published excerpts from the book, ensuring that some measure of attention continued to be paid her. Although not wealthy, Jones had many aristocratic friends: Martha Lovelace (later Lady Beauclerk) to whom she addresses both letters and poems, was a maid of honour at court, and Lady Bowyer headed her subscription campaign. *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* is dedicated to the Princess of Orange, which would not have been done without permission.⁸⁶ Like Masters, Jones did not marry. She was apparently postmistress of Oxford when she died in 1778.

A generous selection of seventeen poems by Jones, sixteen of which are taken from the 1750 *Miscellanies*, conclude the first volume of *PEL*. The timing of her own volume of verse and her good reputation made Jones an obvious choice for inclusion in the anthology. Perhaps more importantly, the Oxford poet had also made the acquaintance of members of the university through her brother, Oliver, who was Chanter of Christ Church Cathedral and later senior chaplain of Christ Church.⁸⁷ As noted, Bonnell Thornton subscribed for ten copies of her book (the “Royal Paper” format) which testifies to a friendship that predates *PEL* by at least five years.⁸⁸

⁸⁵“The Lass of the Hill” was frequently reprinted in broadsides throughout the second half of the century.

⁸⁶Lonsdale notes of Jones’s volume that “commercial publication followed only when the subscribers’ copies had been delivered and it was not generally advertised until early 1752, accompanied by a minor publicity campaign.” *ECWP*, 156.

⁸⁷Johnson knew Jones and called her the “chantress.” *Life of Johnson*, I: 322. A large proportion of the names on her subscription list were members of the university. In their introduction to Mary Barber, the editors refer to “the ingenious Mrs. *Mary Jones*, who is herself a Poetess, and whose productions will undoubtedly be allowed to make a very agreeable part of these volumes.” *PEL*, I: 2. It is worth noting that this is the only instance in which Colman and Thornton use the word “poetess,” defined in Johnson’s *Dictionary* as a “she-poet.”

⁸⁸It has been suggested that Mary Jones played more than a passive role in the creation of *PEL*. In his study of Katherine Philips, Patrick Thomas notes that eleven poems by Philips were printed “in the collection *Poems by Eminent Ladies*. . . put together by George Colman, the Younger, and Bonnell Thornton (or perhaps by Mrs. Mary Jones for them as publishers, when both were still students at Oxford).” Thomas, “Introduction,” *Works of Katherine Philips*, I, 1-68: 38. Thomas identifies the wrong generation of Colman in his attribution, but he does reiterate the notion, never elaborated upon, that Mary Jones was in fact the compiler of the anthology. The theory seems to have begun with Eugene Page, who suggested in his biography of Colman that “Mrs. Mary Jones was then resident at Oxford, and undoubtedly had much to do with their publication of these volumes.” (Page, *Colman*, 39). I have found no evidence to support this

Several of the poems by Jones in *PEL* are occasional, and most of these are light verse (such as “To Miss Clayton, with a Hare” and “Consolatory Rhymes to Mrs. East, on the Death of her Canary Bird”). Others, like “In Memory of the Right Hon. Lord Aubrey Beauclerk, who was slain at Carthagena,” and ““To the Prince of Orange, on his Marriage” the title of which alerts the reader to their having been written “at the time of the Oxford Verses,”⁸⁹ illustrate Jones’s associations both with nobility and royalty -- surely a basis for ‘eminence’.

Jones’s verse fits nicely alongside a number of the themes raised by other poets in the anthology, especially with recurring allusions to Pope and Swift. Her selection begins with “An Epistle to Lady Bowyer,” the first couplet of which is reminiscent of Scriblerian declarations of disgust with the growing number of hack writers: “HOW much of paper’s spoil’d! what floods of ink! / And yet how few, how very few can think!” The poem continues along the same, humorously condescending vein; “The knack of writing is an easy trade; / But to think well requires ---at least a head.”⁹⁰ The focus then narrows in on Pope, and the relative shortcomings of other writers, including herself. The male poet is likened to a tall oak tree, under which nothing else can flourish:

Whilst *lofty* Pope erects his laurell’d head,
 No lays, like mine, can live beneath his shade.
 Nothing but weeds and moss, and shrubs are found.
 Cut, cut them down, why cumber they the ground?⁹¹

rumour of Jones having ghost-edited the anthology. Certainly, the introductory entry for Jones in *PEL* evinces high esteem on the part of the editors, who assume that “the reader will readily agree that *Oxford* is deservedly called the SEAT of the MUSES whilst this ingenious LADY resides there.” *PEL*, I: 254. The encomium might indicate a personal acquaintance, but does not hint at collaboration.

⁸⁹The Prince of Orange married a daughter of George II in 1734; a likely occasion for an Oxford collection of (Latin) congratulatory verses by members of the University. Since Jones was not a member of the University, her work would not appear in a collection of “Oxford Verses.” That Jones gives in her sub-title this context, places her at the margins of such a collection, but also involves her in the celebration of the occasion.

⁹⁰“Epistle to Lady Bowyer,” I: 255-259, ll.1-4.

⁹¹“Epistle to Lady Bowyer,” I: 255-259, ll.9-12.

The trope is a fascinating one for a female poet to use; she seems to suggest that there is no space for her, because she can neither prosper, nor simply *be* a minor poet. This anxiety about writing itself provides her with a subject – something that we have encountered often in the anthology. What Betty Rizzo identifies as Mary Leapor’s anxiety *for* Pope’s influence is equally evident in Mary Jones’s voice (and, as in Leapor’s lines on herself, we again encounter a weed metaphor).

The mighty oak, and the other plants surrounding it, seem also a return to the issues raised by Mary Barber, whom Jones admired, and who depicted in her fable an oak that sacrifices itself to allow ‘foreign’ branches to climb its trunk and adorn it. In my last chapter I discussed how Barber’s extended metaphor might be interpreted as a comment on Barber’s own relationship with Swift. In the case of “Epistle to Lady Bowyer,” readers of the anthology (like readers of Jones’s own volume) might again have thought of Pope’s own pronouncement in the “Epistle to a Lady”: “Our bolder Talents in full light display’d, / Your Virtues open fairest in the shade.”⁹² While Jones’s beginning seems both to reiterate and to deny Pope’s analysis of men and women (in this poem, no one opens fairest in the shade), she later answers her own suggestion of poetic self-annihilation (“Cut, cut”) with a rewriting of the “Epistle to Arbuthnot,” peppered with reminiscences from his other poems, and proving herself a student of Pope who can shape his rhetoric to her own needs. Her concluding couplet is a tricky show of bravado: “Alas! I’d live unknown, unenvy’d too; / ‘Tis more than *Pope*, with all his wit can do.”⁹³ The desire cannot be genuine, coming from a poet who published as she did, but it is at least half true: Pope could not live unknown or unenvy’d.

Though in reality Jones’s ventures among the privileged were much smoother than those of many minor poets, she is familiar with all the stock descriptions of cringing authors, unappreciated by pompous patrons. Like Mary Leapor, though perhaps with more equivocation, Jones registers horror at the thought of a patron, and conveys a dignity she may not always have felt. Her skill in alliterative parallelism in the closed

⁹²Pope, “Epistle to a Lady,” *Poems*, 559-569, ll.221-222.

⁹³“Epistle to Lady Bowyer,” ll.19-20.

couplet is noteworthy: "By fortune fumbled, yet not sunk so low / To shame a friend or fear to meet a foe."⁹⁴ In the last twenty-one lines she borrows again from Pope the trick of describing her own honest parentage; like Pope, Jones has an aged and dependent mother.⁹⁵ The conclusion echoes Pope's gift with chiasmus while voicing a Horatian longing for retreat, but also combines with this the desire for seclusion among female friends that Katherine Philips, and Anne Finch voiced:

I ask no more, but in some calm retreat,
 To sleep in quiet, and in quiet eat.
 No noisy slaves attending round my room;
 My viands wholesome, and my waiters dumb.
 No orphans cheated, and no widow's curse,
 No household lord, for better or for worse.
 No monstrous sums to tempt my soul to sin,
 But just enough to keep me plain and clean.
 And if sometimes, to smooth the rugged way,
*Charlot*⁹⁶ should smile, or you approve my lay,
 Enough for me. I cannot put my trust
 In lords, smile lies, eat toads, or lick the dust.
 Fortune her favours much too dear may hold:
 An honest heart is worth its weight in gold.⁹⁷

The line "No household lord, for better or for worse" implies a conscious choice to remain unmarried and, if not financially, at least otherwise independent. Coming as it does immediately after mention of cheated orphans and a widow cursing, the denial of a "household lord" seems to indicate a mistrust of familial harmony, as well as the poet's fear of dwelling more immediately in a man's shade. The line also mirrors the determination with which her friends, Mary Masters and Elizabeth Carter, remained unmarried.

⁹⁴ll. 100-101.

⁹⁵Jones's mother died shortly before *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* was printed.

⁹⁶Jones's friend Charlotte Clayton. See Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 155.

⁹⁷"Epistle to Lady Bowyer," ll. 113-127.

Independence is an important concept in Jones's verse. In "Soliloquy on an Empty Purse" Jones laments the leanness of the purse which, at an earlier date, significantly contained both her "fortune" and her "confidence": "A poet's fortune!--- not immense: / Yet, mixt with keys, and coins among, / Chink to the melody of song." It becomes an emblem of her poetry, rather than of actual wealth. Content that she will not be tempted to make a purchase, nor fear the dun or pick-purse, she again returns to the theme of unprofitable writing, juxtaposing positive images with base in a conclusion reminiscent of Swift's "City Shower," both light, and bleak.

And softly sweet in garret high
Will I thy virtues magnify;
Out-soaring flatt'ers stinking breath,
And gently rhyming rats to death.⁹⁸

Poetry again becomes an alternative to marriage in this extended trope. She asks the purse if it remembers when she first saw it hanging at a fair "And took thee, destin'd to be sold, / My lawful Purse, to have and hold?" The rhyme of 'sold' and 'hold' in the allusion to wedlock is especially clever, as money and marriage are again linked. This poem may have been influenced by Jones's reading of Barber's work, in particular the "Letter for my Son to one of his School-fellows," in which the Irishwoman also mentions dunning, and the pitiful fortune to which a poet is destined. And, like Mary Leapor's "The Inspired Quill," Jones's "Soliloquy" focuses on a humble object that can testify to the poet's failure to earn. Although these female writers often employed the trope of the natural genius unaffected by art, they themselves rarely sentimentalized the lack of economic security, nor had their Augustan heroes done so. For them, the garret was still associated with Grub Street, with the scriblierian belief that impoverished poets had lean purses because they were also poor writers.⁹⁹

⁹⁸"Soliloquy on an Empty Purse," *PEL*, I: 301-303. ll.7-8, 51-54.

⁹⁹See Pope's introduction to the "Dunciad": "It is not charity to encourage [bad authors] in the way they follow, but to get 'em out of it: for men are not bunglers because they are poor, but they are poor because they are bunglers." *Poems*, 321.

Jones's endeavors were not all as successful as "Soliloquy." The epistolary ode, "Of Patience. An Epistle to The Right Hon. Samuel Lord Masham," for one, resists the practice of stoicism in favor of Christian patience in a way that she cannot quite pull off; the concluding couplet "If yet this sorer trial you survive, / Your lordship is the patient'st man alive"¹⁰⁰ is dreadful, and there are other faltering moments. More promising is that the poem resonates with references to spleen, which Jones asserts has not "sow'rd" Lord Masham. Her description of painful sensitivity here reads as a useful complement to Finch's ode later in *PEL*:

Superior faculties avail not here,
Wit points the shaft, and valour pours the tear.
The same nice nerve which vibrates to the brain
Its sense of pleasure gives as quick its pain:
And all the diff'rence 'twixt the fool and wise,
In their sensations and perceptions lies.
The man of wit in many parts is sore,
Touch but a genius, and he smarts all o'er.
The wise his wisdom to resentment owes,
The fool feels little, for he little knows.¹⁰⁰

Like Johnson's *Rasselas*, whose concern is with "the choice of life," Jones wonders "Is there that thing on earth, a happy man?" The most important question asked in the poem, following examples of those who know too much to be content, is: "If then from wisdom half our pains arise, / Say, Masham, what avails it to be wise?" The poet continues with a nod to Pope's advice to "know thyself," but she also expresses an intelligent doubt:

The greatest good proud science can bestow,
But learn'd the latest, is--- Ourselves to know.
Yet after all their search, the wise complain,
This very knowledge irritates their pain.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰"Of Patience," *PEL*, I: 260-271, ll.29-38.

¹⁰¹ll.49-50, 51-54.

“Of Patience” can be read as another poem on the spleen, but one which its author felt she must provide with an answer, a conclusion that weakens the impact of her valid complaints. It is worth noting, however, that like Finch, Jones does not single out women as the principal sufferers of spleen; indeed, in this poem men are especially plagued (though this is complicated, because the spleen is here exacerbated by intelligence).

Jones’s interest in happiness is again explored in the poem “Of Desire. An Epistle to The Honourable Miss Lovelace.” Like Katherine Philips’s poems for friends, “Content,” and “Against Pleasure,” Jones voices mistrust about worldly sources of happiness, but her poem is more concerned with the psychological misapprehensions under which we labour than with the state of the world that Orinda described so succinctly in “Against Pleasure.” Philips alerted her friends to the fact that “There’s no such thing as pleasure here / ‘Tis all a perfect cheat,”¹⁰² Instead, Jones wonders (and wanders) along lines that again echo Finch’s disgust in “The Spleen”:

WHENCE these impetuous movements of the breast?
 Why beat our hearts, unknowing where to rest?
 Must we still long untasted joys to taste,
 Pant for the future, yet regret the past?¹⁰³

The poet casts a knowing eye on the folly of the human capacity for dissatisfaction (again, like Johnson in “The Vanity of Human Wishes”).¹⁰⁴ Among the other instances of avarice that breeds upon itself, Jones provides a domestic example:

“Oh for a husband, handsome and well-bred!”
 Was the last pray’r the chaste *Dyctinna* made.
 Kind heav’n at length her soft petition heeds,
 But one wish gain’d a multitude succeeds--

¹⁰²“Of Desire,” *PEL*, I: 291, ll. 1-2.

¹⁰³*PEL*, I: 271-277, ll. 1-4

¹⁰⁴While echoes of Juvenal’s tenth Satire permeated English poetry of the period, the influence here may have come from Dryden.

She wants an heir, she wants a house in town,
She wants a title, or she wants a gown.¹⁰⁵

This is a loaded observation, and one of the more succinct passages in *PEL* – a Vanity of *Women's Wishes*. Marriage and materialism are inseparable here, as in some of Mary Leapor's more cynical writings. Worth noting is that in Jones's poem the husband is an acquisition, whereas in most of the similar poems in *PEL* the situation is reversed. Again, however, the conclusion of this poem does not go far enough. In "Of Patience" the poet admitted that wisdom "irritates pain," but "Of Desire" ends with the supplication: "Oh give me wisdom, heav'n! and I have all."¹⁰⁶

Another piece of conventional advice comes in "After the Small-Pox," where virtue is insisted upon as more important than physical beauty (including Jones's use of the stock name Stella, which Mary Barber employed in her poem on virtue versus beauty). This poem, however, offers something new. As one of three small-pox poems in the anthology (along with Rowe's thanks for recovery, and Montagu's lamentation at the loss of beauty) Jones's poem also examines beauty as part of a system of signs by which people interpret their environment – a notion that Thornton, in particular, may have been interested in, given the "Sign-Painters' Exhibition," a project in which he, together with William Hogarth, would burlesque existing and humorously 'enhanced' signs in 1762.¹⁰⁷ Unlike the usual dismissal of ephemeral beauty, Jones's poem does acknowledge its importance. To do so she explores physical objects as symbols of commodities and services, extrapolating from these more theoretical concerns:

When skilful traders first set up,
To draw the people to their shop,
They strait hang out some gaudy sign
Expressive of the goods within.
The vintner has his boy and grapes,

¹⁰⁵"Of Desire," ll. 87-92.

¹⁰⁶l. 179.

¹⁰⁷The hoax (a real exhibition of satirically-altered signboards set up in Thornton's rooms) opened 22 April, 1762. Bertelsen, 138-150.

The haberdasher thread and tapes,
 The shoemaker exposes boots,
 And *Monmouth-street* old tatter'd suits,
 So fares it with the nymph divine;
 For what is beauty, but a sign?¹⁰⁸

Although further on Jones seems to be agreeing with so many writers, like John Hawkesworth in *Adventurer* #82, who argued that “those who wish to be LOVELY, must learn early to be GOOD,”¹⁰⁹ she is more realistic in noting that the coquette, in losing her beauty, parts with the sign of “the nature of the goods within.” Jones does not say that goodness is sufficient, but that eventually nature will repair Stella’s face into a sign of her mind. The poems on smallpox (and other allusions to it) which appear in *PEL* serve as a reminder of this pressing issue of the times, and seem to identify the disease (like the spleen, problematically) as being particularly a woman’s issue. Women who lose their beauty lose more.

Roger Lonsdale believes that Mary Jones’s poetry, “which reflects her admiration for Pope, would eventually have come to seem old-fashioned.”¹¹⁰ A poem that stands out in Jones’s section in the anthology, however, is one that belongs to part of an older tradition than the pithy turns of phrase she inherited from Pope. This is “The Lass of the Hill,” which would already have been familiar to some readers.¹¹¹ The ballad is a warning to the “young virgins of *Britain’s* fair isle” about the guile of artful beaux. The false swain, “Roger,” moans of his suffering to the unnamed shepherdess,

But as soon as he’d melted the ice of her breast,
 The heat of his passion that moment decreas’d;
 And now he goes flaunting all over the vale,
 And boasts of his conquest to *Richard* and *Hal*;
 Tho’ he sees her but seldom, he’s always in haste,

¹⁰⁸*PEL*, I: 291-292, ll. 1-10.

¹⁰⁹*Adventurer*, # 82 (August 18, 1753).

¹¹⁰Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 155-156.

¹¹¹See Chapter Three.

And whenever he mentions her, makes her his jest.¹¹²

The wise reminder that “you’ll find a false *Roger* in every vale” is not startling, but it is nicely set up, and the poem has a cohesion that makes the reader wish for more ballads from Jones. By turns sad and funny (“The whole village cry shame when a milking she goes, / That so little attention is shew’d to the cows”¹¹³) Jones’s poem does seem “old-fashioned,” but at the same time it would have been no less relevant in the second half of the century than in the first (the warning is much like that offered by Montagu in her “Epilogue” about “those traytors men,” though without the relish).

Readers who might have judged Jones a prude from the excerpt of her letter at the beginning of *PEL* would be surprised to encounter her amusing poem, “Holt Waters. a Tale,” in which Cloe, on a coach outing with friends, experiences a pressing need to urinate. Jones warns her readers, “Yet trust me, prudes, it was no more / Than you or I have wish’d before.” After a great ordeal (including putting up with Sir Fopling who insists on attending her) she flies to a dairy, where first she fills a cream-pot, followed by a pan of milk, then, “O stop, dear nymph; alack! forbear; / Spoil not our cheese! our butter spare!”¹¹⁴ When the poor milkmaid returns, she drinks some of this liquid. Margaret Anne Doody suggests that, “although a Popean in her verse Mary Jones turns to the style of Swift when she wishes to deal with physical facts. . . . If Swift’s Celia shits, Jones’s Cloe pisses and pisses.” For Doody, “it is a tribute to the robustness of this Age of Sensibility” that Colman and Thornton include Jones’s “Holt Waters” in *PEL*.¹¹⁵ It is

¹¹²“Lass,” *PEL*, I: 292-294, ll. 19-24. Unlike the other poems by Jones in *PEL*, this version of the ballad is not taken from her 1750 *Miscellanies*. Rather, it is the version that was printed (perhaps in 1750, after Jones’s book) as a broadside titled “The New Lass of the Hill.” This version has numerous variants from that in Jones’s own book, but likely incorporates her own changes (usually improvements). The earlier version, for example, has Roger boast of his conquest not to “*Richard and Hal*,” but to “*Susan and Nell*” (l. 22), which makes less sense. This privileging of another version, rather than consistently following the *Miscellanies*, suggests that Colman and Thornton probably used a broadside version of the poem. It is possible that Jones had some say in the make-up of her own selection in *PEL*, though this does not indicate that she compiled the anthology.

¹¹³“Lass,” ll. 27-28.

¹¹⁴*PEL*, I: 296-301, ll. 94-95.

certainly a tribute to the robustness of an anthology that seems at first to promise “more delicacy” than others.¹¹⁶ In light of this poem, Jones’s letter in praise of Barber merely laments that rhyme about romance is boring, not improper.

Jones was a marginal satirist, writing in a liminal space between such categories as neo-classicism and sensibility, as were many of the women in the anthology. As a contribution to *PEL* Jones’s verses would have offered both a welcome contemporary viewpoint alongside the verse of many deceased writers in the anthology, and yet another reminder of the Scriblerians who had died in the years that preceded the collection.

V. ELIZABETH CARTER (1717-1806)

Thy own ELIZA muses on the shore,
 Serene, tho’ billows beat, and tempests roar.
 ELIZA, hail! your fav’rite name inspires
 My raptur’d breast with sympathetic fires. . .
 John Duncombe¹¹⁷

The Revd. Nicholas Carter, curate of Deal, raised his daughter with a classical education equal to that of his sons, and she, in turn, proved equal to the challenge. Elizabeth Carter’s mother, Margaret (Swayne) died when her daughter was ten, and Elizabeth grew up looking after her father’s household and her younger siblings during the day, while at night she chewed green tea to stay awake to study, and tied cold cloths around her head to alleviate the headaches caused, she said, by too much reading. Eventually she produced translations from Italian, French, and Greek.¹¹⁸ Her renowned translation from the Greek of *All the Works of Epictetus*, a first century A.D. Roman

¹¹⁵Doody, “Swift among the Women,” 84-85.

¹¹⁶ Preface, *PEL*, I: A2

¹¹⁷*Feminiad*, ll.242-245

¹¹⁸Thomas Birch suggested she translate something from the Italian of Francesco Algarotti. *Il Newtonianism per le dame* (Naples, 1737). In May, 1739, Carter’s translation with explanatory notes was published: *Sir Isaac Newton’s Philosophy Explain’d for the Use of the Ladies*, in *Six Dialogues on Light and Colours* (London, 1739).

stoic, was published in 1758, from which she profited handsomely.¹¹⁹ Nor did she ignore the vernacular, having begun publishing occasional pieces in *The Gentleman's Magazine* when she was seventeen. Edward Cave produced an anonymous quarto of her work, *Poems upon Particular Occasions*, in 1738. There were four editions of a second book of verse, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1762), this time printed with Carter's name. She was eventually able to settle in London as a woman of letters, having taken to heart the paternal advice to remain single and live quietly if she wanted to enjoy independence and a life of the mind.¹²⁰

Duncombe was a friend to Carter, and his rhapsody on her in *The Femiinad* is his longest.¹²¹ Numbered among her other friends was Samuel Johnson, who uttered that immortal line: "My old friend Mrs. Carter, could make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus."¹²² Although Roger Lonsdale suggests that Carter is "doomed" to be remembered by this note in Boswell, Carolyn D. Williams has illustrated that the dual accomplishments testify to no mean feat of diversity. Johnson's praise contains no irony but rather a real appreciation for Carter's hard work and the difficulty inherent in balancing domestic duties and independent scholastic endeavours.¹²³ She was a key member of the circle of bluestockings that included, among others, Elizabeth Montagu, Frances Burney, Elizabeth Robinson and Anna Laetitia Barbauld. She died in 1806 at the age of eighty-nine, widely recognized as a "poet, scholar, translator, essayist and letter writer."¹²⁴

¹¹⁹Revd. Montagu Pennington, Carter's nephew, biographer, and the editor of her correspondence, estimated that she earned 1000 pounds from the subscriptions. *A Series of Letters Between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catharine Talbot, from the Year 1741 to 1770*. . . 4 vols. (London: Rivington, 1809).

¹²⁰Pennington noted that early in life she "seems to have formed a resolution, or at least an intention, which she was enabled to keep, of devoting herself to study, and living a single life." *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter*, 2 vols. (London, 1808) , 8, 34.

¹²¹Duncombe's father, William, corresponded with Carter, and John Duncombe himself married Carter's friend Susanna Highmore.

¹²²Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, I: 122, n.4.

¹²³Carolyn D. Williams, "Poetry, Pudding, and Epictetus: The Consistency of Elizabeth Carter," *Tradition in Transition*, 3-24.

Like every other poet in the anthology, Elizabeth Carter had not always been in control of her writings. A number of her poems circulated in manuscript throughout the 40s and 50s. I have noted that Richardson printed her "Ode to Wisdom" in the first edition of *Clarissa* (1747) without knowing the identity of the author, and there were other printings.¹²⁵ In 1748, Robert Dodsley reprinted the piece in his *Collection*, along with an amended version of another, "To a Gentleman on his intending to cut down a Grove to enlarge his Prospect," which had appeared first in her 1738 volume. In 1750 Carter wrote to William Duncombe: "Mr. Cave is the only person who ever had any poetry, with leave to print it, from me, and he not for some years. All the rest, which you have seen in other collections, were without my consent or knowledge. The Odes in Mr. Dodsley's Miscellany I was surprised to meet there, for he had them not from me."¹²⁶ These two "odes" were then reprinted by Colman and Thornton in *PEL*, where they make an important (albeit small) contribution.¹²⁷ The editors, ignorant of her 1738 volume, claim that the poems reprinted in the anthology "are all that her modesty has ever suffered to be made public."¹²⁸

The "Ode to Wisdom" engages with the sublime, and is one of the few heralding note of intensifying sensibility in *PEL*. It is at night, the speaker in the poem argues, that "folly drops each vain disguise, / Nor sport [sic] her gaily-colour'd dyes, / As in the beam of day."¹²⁹ Night is seldom addressed elsewhere in the anthology, and Carter's nocturnal

¹²⁴Uphaus and Foster, *The Other Eighteenth Century*, 213. Carter was one of the women in Richard Samuel's painting, "Nine Living Muses of Great Britain" c.1779.

¹²⁵See Chapter Three. Carter chastized Richardson for printing the poem, and Richardson urged her to "Be pleased, Madam, to receive a faithful relation of the occasion of the trespass I have made, for which you call me too severe, however just. . ." qtd. in Pennington's, *Memoirs* I: 101. She accepted the apology.

¹²⁶Qtd. by Pennington in Carter's *Memoirs*, 100. It is a similar sentiment to that expressed by Montagu toward Dodsley. Worth noting is that Dodsley was one of the booksellers later named on the title-page of Carter's *Epictetus*. Duncombe's praise for Carter hints that the "Ode to Wisdom" had taken root in the literary culture of the moment, in spite of her refusal to grant the right to print it: "While, undisturb'd by pride, you calmly tread / Thro life's perplexing paths, by Wisdom led." *Feminiad*, ll.258-59.

¹²⁷Carter's section of verse is the smallest in either volume; every other poet but Judith Cowper [Madan] has more than two poems printed in the book (and more pages are devoted to Cowper).

¹²⁸[172]. As noted above, the editors made this same sort of mistake with Judith Cowper.

¹²⁹"Ode to Wisdom," *PEL*, I: 173-176, ll.16-18.

description, which can be read as belonging to the tradition of ‘night-pieces’ to which Thomas Parnell and others contributed, makes a welcome addition to the collection.

Form and content intersect in this piece, where the poet expresses her longing in this piece to conquer “an empire o’er the mind” through earnest study. While her desire for retreat “From envy, hurry, noise, and strife, / The dull impertinence of life” echoes the Horatian longings of others in the anthology, she is also more confident about retreating to the world of letters, rather than confining herself to a domestic sphere.¹³⁰ Carter’s supplication to Pallas, and her determination to follow the goddess’ “unerring rules,” lead to passages that reiterate the musings of other poets on vanity and idle pleasures: “Let av’rice, vanity, and pride, / Those envy’d glitt’ring toys divide, / The dull rewards of care.”¹³¹ Carter’s style is economical, and she voices this longing for wisdom more convincingly than Jones, who could not herself imitate Horace, but was limited to imitating Pope or other translators of Horace. The “Ode” achieves a kind of synthesis in its delineation of various sources of contentment.

Thy breath inspires the poet’s song,
The patriot’s free, unbiass’d tongue,
The hero’s generous strife;
Thine are retirement’s silent joys,
And all the sweet engaging ties
Of still, domestic life.¹³²

The allusive quality of her verse testifies to her background in the classics, and makes Carter yet another example of a woman whose education oversteps the confines of the “natural” genius.¹³³ There are several learned women in the collection, but she is the only eminent lady here who knows her pudding as well as her Epictetus.

¹³⁰ll. 55-6.

¹³¹ll. 34-6

¹³²ll. 73-78.

¹³³Richardson had Clarissa gain this education through thoughtful, independent study, whereas Carter’s own father encouraged her education in every way.

Carter's second poem again highlights her extensive reading. "To A Gentleman, on his intending to cut down a grove to enlarge his prospect" is important in that it voices the kind of concern for arboreal beauty which goes beyond the ephemeral taste of the age, and tropes the trees as a symbol of continuity with the past. The trees are valuable because of their contribution to thought, music and poetry throughout the ages—"From each inspiring bough / The Muses wove th'unfading wreathes, / That circled *Virgil's* brow."¹³⁴ Carter expresses her disapproval of the gentleman's proposal in the voice of "a weeping *Hamadryad*." She alludes to Isis, Plato, the Lyceum, and Apollo. Hers is an environmental argument based on antiquity, which again identifies Carter as one of the most learned women in the miscellany.

Carter does not argue in favour of the woods on the basis of an enjoyment of shade as a physical experience. Instead, the association she draws between trees and ideas is phrased in opposition to more tangible pleasures, and the poem anticipates the type of reverence for trees that occurs in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, where the woods represent taste and decorum:

Reflect, before the fatal ax
My threaten'd doom has wrought;
Nor sacrifice to sensual taste
The nobler growth of thought;¹³⁵

On one level, this seems a rejection, or at least a containment of the sensuality that Behn represents in the section of the miscellany immediately preceding Carter's. This poet's grove is no "Bower of Bliss."¹³⁶ As in Barber's "Oak and his Branches," and Jones's "Epistle to Lady Bowyer," the tree is made to represent "higher" qualities and accomplishments. Carter's poems date from the late 1730s, but they also represent a marriage of sentiment and thought which signals a movement away from the more satiric works of 'female Scriblerians' like Barber, Montagu, and even Jones. Her trees harken

¹³⁴"To a Gentleman," *PEL*, I: 177-178, ll.22-24, 3.

¹³⁵ ll.25-28.

back to Virgil, not to Swift or Pope. Carter's poems, like her interest in Epictetus, point to a thoughtful and controlled enlightenment at mid-century.

* * *

In February, 1755, Carter received a letter from her close friend Catharine Talbot, which suggested she contribute some of her verse, "a few gems without any other name than by a lady," to the upcoming edition of Dodsley's evolving *Collection*, "for the honor of poetry, of the nation, of the sex."¹³⁷ Carter's response of March 5 begins with an unequivocal rejection of the idea: "I know not what to say to your proposal about Dodsley's Miscellanies, except saying honestly it does not please me at all."¹³⁸ Having ruled out Talbot's proposal, Carter's tone becomes more hypothetical. Here, she implies that she has another venue in mind for her verse:

If I ever writ any thing worth printing, I should rather chuse to publish it myself than have them published by any body else. If I ever do appear in a Miscellany, I should chuse it should be in a Miscellany of Ladies. One may venture to say this with regard to the lady writers of the present age, though it would not have been much to one's credit perhaps in the last.¹³⁹

This musing on the ideal print venue was written only three months prior to the publication in May of *PEL*, wherein appear Carter's two poems, borrowed from Dodsley's earlier unauthorized printing. While there is no evidence in Carter's early letter that her contemplation of a miscellany of ladies is not coincidental with the appearance of just such a text, the proximity of the two is remarkable.

¹³⁶E.g. Behn's "The Prospect and Bower of Bliss," *PEL*, I: 133

¹³⁷*Letters*, II: 200-201. The fourth volume of Dodsley's *Collection* was to be printed later the same year, along with a new edition of the first three.

¹³⁸Pennington adds a footnote here, that "several of [her poems], however, were published in [Dodsley's] collection." *Carter's Letters*, II: 203. Four of her poems appeared in the 1758 edition.

¹³⁹Talbot to Carter, February 7, 1755, *Letters*, II: 200-201; Carter to Talbot, March 5, 1755, II: 202-203.

In a later epistle, dated December 22, 1755, Carter voices anxiety about *PEL*, which had then been for sale for several months. On this later occasion, Talbot had written in some agitation to inform Carter about the anthology, and Carter's response is worth quoting at length:

You were very good in being vexed for me when you saw my name in that curious collection which makes up Baldwin's frontispiece. I have had the mortification of seeing it in some trumpery advertisement or other, so often within this last half year, that I have lost all patience, and throw away the newspaper quite in a tiff whenever I meet with it. What can one do with these miscellany mongers, magazine mongers, and roguery mongers of all kinds? What they have stolen, or to what they have chose to affix my name, I have always been too much out of humour to enquire. It is very possible these gentlemen have done me the honour of ascribing poetry to me which I never writ, as others in a more private manner have pamphlets and letters which I never saw.-- But after all, when one considers what are the real evils of life, and still more when one feels them, how very idle is it to suffer one's-self to be affected with a moment's uneasiness by such foolish trifles as these. It is surely wrong, and I will endeavour to be wiser for the future.¹⁴⁰

Carter did have much to occupy her thoughts at this time. She was putting the finishing touches on *Epictetus*, and in the same letter she states that she had hoped to send Talbot her Introduction, "but constant head-aches have made me go slowly in composing . . . at the present you must be contented with this parcel of translations."¹⁴¹ The two friends were involved in serious discussions about the dangers and the benefits of the stoicism advocated by the slave philosopher, and Carter's resignation echoes her belief that stoicism could instruct the Christian in discipline.¹⁴² She is clearly impatient with her own impatience over a mere collection of poems. The annoyance that Carter does express in regard to *PEL*, though, requires some unpacking. Rather than pausing to

¹⁴⁰Carter, *Letters*, II: 214-215.

¹⁴¹Carter, *Letters*, II: 212.

¹⁴²Moreover, "the real evils of life" that Carter mentions refer to a recent note in which Talbot lamented that "This year is a very alarming one." An earthquake had hit Portugal on November 1, 1755, and Carter returns to this in her letter: "how dreadful are the accounts from Lisbon. My spirits have been most deeply affected by them. . . ." *Letters*, II: 213.

consider her place in an English canon of women writers --something that her earlier letter proves she thought about-- she is "mortified" by this anthology.

Not only would Carter have read most of the poets whose work appears in *PEL*, but she had closer connections to several of them, as well. Thomas Birch, who had edited Catharine Cockburn's writings, was her friend.¹⁴³ As noted above, Carter was a close friend of Mary Masters, whose verse is also printed in the miscellany and who later subscribed to *Epictetus*.¹⁴⁴ In 1737 Carter had published a poem "On the Death of Mrs. Rowe," paying homage to the well-known poet.¹⁴⁵ In her later volume of verse, she would include a poem inspired by Katherine Philips's "Ode on friendship," "Like Bonnell Thornton, Carter also subscribed to Mary Jones's *Miscellanies*.

Though Carter notes in her letter to Talbot that only Richard Baldwin's name appears on the title page of the collection, there is a possibility that Carter knows the identity of "these gentlemen" who have affronted her, and although her choice to juxtapose the insult "miscellany mongers" with "magazine mongers" reflects her own history of stolen pamphlet, and verse publications, there may be a subconscious (or overt?) identification of Colman and Thornton in the term, "magazine mongers," as the writers of the *Connoisseur*. Perhaps more significant to Carter's information about the origins of *PEL* is her friendship with William Pulteney, the Earl of Bath. Pulteney was George Colman's uncle, and had been his guardian since 1733.¹⁴⁶ Pulteney later encouraged Carter to publish her second volume of poems, which she dedicated to him. He then settled an annuity on her at his death (as he did for Colman).

¹⁴³For a discussion of the problematic figure that Birch became in Carter's life, see Sylvia Harcstark Myers' *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 45-60.

¹⁴⁴The copy of Masters's 1733 *Poems* now at the British Library was owned by Carter's biographer; it is inscribed in Latin: "From the library of Montagu Pennington, gift from Elizabeth Carter."

¹⁴⁵A revised version of the memorial verse for Elizabeth Rowe was printed in Carter's own 1738 *Poems*, in Rowe's *Miscellaneous Works* (1739) and *GM* in March 1739 (152). Colman and Thornton should have been familiar with it, having seen a later edition of Rowe's *Works*, but they do not include it.

¹⁴⁶The Earl of Bath may not have been apprised of *PEL*, however. Not until his death did Colman give up the law, and it is probable that his uncle's disapproval of his literary activities contributed to the editors of *PEL* remaining anonymous.

Regardless of her knowledge after the fact, the exchange between Carter and Talbot is the only evidence we have from any of the poets in the anthology that speaks to the collection, and this is an unhappy exchange. On another occasion Talbot had teased Carter that “you and I don’t always agree what is good company and what not. Some of your tuneful choir had warbled in Magazines among many unclean birds, when you was scandalized at finding your Owl [the “Ode to Wisdom”] in Clarissa’s harpsichord.”¹⁴⁷ It seems likely that, here, Carter was upset by the company her poems were made to keep, I have noted that the title page to *PEL* contained the names of all eighteen poets in the miscellany, as did the newspaper advertisements for the collection that Carter tells Talbot she has seen.¹⁴⁸ She therefore knew who her fellow “eminent ladies” were, and it is probable that she would have disapproved of several of them: Margaret Cavendish, for example, with her reputation as a historical oddity, might have been questionable. Mary Wortley Montagu, although an aristocrat, did not have a spotless reputation. Nor would Laetitia Pilkington be welcome. Of Pilkington’s *Memoirs*, Carter’s friend Elizabeth Montagu, would write: “Wit in Women is apt to have. . . bad consequences; like a sword without a scabbard it wounds the wearer and provokes assailants.”¹⁴⁹

Miscellanies make strange bedfellows, and the worst would have been Aphra Behn. Due to the alphabetical order of the miscellany (again, repeated in the list that she saw in advertisements) Carter’s section follows that of Behn. Carter would have taken offense at being juxtaposed with this lady of the “last age,” alongside whom she might have felt that appearing in print was “not much to one’s credit.” As Lonsdale notes, Carter “refused to countenance the authors of works injurious to religion or virtue. Although she had an ‘extreme partiality for writers of her own sex’, believing that the mental powers of women were underrated. . . she detested Mary Wollstonecraft’s ‘wild

¹⁴⁷*Letters*, II: 200. Among George Ballard’s letters is one in which he notes having sent a copy of the *Memoirs of Learned Ladies* to “Mrs. Talbot.” Bodleian Ballard 43. ff. 237

¹⁴⁸As noted in Chapter One, *The Daily Advertiser* and *The Public Advertiser*, among others, included their names.

¹⁴⁹Elizabeth Montagu, qtd. in “Bibliographical Note,” by Iris Barry, ed. *The Memoirs of Mrs. Laetitia Pilkington. Written by Herself* (London: Routledge, 1928) 471-72.

theory' about the rights of women" for example.¹⁵⁰ In any case, the annoyance she expressed in December, 1755, was genuine. As her letter states, Carter did not anticipate *PEL*, but the anthology was clearly not the sort of thing she had envisioned in her previous musings to her friend. Her conception of an acceptable "Miscellany of Ladies" had been undermined by another notion of canonicity¹⁵¹ based not upon what, in Carter's opinion, should constitute such a canon, but on what had already come to do so.

Although the 1762 *Poems* was her last publication, verses by Carter continued to appear in print miscellanies as the century drew to a close: *The Poetical Calendar* (1763), *The Collection of the most esteemed Pieces of Poetry* (1767), *The Lady's Poetical Magazine* (1781-82), to name a few. She is the only writer in the 1755 *PEL* whose number of poems increases in the much amended edition of *PEL* in 1785.¹⁵¹ She was also the only person concerned with *PEL*, including its editors, who lived to witness the new century. In 1755 she saw herself, rightly, as having a future in print, and she was cautious about that future. Catharine Talbot had earlier quoted Pope to her friend on the subject of publishing individual poems: "If you don't marry your daughter, somebody will run away with her."¹⁵² Carter simply wanted the right to do neither of these things, if she chose. She may not have been pleased with her inclusion alongside the disreputable and the quaintly archaic in 1755, but with the works of *Epictetus* in 1758 Elizabeth Carter stepped further outside of conventional social strata, gaining a kind of control of her life

¹⁵⁰Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 166.

¹⁵¹See Appendix D for additional poems by Carter printed in the 1785 *PEL*, and information about the *Ladies Poetical Magazine*. Eight poems from her 1762 *Poems* volume were reprinted in G. Pearch's *Collection of Poems in Two Volumes by Several Hands* (1768, 1770, 1775, 1783) intended to supplement Dodsley.

¹⁵²Carter, *Letters*, II: 200.

and independence as a writer that was seldom attained, and making herself, like Aphra Behn, one of the few women who could earn her living with her pen.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Later History

I. The Eighteenth Century

One testimony to the impression of success that *PEL* likely projected in its own time is a printed miscellany that I have come across in the holdings of the British Library, titled *A Select COLLECTION of the Original Love Letters of Several Eminent Persons*, and printed in London late 1755. The last part of a long and detailed title reads thus: “Printed from Genuine Manuscripts, To Which are Subjoin’ed. POEMS BY EMINENT LADIES; Particularly. . .” and then lists, in the same order and in the same house style, the names of the eighteen women in the Colman and Thornton anthology. Following this list is Cowley’s familiar epigraph on beauty and wit from his ode to Katherine Philips. Instead of Baldwin’s name, here, the words “Printed for the proprietors” discourage inquiry. A total of fifty-six poems, all taken from *PEL*, make up the section of verse in the *Love Letters*.¹ The introduction, signed “G. Gaylove” is very much an appeal to the ladies, whom “Gaylove” assures in the Preface “a “bill of fare” analogy” that the book “consists of various Dishes, adapted to the Taste of every Female living.” In effect, the privileging of manuscript material and the historical anthology are united in *Love Letters*. Whoever the compiler was, he had no qualms about cashing in on a reduced version of *PEL* by pirating from it, and assimilating it into the popular sub-literary genre of collected amorous epistles (nor about learning how to write a preface from *Tom Jones*). “Gaylove” generally chose light, shorter poems from *PEL*. For example, Chudleigh’s “To the Ladies” is here, but not “The Ladies Defence.” There are seven poems here by Montagu, thirteen by Behn, and thirteen by Leapor. The longest piece is Pilkington’s “The Statues” (oddly enough, Cowper’s “Abelard to Eloisa” is not in the *Love Letters*). These

¹See Appendix C. These are not sheets left over from the printing of *PEL*, but a new publication. The poems borrowed from *PEL* begin on page 70, following the section of ‘Love Letters’, and the poets are not organized in the same strict alphabetical order as in *PEL*, though clearly they were working from a text that was organized alphabetically, and then made more haphazard in later additions. Despite the title-page, in the body of the text no names are provided, and no poem is directly attributed to any poet.

borrowings, and the very different nature of this second, 1755 collection, throw into sharp relief the more legitimate claim made by Colman and Thornton that *PEL* is literature rather than hack work.²

More respectful is the Dublin edition of *PEL*, brought out by bookseller Sarah Cotter in 1757.³ It is definitely a different printing, though no additions or subtractions have been made to the anthology (including, as I noted above, the lacuna where Mary Wortley Montagu's introduction should be). This edition adds to its title the information that there is "prefixed a short account of each writer," which was not mentioned on the 1755 title-page, and for the first time these "prefixes" are themselves listed in the table of contents. Only five extant copies of the Dublin edition are recorded in the *ESTC*.

Also from 1757, we find more tangential influence in J. Hinton's *Beauties of Poetry Display'd*, which collected partial and complete poems arranged alphabetically by subject. *Beauties* might not have contained lines from Behn's "Voyage to the Isle of Love," under the headings jealousy, inquietude, absence, den of cruelty, and city of love, as well as Leapor's "Autumn," and passages from Rowe, Jones, Leapor, Masters, and others, were it not for *PEL*.⁴ Colman's and Thornton's collection also influenced biographical projects; in 1766 *Biographium Faeminium*, while offering little new information, contributed to continued interest in women writers by resuscitating biographies from Cibber's *Lives*, Ballard's *Memoirs*, and *PEL*. All of Colman's and Thornton's authors were included in *Biographium*.⁵

Despite the tribute paid by the 1755 *Love Letters* miscellany (or perhaps, because the pirated book had an impact on the sales of *PEL*) Colman's and Thornton's anthology was not a best-seller. Eighteen years after its initial publication, remaining copies of *PEL*

²Only two copies of *Love Letters* are extant according to *ESTC*. The second (unverified) is at Illinois. This paucity suggests a small print run.

³*Poems by Eminent Ladies. Particularly Mrs Barber, Mrs Behn, Miss Carter. ... To which is prefixed a short account of each writer.* 2 vols. (Dublin: printed by D. Chamberlaine, for Sarah Cotter, 1757).

⁴*The Beauties of the Poets Display'd*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1757). Two poems by Rowe that are not in *PEL* are also printed here.

had to be sold, and were reissued in 1773 as a “new edition” with a cancel title-page.⁶ The stiff competition of countless “Journals, Medleys, Merc’ries, Magazines” which Pope derided in the *Dunciad* must have proven too much for the market to bear (that said, only ten copies of the 1773 reissue are recorded by the *ESTC* as extant, versus thirty-four of the 1755 *PEL*, which may indicate that the first did sell better). I have noted that it was on the 1773 cancel title-page that “G. Colman and B. Thornton” were first officially linked to *PEL*. Thornton had died in 1768, having made his name in journalistic circles, and Colman was then manager of Covent Garden theatre, and a well-known playwright. The appearance of the *Biographium Faemenium* may have prompted the notice on the title-page of the 1773 reissue that the poems were prefaced by “an Account of the writers.” More importantly, the fact that Thomas Evans is the bookseller listed both on the 1773 reissue of *PEL* and a new edition of Ballard’s *Memoirs* that appeared in 1775 testifies to a continued relationship between the two texts in the marketplace.

The 1773 reissue of *PEL* may have also helped prompt Mary Scott in 1774 to write “*The Female Advocate; A Poem. Occasioned by Reading Mr. Duncombe’s Feminead.*”⁷ Scott, who expanded the catalogue of women honoured by Duncombe by looking further into the past, and by mentioning those who had written since Duncombe had penned his panegyric list,⁸ also recorded a number of names that had not been alluded to in the *Feminead*, but who had appeared in *PEL*: Mary Masters, Mary Monck, Margaret Cavendish, Mary Chudleigh, Mary Barber and Constantia Grierson.

⁵The fact that *The Poetical Works of the Right Honourable Lady M—y W—y M—e* appeared in 1768 may be in part thanks to the continued interest generated by such books as the *Biographium*. (Montagu had died in 1763).

⁶*Poems by the most Eminent Ladies of Great Britain and Ireland. . . Selected, with an account of the writers, by G. Colman and B. Thornton, Esqrs. A New Edition* (London: pr. for T. Becket and Co. and T. Evans, 1773). Ezell states that the text was “enlarged and retitled, “ in 1773, but it was only retitled. *WWLH*, 112.

⁷Another possibility is that the booksellers knew of Scott’s impending publication, and hurriedly reissued *PEL* (not a difficult thing to do) in order to take advantage of the interest it would generate. Moira Ferguson calls Scott’s poem “the first distinctively feminist response by a woman in the late eighteenth century to the mid-century burgeoning of sympathetic male interest in women authors.” Ferguson, “‘The Cause of my Sex’: Mary Scott and the Female Literary Tradition,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 50:4 (1987) 359-377: 359.

⁸Poets such as Anna Laetitia Aiken Barbauld, who would appear in the 1785 *PEL*. See Appendix D.

A genuine, much altered edition of *PEL* appeared in the mid-1780s (likely in 1785) compiled by other anonymous editors. Now titled *Poems by the most Eminent Ladies of Great-Britain and Ireland*, the new edition was puffed as “Re-published from the Collection of G. Colman and B. Thornton, Esqrs., with considerable alterations, additions, and improvements.”⁹ Fewer pages make up each volume, although the number of poets is increased to thirty-four, including more contemporary women. While the 1785 edition retained the practice of listing each poet’s name alphabetically along with her work, there are no biographical introductions, and we actually know less about some of the later poets added to the new edition than we do the writers in the 1755 edition. Virginia Woolf believed that “women’s books continue each other.” It may be that all books do this: the 1785 edition of *PEL* borrowed heavily from a four-volume collection compiled by James Harrison and titled *The Lady’s Poetical Magazine, or Beauties of British Poetry (LPM)*. Harrison had, in turn, borrowed older materials from the first edition of *PEL* to include in *LPM*.¹⁰

The editors of the 1785 *PEL* expanded the section by the now more eminent Carter while reducing those of every other poet except Jones and Pilkington, which are preserved intact. Mary Barber, from whose *opus* Colman and Thornton reprinted twenty-eight poems, has only six in the later version. No poet from the 1755 *PEL* is eliminated. There are new light pieces, such as Miss Pennington’s oft-printed “The Copper Farthing,” and Charlotte Lennox’s “The Art of Coquetry,” but there is overall considerably less satire – more odes and verses “to a friend in affliction,” and prayers, such as Frances

⁹*Poems by the Most Eminent Ladies of Great Britain and Ireland Re-published from the Collection of G. Colman and B. Thornton, Esqrs. With Considerable Alterations, Additions, and Improvements.* (London: pr. and sold by W. Stafford, [1785?]) This is the *ESTC* date estimate, whereas the *CBEL* and *NCBEL* estimate 1780, which is impossible given the 1781-82 date of the primary source of new material, *Ladies Poetical Magazine* (see following note).

¹⁰*Lady’s Poetical Magazine, or Beauties of British Poetry*, ed. James Harrison, 4 vols. (London: pr. for Harrison and Co., 1781-82). Harrison’s Postscript to the fourth volume testifies to how very unusual was Colman’s and Thornton’s own decision to include biographical introductions to their authors. “The Editor of this Collection,” Harrison owns proudly of *LPM*, “has as much as possible gratified the curiosity... by affixing to each production the NAME of it’s[sic] respective Author,” IV: 306.). Thirty-five poets are named, here, but Mary Whateley Darwall is listed under both her maiden and married names. See Appendix D for names, dates, and sources for the poems.

Greville's oft-printed "Prayer for Indifference." There are, among others, pastorals by Frances Moore Brooke, an "Invocation to the Nightingale" by Mary Hays, and "Effusions of Melancholy," by "Miss Roberts."¹¹ It is worth noting, however, that the pieces excised from the sections by Masters and Leapor are their more serious, religious poems—a curious decision for the age of sensibility. Both of Masters's psalms are omitted, as are Leapor's "The Crucifixion and Resurrection" and "On Mr. Pope's Universal Prayer," among others. Both Killigrew's "St. John Baptist" and "Herodia's Daughter" are, unfortunately, omitted, as are Pilkington's lines "Written on her death-bed." Of Rowe, only "Despair," and her lines on the death of her husband are retained.¹² Clearly, these decisions reflect a real editorial concern about religious enthusiasm.

II. The Nineteenth Century and After

In spite of editorial qualifications about the poets and the contents of *PEL*, Colman and Thornton were much less anxious in their attitude toward women writers than were many of the editors who followed them, such as literary historian Anne Katherine Elwood, who wrote *Memoirs of The Literary Ladies of England, From the Commencement of the Last Century* (1843).¹³ In her Preface, Elwood "begs. . . to deprecate the severity of criticism, by stating that [the *Memoirs*] are intended only for such of her own sex, who, not feeling themselves equal to profound and abstract subjects, can derive amusement and information from what is professedly too light for the learned,

¹¹See Appendix D.

¹²"Viewing the two different versions together, one senses a shift away from the eclectic collection in the first edition to a greater uniformity in subject and style." Ezell, *WWLH*, 117. Ezell (who also dates this later edition as appearing in 1780) argues that this volume evinces "a slight narrowing of focus." She uses the example of Mary Barber to illustrate that the new edition concentrates on Barber's verse letters, her most informal and domestic pieces, and ones that focus on her relationships with men," while excising most of her commentary on Ireland. *WWLH*, 112-115.

¹³*Memoirs of the Literary Ladies of England*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1843). Of the women in *PEL*, or, indeed, from the eighteenth century, only Montagu and Carter are represented in Elwood's collection.

and too simple for the studious.”¹⁴ Nineteenth-century reviewers could be very severe, and Elwood is not the only compiler to have issued such a disclaimer. Nevertheless, Elwood manages to deprecate not only her subject in this Preface, but also her readers and herself. Colman and Thornton, while providing heuristic guidelines as to how their eminent ladies should be read, do give their readers, and their poets, more credit.

Space does not permit discussion of the numerous anthologies and biographical collections devoted to women writers that followed *PEL*, many of which Margaret Ezell considers in *Writing Women's Literary History*. On an individual level, we know that Wordsworth owned a copy of the 1755 edition of the anthology, and culled verses by Finch, Killigrew, and Pilkington from it for his own small anthology as a Christmas gift for Lady Mary Lowther in 1819 (this was not published until 1905).¹⁵ Moreover, when Wordsworth came across Alexander Dyce's *Specimens of British Poetesses* (1825, 1827), he told Dyce that he had “long wished for opportunity and industry” to execute such a project himself. Dyce had stated in his Preface that “the present volume was planned, and partly executed, before we were aware of the existence of perhaps the only similar publication in the language, — viz. *Poems by Eminent Ladies*.”¹⁶ Wordsworth sought to advise Dyce in case another edition should be called for, using the Colman and Thornton anthology as a reference:

British Poetesses make but a poor figure in the ‘Poems by eminent Ladies’. But observing how injudicious that Selection is in the case of Lady Winchelsea, and in Mrs. Aphra Behn, from whose attempts they are miserably copious, I have thought something better might have been chosen by more competent Persons, who have access to the Volumes of the several writers. In selecting from Mrs. Pilkington, I regret that you omitted (Look at page 255) ‘Sorrow’, or at least that you did not abridge it. . . . See also ‘Expostulation’, 258; it reminds me strongly of one of the Penitential Hymns of Burns.¹⁷ The few lines upon St. John the Baptist, by Mrs.

¹⁴Elwood, Preface, *Memoirs*, I: [v]-vi.

¹⁵ *Poems and Extracts from the works of Anne, Countess of Winchelsea and Others. Compiled by William Wordsworth for an album presented to Lady Mary Lowther, Christmas, 1819*, ed. Harold Littledale. (London: H. Frowde, 1905).

¹⁶*Specimens of British Poetesses* (London: T. Rodd, 1825; 1827) Preface, iii-vi: v.

Killigrew (Vol. 2. page 6), are pleasing. . . .Has the Duchess of Newcastle written much verse? her Life of her Lord, and the extracts in your Book, and the 'Eminent Ladies', are all that I have seen of hers. The Mirth and Melancholy has so many fine strokes of Imagination that I cannot but think there must be merit in many parts of her writings. . . .¹⁸ Could you tell me anything of Lady Mary Wortley Mont: more than is to be learned from Pope's Letters and her own? She seems to have been destined for something much higher and better than she became. A parallel between her genius and character and that of Lady Winchelsea her Contemporary (though somewhat prior to her) would be well worth drawing.¹⁹

Evidently, the antiquarian aspect of reading women's poetry had become much more respectable since 1755. Rather than the new manuscript material sought by anthologizers of the previous century, Dyce's effort to distinguish his collection from *PEL* hinges upon the old. He argues that *PEL* is inferior because it "contains, however, no extracts from rare books, in which our Selection is so rich, and exhibits specimens of only eighteen Poetesses."²⁰ Of these eighteen, Finch is Wordsworth's favourite, and he goes on at some length in his enthusiasm for the countess (whose 1713 *Poems* he owned). He thinks little of "The Spleen," but "The fable of Love, Death, and Reputation. . . is ingeniously told." In the remainder of the letter, Wordsworth advises Dyce not only on pieces that should be omitted, but also on couplets and larger sections to excise from the poems he has printed.²¹ No more editions were to appear from Dyce, though Wordsworth's correspondence is a testimony to the power of *PEL* to generate thought about female poets and their editors.

¹⁷Some of Burn's early poems were composed in the metres of the Scottish metrical psalms.

¹⁸Wordsworth must not have come across one of the twenty-five copies of *Select Poems of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, ed. Sir Egerton Brydges. (Kent: Printing press of Lee Priory, by John & Warrick, 1813) 20 p.

¹⁹Wordsworth to Dyce, c. 19 Apr. 1830, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 8 vols. Arrg. and ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967-93) V: 234-239.

²⁰Dyce, Preface, *Specimens*, v. Dyce obviously knew nothing about the 1785 edition of *PEL*, which "exhibited specimens" from almost twice as many writers.

²¹The letter demonstrates Wordsworth's longing to edit the countess. He refers to the 1713 *Poems*, which Dyce, too, must have owned: "'Deep line so honour', etc. to 'maturer age'. 151, if shortened, would be striking. . . omit 'when scattered glow-worms,' and the next couplet. . ." *Letters of Wordsworth*, 238-9. Greer strongly disapproves of "the cosmetic surgery to which Wordsworth subjected Winchilsea's work and which he would have had duplicated by Dyce," because these corrections (unlike those requested by Barber of Swift) "were not made in the taste or the spirit of the time" *Slip-shod*, 254.

Nonetheless, once Colman and Thornton were themselves engaged in other pursuits, they seem to have recorded no further interest in women writers. Shortly after the appearance of *PEL* Colman wrote to Duncombe, gently refusing to print a poem by one of Duncombe's female friends in the *Connoisseur*: "I wish I could introduce your sonnet, but I feel it cannot be done with a good grace, as I have already treated of Ladies Poems; besides, I am willing to have as little poetry as possible in my papers."²² No mention is made of *PEL* in either of the generous *DNB* articles on the two editors, which may reflect late nineteenth-century priorities,²³ although some of the poets in *PEL* fared quite well in the early decades of the twentieth century: Myra Reynolds' 1903 edition of Anne Finch's poems was followed in 1905 by her inclusion in *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*. The same year saw the publication of Wordsworth's album for Lady Lowther, and an edition of *Selected Poems by Katherine Philips*.²⁴ In 1905-6 J. R. Tutin produced "The Orinda Booklets," one of which was devoted to Philips, and another, *Early English Poetesses*, reproduced verses by Cavendish, Philips, Behn, and Finch.²⁵ Behn's *Plays, Histories, and Novels* were edited in 1871, and again by Montague Summers in 1915 (rpt. 1967).

Any consideration of the boundaries of the anthology's influence should take into account the inscription in the copy of the 1785 edition of *PEL* now in the Library of Congress.²⁶ The bookplate in this copy is that of Carrie Chapman Catt (1859-1947) leader and chronicler of the women's suffrage movement. The book was gifted to the Library in November 1938 by the National American Woman Suffrage Association.²⁷

²²Qtd. in Peake, *Memoirs of the Colman Family*, 49. This friend may have been Susanna Highmore, Duncombe's future wife.

²³Colman's *DNB* biography is by Joseph King, and Thornton's by Thomas Seccombe.

²⁴George Saintsbury, ed. *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1905. In 1928 a selection of Finch's work was edited by John Middleton Murry.

²⁵The first, in 1904, was Philips alone. Alternately called the Hull booklets, there were seven in the series, not all devoted to women.

²⁶At present, vol. ii only.

Catt left no record of her thoughts on *PEL*, but she must have valued being able to hold in her hand the words of other pioneers. Her own book about suffrage testifies to the weight of continuity. It is “dedicated on behalf of the women who have gone before to the women who come after.”²⁸

²⁷In spring, 1938, Catt (then 79) called a meeting of the executive at her home to decide on the books and materials that were to go to the congressional library. Mary Gray Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Biography* (NY: H. Wilson, 1944) My guess is that *PEL* was among these.

²⁸Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman suffrage and politics; the inner story of the suffrage movement [1723]* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1970).

CONCLUSION

Their conversation need I tell?
 Or who spoke most, or which spoke well?
 Or how it ran of various things,
 Of queens and grottos, wars and kings,
 Of fortune-tellers, or the fashion,
 Of marriage, or predestination---?
 In short, they settled all the nation.

Mary Jones¹

In 1990, Robert McDowell began an article on the role of the modern verse anthology with the arresting question: "What good does it do?"² Yet the difficulty of answering this leads always back to the broader query: *What* does it do? Matthew Concanen, editor of *The Flower-piece*, offered one answer in 1731:

The world is so well convinced of the usefulness of such collections as this, that it is hoped the present will need no other apology, than to say, it was compiled with care, and digested with taste. . . . it is sufficient to urge the kind reception which sundry things have met with; besides it is obvious to consideration that these are repositories of several curious pieces which might have been lost to the world, either through the authors' negligence, or their own minuteness, which, when treasured up in this manner, descend to posterity, and give pleasure to other ages than those they were written in.³

Concanen's elegant explanation recognizes the compiler's task as a favour on behalf of the reader, but it is not that simple. In part, it is the act of treasuring up the poems that renders them treasures. It also preserves their makers, and brings a small measure of immortality to their compilers. In an appraisal of the greatest critic of the eighteenth century, Harold Bloom contends that "The heart's hunger for survival, displaced into a rainbow of forms, is exposed by Johnson as the de-idealized drive for literary

¹"Holt Waters. A Tale," *PEL*, I: 296-310, ll.9-15.

²McDowell, "The Poetry Anthology," *Hudson Review*, v. 42 (Winter, 1990) 594-608: 594.

³"Publisher to the Reader," *The Flower-piece*, [I].

canonization.”⁴ Less than a year before *PEL* appeared, Mr. Town himself wrote in apprehension at seeing his wit immortalized on only “a sheet and a half” of paper, fearful of “the shame of seeing many of them prostituted to the vilest purposes. . . . The repeated abuses of illiterate bakers, pastry-cooks, and chandlers, I know I am condemned to suffer in common with other mortal writers.” The connoisseur takes comfort in the issues of the periodical he finds in coffee houses, “strung upon a file, and swelling gradually into a little volume!”⁵ In *PEL*, Colman and Thornton create a more substantial volume than the ephemeral issues of the *Connoisseur*, but there is an anxiety of editorship that comes through in the anthology, as well. As in all their projects they desired fame, not in the professions that had been imposed upon them, but in letters. In the 1760s volumes of the *Connoisseur* underwent several printings, and seventeen years after the appearance of *PEL* a two-volume collection of essays was published in which selections from the *Connoisseur* were printed along with those from other journals. Titled *The Beauties of the magazines, and other periodical works, selected for series of years*, the contents were puffed as being “By the most eminent hands; viz. Colman, Goldsmith, Murphy, Smollett, Thornton. . . &c.”⁶ Theirs, too, had become eminent hands.

* * *

Germaine Greer praises Colman’s and Thornton’s “remarkably pure text,” and points out that they “made few errors in the slender biographical details which they supply” in *PEL*. However, she is critical about their selections, which “do not at all represent what was most characteristic or most successful in the women’s work.” She argues that an editorial “predilection for lightness and easiness easily leads them into

⁴Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (NY, San Diego and London: Harcourt Brace, 1994) 200.

⁵*Connoisseur* #29, Thursday, August 15, 1754, I: 169-74. Coffee-house owners subscribed to an assortment of newspapers for the use of their customers. See Tierney, “Book Advertisements,” 111.

⁶*Beauties of the Magazines*, 2 vols. (London: pr. for Richardson and Urquhart, 1772). Note that this collection appeared a year before the spurious 1773 “new edition” of *PEL*.

preferring girlishness and insipidity over difficulty or intensity.”⁷ Greer has in mind particularly the selections from Finch, which she criticizes by hypothesizing that Finch “might well have wished that they had chosen to include more ambitious work.”⁸ While Colman and Thornton do privilege sweetness and light (much of the verse is very funny, and Pilkington for one is certainly kinder and gentler here than in other poems in her *Memoirs*), the editors also cast a wider net than Greer is willing to admit. Although the selections in *PEL* are not always the most characteristic or the most successful choices from a poet’s *opus*, they are often both.

In the Preface to *PEL*, its editors make a point of addressing the variety of poetic topics that appear in the anthology: “It will not be thought partiality to say that the reader will here meet with many pieces on a great variety of subjects excellent in their way.”⁹ The perusal of *PEL* may not be quite as diverse an experience as Laetitia Pilkington’s account of her life “seeing the World from the Palace to the Prison,”¹⁰ yet the anthology does offer adventurous reading: wealth and privilege as well as lean purses, piety in one section, and sexual innuendo in another, satire, domesticity, romance, righteous indignation, and some mild urinary humour. The chronological spectrum alone affords cultural diversity, added to which the wide social range reveals varied responses to recurring themes such as marriage, spirituality, health, the anxiety of (or for) poetic influence, and all that is encompassed in the fable by Anne Finch, in which:

Reputation, Love and Death,
 (The last all bones, the first all breath,
 The midst compos’d of restless fire)...
 From each other would retire...¹¹

⁷Greer, *Slip-shod*, 253. Greer’s statement that the biographical details in *PEL* are “slender” does not address the remarkable fact that they are there at all.

⁸*Slip-shod*, 253.

⁹*PEL*, I: iii-iv.

¹⁰Pilkington, *Memoirs*, II: 252.

¹¹*PEL*, II: 307, ll. 1-3.

They cannot retire from each other, however, and their convergence is especially relevant in *PEL*, a historical anthology which, I have argued, is also a vehicle by which old poems function in new ways. Anita M. Hemphill holds that “Often an anthologist’s proclaimed or implied intentions are undermined by his text,” because “whether an anthology is organized chronologically or thematically, its recurrent themes and imagery show that it has an organic structure; poems that share the same themes subtly shade each other, enhance each others’ meaning, and create a new, inclusive poem. A single poem, thus, varies the continuing themes in a larger composition.”¹²

Although I would not go so far as to call the anthology itself “a new, inclusive poem,” it is apparent that *PEL* is larger than the sum of its parts “either its poems, or its individual authors. I have demonstrated that more referential occasional poetry, in which the identities of those addressed in the poems are unknown and no longer relevant, are scanted in *PEL*, because the anthology is not only exclusive in being gendered, but inclusive in its accessibility. There are elegiac and contemplative pieces; however there is more emphasis on socially constructive themes, which are foregrounded in personal experience. Mary Barber’s poem, “An Unanswerable Apology for the Rich,” for example, is a satire on greed and a lack of compassion, and her “Widow Gordon’s Petition,” the poem that brought her to the attention of Swift, is a charitable entreaty on behalf of a poverty-stricken mother who must be “snatch’d . . . from destruction, and the grave.”¹³ The personal and the public are brought together in *PEL*, in demonstrations not only of faith, and of hope, but of love (and the greatest of these is love).

The interpolation of Jones’s letter about poetic subjects early in *PEL* argues that this is no miscellany of love poems, no *Cupid’s Arrows*, no *Amorous Miscellany*. Instead, the collection begins with a tribute to maternal love. The first poet, Mary Barber, writes for her children, reads Gay’s fables to them, and seeks to improve herself in order to advise them (and to voice her own fervour about Ireland and Dean Swift).¹⁴

¹²Anita M. Hemphill, “Victorian and Edwardian Poetry Anthologies, 1861-1914,” diss. (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1984).

¹³*PEL*, I: “An Unanswerable Apology for the Rich,” i2-14; “The Widow Gordon’s Petition” 14-16, /50.

Regardless of Jones's rejection of romantic love in favour of Barber's good sense, however, it is romance which dominates the first volume by dominating the largest section, that of Aphra Behn, whose long allegories, *The Isle of Love* and "The Golden Age," are reminders of Madeleine de Scudery. Her shorter pieces on passion and loss are entertaining, but they are also potentially unsettling. The poet is intensely vulnerable on these pages, writing of emotions (as in "On Loving Two Equally" and "Ode to Desire") that no woman in 1755 would have published. The same sort of languishing after love occurs in Cockburn's songs, which at times focus on a woman withholding sex (as in "The Platonic") but also speak to "love without reserve."¹⁵

While it is a pervasive theme throughout the two volumes, love is not always a positive force, particularly in the later satiric verses. Montagu's eclogues, which tend to pick up on the potential for titillation that Behn's verse brings to the anthology, also indicate that most men are not to be trusted. She describes a situation both corrupt and pathetic in "Wednesday," where Dancinda is on the brink of adultery. The world-weary chastisement of Mary Monck's "On a Romantic Lady" is a reminder of Scudery in *PEL* which also calls to mind Charlotte Lennox's recently published *The Female Quixote* (1752). Monck's warning against such captivating reading emphasizes the distance between golden ages in literature and present reality. It also seems to highlight Jones's letter, and is here an interesting negation of Behn's rapture. Elsewhere, conventional scepticism is heard from a number of voices, as in Philips's "Against Love," where she argues that "Him, whose heart is all his own, / Peace and liberty does crown, / He apprehends no killing frown."¹⁶ The fabular brings with it a moment of synthesis from Finch, who explains the decree "That Love by Folly should be led" because love is blind.¹⁷

¹⁴She also tries to comfort Constantia Grierson on the loss of a child. As a motif, however, childhood seldom recurs in the anthology. Mary Monck casts a quick look at illegitimate childbirth, and Grierson's addresses to Constantine Barber trope the boy (as his mother had done) as a passive vehicle for conveying messages that have little to do with him.

¹⁵*PEL*, I: 233. l.16.

¹⁶*PEL*, II: 230, ll.11-13.

¹⁷*PEL*, II: 313, l.36,

In the “Town Eclogues” and elsewhere love has very little to do with marriage, yet marriage is an important issue throughout the anthology. Not surprisingly, the institution is viewed with scepticism in a number of the poems: Behn mistrusts the fetters of conventional honour. Jones refuses to take “a household lord, for better or for worse.” Chudleigh protests that “Wife and servant are the same,” (and Chudleigh’s Parson calls the institution a “nuptial chain”). Leapor offers “The Mistaken Lover,” “The Way of the World,” and “Strephon to Celia. A Modern Love-Letter” – each of which suggests that marriage, at least among the gentry, is an economical rather than companionable union. Pilkington’s honeymoon poem, “The Petition of the Birds” alludes subtly to a frightening side of sexuality, and her fantasy of female empowerment, “The Statues: or, The Trial of Constancy,” underscore the questioning of lasting spousal affection evinced throughout *PEL*. Both Monck and Finch subscribe to the comic version of a tragic myth about a marriage, assuming that Orpheus (who died savagely at the hands of women) “thought all was well... when he had left his wife in hell.”¹⁸

Matrimony is not universally decried in *PEL*. Jones’s ode on the marriage of Lady Beauclerk is joyous, and Finch invokes the muses on behalf of her husband. She identifies her spouse as both her reason for writing and her protection from censure, and urges him to remember that the bonds of matrimony “should mysterious be.”¹⁹ Philips’s touching piece, “To my Antenor, March 16, 1660-1,” in which a momentous historical event (the Restoration) impacts on fragile personal history, bears witness to love in the midst of factious upheaval, while at the same time alluding to despair and suicide. Monck’s deathbed lines to her husband, in which she promises to die as she has lived, his “faithful wife,” are also serious about the business of love. Elizabeth Rowe’s lines “On the death of Mr. Thomas Rowe” portray marriage as a holy and a happy union, even as the poem participates in the “graveyard” school of poetry. Overall, *PEL* throws into sharp relief the quantity of verses to husbands that were written by female poets (the

¹⁸Finch’s “Answer to the Foregoing Verses” l.19; 13, 15.

¹⁹“To Mr. Finch,” *PEL* II: 300-304, l. 105.

married men we encounter in miscellanies of the period do not have nearly the same proportion of poems to their wives; I have found none in Dodsley's *Collection*).

Despite the light tone of much of the verse in *PEL*, many of the occasional pieces about love hinge upon death, a theme which is given greater poignancy by the historical nature of the anthology. In addressing death and dying, *PEL* offers a few hymns and religious dialogues by Elizabeth Rowe, and more socially-oriented assurances by Barber that instruct us to live virtuous lives, for only the soul is immortal. Honourable death is lauded in such pieces as Jones's "In Memory of the Right Hon. Lord Aubrey Beauclerk. . . slain at Carthage," but the possibility of death being honourable seems doubtful in Behn's "Scot's Song," where a shepherd seeks out "fearful wounds" in battle. More self-referential is Killigrew's "Epitaph on Herself," where the poet leaves her verse as monument—a serious couplet that does not explore the implications of the poet's need to furnish her own cenotaph. Leapor's humorous yet dignified piece, "Mira's Will," seems in *PEL* to be a longer answer to Killigrew's earnest poem.

Elsewhere in the anthology death is more stylized. The reader is at a considerable distance from Killigrew's sanguine description of a portrait of the head of John the Baptist, and Leapor (from whom comes "The Crucifixion and Resurrection") offers another pseudo-hagiographic moment in her fable about Pope's death. Most memorable is Cavendish's grotesque index (though a better word might be menu) of the several ways in which "Nature's Cook," slays and consumes human bodies. "Nature's Cook" is notable as the only poem on death that does not offer a warning moral or spiritual comfort. Even more distant is the death in fables, from Barber's reflection on immortality, and the oak tree graced "alive or dead" by the ivy that kills it, to Finch's more vivid piece on the species who live and die in another stately oak.

One of the most striking poems in the collection is Finch's ode, "The Spleen"—certainly not girlish or insipid—where the poet's own suffering is linked to the decline and fall of a physician who could not heal himself. A more frightening and less "protean" illness is the small pox, though in poems written upon it by Jones, Montagu and Rowe, it is clearly an illness that also brings profound changes to its victims. Most of the notice taken of this disease in *PEL* focuses on its survivors, and Montagu's "Saturday. After the

Small-Pox,” resonates with issues in her personal history that were both public and political by mid-century.

Several poems in *PEL* express a longing to separate the private and the public. Philips “A Country Life” is a good example of the poem that advocates such a retirement. More than urban growth, however, a number of personal hardships incited this longing for release from the madding crowd, and these sorts of anxieties are manifest in *PEL* – an absurd and shallow society, unfair criticism, unfulfilled love. For Finch, the answer to the quandary of “bones” and “breath” to which we are reduced is the absence of an answer: no attempt to separate the self from the petty concerns of this world can be successful as long as one is living in it. At various moments in Elizabeth Rowe’s writings, a more permanent retreat from the world *does* seem to be her goal.

The slight sampling of religious verse that does appear in *PEL* often concentrates upon retreat, offering conventional philosophy about denying the world in favour of a life of the soul. Most notable of course is Cowper’s “Abelard to Eloisa,” with its concluding image of a “rack’d soul. . . hush’d to peace,” but others are not so extreme, advocating friendship rather than complete seclusion. Female friendship is important in *PEL*; almost every poet has at least one piece addressed to a friend (Lucasia, Lucinda, Charlot) and celebrates that friendship. Some of these are on literary matters, like Chudleigh’s “To Eugenia, on her Pastoral.” Barber’s lines to Grierson on a family tragedy, the most personal of subjects, also touch on classical literatures and languages. Every poem by Grierson printed in the collection is a form of encouragement offered to a female friend. Whereas the letter from Swift to Lord Orrery at the beginning of the first volume is an appeal for “protection” addressed to a patron on behalf of Barber, Mary Jones’s letter is to a friend Miss Lovelace, talking about “meet[ing] with a sister in print.”

The contemplative meets the social in a variety of dialogue poems in *PEL*. While some of these are broadly allegorical (like Cavendish’s disputes between “Mirth and Melancholy”) others are vehicles for the debate about woman’s place in the chain of being. In an anthology devoted exclusively to the voices of women, a battle of the sexes is played out in which (for the most part) the only misogynist voices are simulated. Barber’s “poetical letter” to a man who dislikes women reading and writing is an answer

to her own impersonation of “the Rev. Mr. C-----,” and Montagu’s “Silliander and Patch” conflates avarice and lust in the conversation overheard at the coffeehouse, a male preserve. Another conversation is overheard (and, at the same time, not overheard) in Leapor’s mock-pastoral dialogue between Corydon and Phillario (“She read! She’d better milk her brindled cows.”)²⁰ More polemical is Chudleigh’s long “Ladies Defence” where cool logic and warm religion are enlisted to counter misogynist assumptions spouted by her male (buffoon) speakers. The men in this poem represent the Scylla and Charybdis of antagonism toward women, and absurd flattery of them.

The rhetorical approaches to gender and worth in *PEL*, though, begin with Abraham Cowley’s flattering epigraph on the title page of both volumes: “We allow’d you Beauty. . . Ah, cruel Sex! will you depose us too in Wit?” The question is a form of appeasement, the first compliment in two duodecimo volumes that are puffed as “the most solid compliment that can possibly be paid to the Fair Sex.” Nor is the issue settled even in the final poem, where Finch warns Pope to “sooth[sic] the ladies.” Significantly, Finch’s assertion in the penultimate line of her poem, that women are “born to wit,” counters Cowley’s suggestion that women as a group are simply progressing toward wit. The demonstration of this wit is nonetheless a path fraught with pitfalls. Grierson warns that “terrors wait on talents misapply’d.” Cavendish seeks “a wit, whose fancy’s not confin’d,” but Barber is wary about claiming that nebulous term as her own. Barber’s “Apollo’s Edict” pokes fun at the use of clichés, putting the poet herself outside the realm of poetasters, yet like Leapor she also refers to herself as a “small poet.” In “Defence of Myrtillo,” Masters champions a male friend but she betrays more than a hint of self-defence in doing so. Cavendish again is blissfully unaware of the contradiction between her gender and her verse in *PEL*, inquiring seriously “Wherein Poetry chiefly consists.”

As the earliest writer in *PEL*, Cavendish bridges the gap between heroic female ancestors and the later authors. Her tribute to Queen Elizabeth in poems about Queen Mab are echoed by Pilkington, and by Montagu’s direct homage to Elizabeth in her “Epilogue.” Cockburn petitions Caroline in “On the Queen’s Hermitage,” as does the first poem in the anthology, Barber’s “A True Tale,” which speaks to Caroline’s power to

succour a deserving male poet. There is more mention of queens and king's consorts than of kings in *PEL* (including Katherine Philips's praise for Boadicea in "On the Welch Language") and these royal women underscore the presence of exceptional women in the anthology.²¹

The eighteen women in *PEL* also represent an exceptional social range. In chapters four through seven I demonstrated that these differences reflected on the reputations of the poets. They also colour our reading of the anthology. Within the context of *PEL*, for example, we are able to approach Montagu's "The Lover. A Ballad," and Barber's advice to her son in "Conclusion of a Letter" from different angles. Like Barber, Montagu offers an opinion about choosing a mate, one in whom "Good sense and good nature" are "equally join'd," and who is "Not over severe, yet not stupidly vain."²² The contrast between the two poems, though, is striking. Whereas Montagu writes of a man who brings with him luxury and comfort, Barber advises her son to choose a wife, "By learning made humble, not thence taking airs, / To despise, or neglect, her domestick affairs."²³ The poems reinforce one another in the emphasis on mutual sympathy, but the agendas and the rhetoric are obviously different. Barber focuses on the stability and well-being of the family unit; Montagu expresses her own worth in terms of the trust she would place in such a lover. There is a clear distinction between the social position of the woman Swift referred to as "the wife of a citizen" whose own concern is with "domestic affairs," and a woman of the landed gentry, worldly and well-traveled, for whom "decorum" in public is followed by private time "with champagne and a chicken."²⁴

A similar testimony to the social variety in the anthology is Pilkington's "Carte Blanche," one of several poems in *PEL* that speaks to versification as an activity that mars or wastes paper. Barber, in her poem against poetry for her son, argues that "paper's

²⁰*PEL*, II: 125, l. 51.

²¹In their introduction to Jones, Colman and Thornton also highlight the poet's "friendship and acquaintance of HER ROYAL HIGHNESS the PRINCESS of ORANGE" *PEL*, I: 254.

²²*PEL*, II: 176-178, ll. 12, 15.

²³*PEL*, I: 22-25, ll. 57-58.

²⁴*PEL*, II: 177, ll. 26

too dear to be wasted in rhymes.”²⁵ Leapor impersonates a quill, and Jones’s section in the anthology begins with an exclamation: “How much of paper’s spoil’d! what floods of ink!”²⁶ Economizing was part of these women’s lives, in ways it would not have been for wealthier women. No mention is made by Cavendish or Philips, Montagu or Finch, of economizing with paper. Whether they should appear in print continued to be a very real issue for all the women writers in this period; whether or not they had the means of production was also an issue for some of them.

Everyone knew the worst-case scenario *after* publication, the paper trail from Grub Street to the pastry and chandlers’ shops, and worse. This is why Colman and Thornton cite Cowley, Dryden, Roscommon, Creech, Pope, and Swift on the first page of *PEL*. Learned men continue to be a theme in the anthology, often in the editorial interpolations. Dryden’s interest in Killigrew’s verse is central to the biographical introduction to her. The three Dubliners in the anthology were affiliated poetically as well as patriotically with Swift, whose voice comes close to opening the anthology with his recommendation of Barber. Pope’s influence is most obvious in Cowper’s “Abelard to Eloisa,” but it is also evident in Jones’s section, most notably the “Epistle to Lady Bowyer,” where Pope’s name is twice mentioned, and where Jones modestly rewrites the “Epistle to Arbuthnot” to fit her own circumstances. If imitation is the highest form of compliment, Pope is often complimented in *PEL* (where he is, and is not, Orpheus). Much of Leapor’s work seems a kind of monument to Pope again. Her tribute to his “Universal Prayer” is itself reverential, and “The Lybian Hunter” is striking in the level of grief she expresses at his death. The exchange between Pope and Finch at the conclusion of *PEL* is fitting. Although Pope’s voice seems an intrusion in this collection of women’s verse, Finch, a universally acclaimed eminent lady, has the last word in both the argument and the anthology.²⁷ Pope calls “Ardelia” exceptional in comparison to “those *Sapphoes* we admire no more.” Finch’s response conjures up a tribe of “resenting heroines.”

²⁵*PEL*, I: 28-29, ll. 18.

²⁶*PEL*, I: 255-259, ll. 1.

²⁷The interpolation of work by one poet within a volume or section by another is common enough in other miscellanies, but the compilers of *PEL* are otherwise so strict that the exception proves the rule.

In the first pages of their anthology, Colman and Thornton claim that “this collection is not inferior to any miscellany compiled from the works of men.” Like Edward Young’s shining simile for eminent men, the eighteen ladies in *PEL* were represented as being “like ships in seas, while in, above the world.”²⁸ So, too, were Colman and Thornton both involved in the female poetic world that they governed, and above it. The Latin epigram by Tibullus that they chose to precede their humorous puff of *Poems by Eminent Ladies* in *Connoisseur* #69 reflects both on the ladies, and on the compilers who chose them:

Dignior est vestro nulla puella choro

There is no girl more worthy of your song.

²⁸Young, “Night Thoughts. Night VIII: Virtue’s Apology,” *Works*, I: 152-185, /1.1082.

Appendix A: The Print History of Anne Finch's "The Spleen"

In 1903, when Myra Reynolds brought out the edition of poems that introduced Finch to the twentieth century, she identified Finch's first appearance in print as that of an ode titled "The Spleen" in Charles Gildon's 1701 *New Collection of Poems On Several Occasions*.¹ In so doing, Reynolds overlooked a number of earlier print publications.² These early publications seem to have been fairly sparse, however, and "The Spleen" is undoubtedly the poem that contributed most to establishing the poet's fame.

Thomas Birch printed six poems by Winchilsea, including her celebrated ode, in the tenth volume of the *General Dictionary* in 1741. Before mentioning Finch's 1713 volume of poems, Birch states that "one of the most considerable of the Countess of Winchilsea's Poems was that upon the *Spleen*. . . printed in *A New Miscellany of Original Poems*. . . published by Mr. Charles Gildon at London 1701 in 8vo."³ Gildon's *Miscellany* was a popular collection of verses by courtiers such as the Earl of Dorset, Charles Sedley, John Dryden, Nicholas Rowe "And Several Other Eminent Hands." Advertised on the title page as a "first" edition, the anthology was an emended and much expanded follow-up to a verse *Miscellany* that Gildon had edited in 1692. The 1701 anthology was re-issued with a new title page the same year, and again in 1716 as a "second edition" with another title page.⁴ Following Birch's lead, later admirers like Ballard, and Cibber and Shiells praised the "considerable" nature of "The Spleen," as well as its initial appearance in "*A new Miscellany of Original Poems*. . . published by Mr. Charles Gildon at London in 1701."⁵

¹Reynolds, Introduction, *Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea*, lii. The 1701 collection is commonly referred to as Gildon's *Miscellany*.

²As I noted in Chapter Four, not only was minor verse by her circulated in manuscript, but Finch saw her lyrics published as early as the 1680s in pro-Stuart anthologies, and religious verse by her can be found in miscellanies of the 1690s. For instance, the lyric "'Tis strange, this Heart" appeared in a collection of songs, and another appeared in a play by Thomas Wright, *The Female Virtuoso's* (1691). A broadside, *The Prerogatives of Love*, was issued anonymously in 1695. In 1696 six religious poems were included in the first volume of *Miscellanea Sacra*, a collection that underwent a second edition two years later. Another ode, *On the Death of King James II. By a Lady* was printed on its own in 1701. See Barbara McGovern, *Anne Finch and Her Poetry*, 70-71, and Anne Messenger, "Publishing without Perishing," 27-37.

³Birch, *General Dictionary*, X: 178.

⁴The date on the title page is 1715, but the inclusion of another 24-page miscellany bound into the centre of the collection suggests that the book may actually have been published in 1716, because the 24-page contains a reference to the battle of Sherriff-Muir, which occurred November 13, 1715.

Most notable in the print history of "The Spleen" is a second collection, published only a few months after Gildon's and containing verse by many of the same courtiers: *A Collection of Poems: viz. The Temple of Death*.⁶ Here again the ode was printed anonymously. Aside from an unpublished Oxford dissertation of 1954 by D. G. Neill, nowhere since have these printings of "The Spleen" been mentioned.⁷ Otherwise, the second printing of "The Spleen" has been alleged to be a 1709 pamphlet published by Henry Hills, titled *The Spleen, a Pindarique Ode, by a Lady. Together with a Prospect of Death, a Pindarique Essay*. (The *Prospect of Death*, likewise printed anonymously, had first been published in 1700, and was by John Pomfret, author of *The Choice*).⁸ Though Hills' pamphlet has been called the second printing, therefore, it is properly the third.

The *Temple of Death* underwent a second edition, with considerable changes, in 1702, and a third in 1716. Before the publication of Finch's *Poems* in 1713, therefore, "The Spleen" was printed not twice, but at least four times. There is yet another anthology which includes Finch's ode, this one produced after her own collection. Titled *The Virgin Muse*, it was printed in 1717, and reissued in 1722, and has gone unnoticed in

⁵Ballard, *Memoirs*, 371; Cibber and Shiells, *Lives of the Poets*, III: 321. Colman and Thornton chose as their copy-text for "The Spleen" Finch's *Miscellany Poems* rather than Birch's *Dictionary*, the influence of Birch's appraisal lingers, nevertheless, in the editors' introduction to the "Ode on the Spleen" called Finch's "most considerable poem." *PEL*, II: 286.

⁶The *Temple of Death* is an expanded edition of a 1672 collection, recorded in the Stationers' register for October, 1701. The stationers' register records the first edition of Gildon February 17 1701: "A Colleccion of Poems by sevall[sic] hands, most of them with persons of eminent quality. . . with the first addiccion of these Miscellanies; The Prospect of Death, a Pindaric, to the Memory of Mr. Dryden. . . ; A Pindarick on the spleene and many others. . ." The *Term Catalogues* date the printing of *The Temple of Death* in the Trinity Term, June, 1701, but there is no mention here of Gildon's collection. *Biblioteca Annua*, Number 3, places the publication of Gildon's *Miscellany* sometime between March 25, 1701, and March 25, 1702. Curiously, it is in the volume for the previous year, Number 2, March 25, 1700, to March 25, 1701, that *A Collection of Poems viz. The Temple of Death* is noted.

⁷D. G. Neill, "Studies for an Edition of the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea, Consisting of a Bibliography of her Poems and a Study of all Available MSS," diss. Oxford, 1954.

⁸*The Spleen, a Pindarique Ode, by a Lady. Together with a Prospect of Death, a Pindarique Essay* (London: H. Hills, 1709). The *DNB* mentions that "The Spleen" was "republished" by Hills after the Gildon miscellany. Reynolds writes that by 1713, when Winchilsea was preparing her volume of verse, "her *Spleen* had attained to the dignity of a second edition" which Reynolds identifies in her notes as this pamphlet. (Reynolds, lvi, 416n.) The *CBEL* and *NCBEL*, as well as most dictionaries of women writers, reiterate the importance of this apparent second edition. Anne Messenger has consulted Neill's dissertation, but she does not seem to know about *The Temple of Death*, or at least she does not distinguish it from (perhaps the second 1701 issue of) Gildon's anthology. Messenger states that "'The Spleen' was such a success that it was included in a second collection only a few months after its first appearance, where it was accompanied by three more poems 'by the same hand.'" See "Publishing without Perishing," 30. It is, in fact, in Gildon's collection, and not *The Temple of Death*, that three additional poems by Finch follow "The Spleen," whereas *The Temple of Death* includes only the pindaric ode.

Finch scholarship,⁹ Because Finch's own book of verse was issued four times with cancellans title pages after its initial appearance, this means that the occasions on which "The Spleen" was brought into the public eye via new editions and re-issues in the first two decades of the century, including in her *Poems*, total no less than twelve, rather than the seven times that have been assumed.

The most interesting aspect of the poem as it appears in the *Temple of Death* is that it varies from the Gildon edition and Finch's *Poems* in the same ways that Hills' pamphlet edition does. There are many of the same accidentals and shifts in diction, inversion of lines forty-five and forty-six, and omission of lines 138-141 that occur in the pamphlet and which constitute its most notable differentiation from the versions in Gildon and in Finch's *Poems*. Evidently, if Hills' pamphlet edition of "The Spleen" is a pirated one it is not, as has been indicated, the first such unauthorized printing, since the text conforms so closely to that in the 1701 *Temple of Death*. Hitherto, the conclusion reached when examining Hills' pamphlet is that it resulted from either an earlier ms. version of the poem, or from an imperfectly remembered or carelessly transcribed version of that in Gildon's anthology. This may still be true of the poem as it appears in *The Temple of Death* miscellany. Hills' pamphlet, however, most likely had as its source *The Temple of Death* itself.¹⁰

Both internal and external evidence yoke the *Temple* version of the ode to Hills' pamphlet. The poem printed directly after "The Spleen" in the anthology is the same one that is coupled with Finch's poem in the 1709 pamphlet — the anonymously printed "A Prospect of Death: A Pindarique Essay." John Pomfret's *A Prospect of Death* however, had also been reprinted in pamphlet form in 1703, and was there erroneously attributed to the Earl of Roscommon.¹¹ Roscommon is one of the authors who is named on the title page of *The Temple of Death* collection, because three poems by the earl do appear therein, although "A Prospect" is itself printed in *Temple* without any author's name given. It is likely the 1703 mis-attribution to nobility, along with their shared pindaric format, and appearance in an anthology from which Hills borrowed many other poems, that led to his twinning of "A Prospect" and "The Spleen." As with Finch's ode, the textual variants coincide closely in the 1701 and 1709 printings of Pomfret's pindaric

⁹For my note on Katherine Philips and *The Virgin Muse*, see above, Chapter Four.

¹⁰The source may have been indirect, for example a hand-copied version of "The Spleen" as it appeared in *The Temple of Death*, though this seems less likely.

¹¹[John Pomfret], *A Prospect of death: a pindarique essay. Written by the Right Honourable the Earl of Roscommon* (London, 1704 [1703]).

essay, further evidence that *The Temple of Death* furnished Hills with both poems. Hills also reproduced in 1709 the poem that lent its title to the collection in which “The Spleen” made its second appearance: *The Temple of death: a poem, by the Right Honourable, the Marquis of Normanby. A Translation of the French.*¹²

The inclusion of “The Spleen” in *The Temple of Death* testifies to a greater readership and popularity than have been estimated. Moreover, this second 1701 printing of the poem comments on the occasional nature of “The Spleen” --as a separate entity from Finch’s volume of poetre-- and on the initially unstable textual condition of Finch’s verses. As such, the ode points to the intersection between manuscript circulation and print culture. Much can also be discovered about a poem by the company it keeps. In Gildon’s collection, “The Spleen” is prefaced by a poem by Nicholas Rowe that reveals a familiarity with Finch’s poem, and with another ode by her, “All is Vanity,” which, though composed before Dryden’s death in 1700, was first printed only in 1713.¹³ Rowe’s poem serves as a reminder of the select circle who read and possibly critiqued these poems long before they were printed. *The Temple of Death*, which shares a number of poets with Gildon’s collection, likely represents the efforts of booksellers Daniel Brown and Benjamin Tooke to capitalize on the popularity of the Gildon miscellany printed only a few months earlier.¹⁴

A manuscript of post-1713 poems by Anne Finch now held at Wellesley College, Massachusetts, has among its contents an epistolary piece in which Finch recognizes her debt to the Duke of Buckingham, John Sheffield (1650-1721):

For none like Sheaffield can the muse support
Who still composes as in Charles’ Court
Where high he stood amidst the tunefull choire

¹²The French is by Philippe Habert.

¹³Nicholas Rowe, “Epistle to Flavia, on the sight of two Pindaric Odes on the Spleen and Vanity, Written by a Lady to her Friend,” Gildon’s *Miscellany*, 53-59. The “Epistle” was reprinted in the many editions of Rowe’s poems throughout the century, eventually with a footnote identifying the author of “The Spleen” and “Vanity.” See for example Nicholas Rowe, *The Poetical Works* (London, 1790) 53-55.

¹⁴Similarly, Gildon had himself hoped to repeat the success of Jacob Tonson’s several *Poetical Miscellanies*. Benjamin Tooke was also among the first booksellers of Finch’s 1713 *Miscellany*. In addition to highlighting the inclusion of poems by Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1643-Jan 1705/6), the title pages of both miscellanies boast the names of George Stepney (1663-1707), George Granville (1667-1735), Sir Charles Sedley (1639-1701), and John Dryden. Gildon’s collection also contains works by Sir Fleetwood Shephard, Mr. Wolesly, and Nicholas Rowe, and the *Temple* includes works by Charles Montagu, Lord Halifax, the Earl of Roscommon, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and Sir George Etherege (1635-1692).

The Class to which succeeding wits aspire.¹⁵

Jean Ellis d'Allessandro reads this reminiscence as Finch's acknowledgment that she too "still composes as in the days of the Restoration, days in which Sheffield had published his [1682] *Essay upon Poetry*."¹⁶ Certainly the passage functions as a reminder of Finch's earlier status as a courtier. Her relationship to Sheffield, though, is important not only because he was a member of the nobility who encouraged her talent while she was at court, but because in 1694 he was made Marquis of Normanby, and it is he whose translation of Philippe Habert's *Temple of Death* lends its title – and his own title – to the 1701 anthology.¹⁷ These indirect connections suggest a closer proximity between Finch and her ode's appearance in the *Temple of Death* than might otherwise be assumed.

¹⁵"To the Right Honourable Countess of Hartford," *Wellesley Manuscript*, (d'Allessandro) 75.

¹⁶d'Allessandro, Introduction, *The Wellesley Manuscript*, 75.

¹⁷Horace Walpole, *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. 4 vols. (London: John Scott, 1806) 3: 90.

Appendix B: A Source for Judith Cowper's "Abelard to Eloisa"

Poems by Eminent Ladies is not the first anthology that included Judith Cowper's response to Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard." In addition to appearing anonymously in two magazines,¹ her poem was printed in an anthology published five to eight years previous to *PEL*, titled *Cupid Triumphant* (1747?), where it is preceded by Pope's poem.² In addition to a number of unrelated pieces by Pope, this collection consists of poems and love letters that center upon the same tragic love story that inspired Pope and Madan.³ In *CT*, Madan's poem is attributed to "a Lady" on the title page, but subtitled in the text: "By Mrs. C-----ER." The Twickenham edition of Pope's *Works* contains an appendix in which Tillotson notes:

[L. S.] Wright suggests that the reply, published in *Cupid Triumphant* (1747) and signed 'Mrs. C----er', is interpreted in the table of contents as 'Mrs. Centlivre' instead of as 'Mrs. Cowper', i.e. Mrs. Judith Madan (née Cowper), Pope's friend. He shows, however, that the poem is almost word for word that of Pattison. There are two MS. copies of the Pattison-Madan reply in the Brit. Mus. (I) Addit. MS. 4,456, ff. 92ff. (following a transcript of Pope's poem); (s) Add MS. 28101 [a 'Family Miscellany' belonging to the Ashley Cowper family], ff. 150r. This latter is headed 'By the same hand [i.e. Mrs. Madan]-1720'. The poems by Mrs. Madan in this collection are dated and placed in chronological order, which suggests that the dating has authority. . . If [the 1720 date] is correct, Pattison is ruled out (he was not born till 1706).⁴

¹*PEL*, II: 137-143. See my note on this poem in Chapter Three.

²No date appears on the title page. The Bodleian catalogue dates this publication as 1750 whereas the *CBEL* dates it 1747. Madan's poem begins on what would be page 155, and continues to page 160.

³*Cupid Triumphant. Containing several amorous poems, love letters, &c. Between persons of distinction: viz. the celebrated letters, &c. of Abelard and Eloisa. . . Translated from the French. To which is added, two admirable poems, extracted out of the above letters. I. Eloisa to Abelard. By Mr. Pope. II. Abelard to Eloisa, in answer to it. by a lady. Never before printed. With several other poems.* London: printed, and sold by J. Jeffereis, [1747] 8 parts, plates: ill. 8^o. Also included in the *Cupid* collection are "The Rape of the Lock," "An Essay on Criticism," "The Dunciad," "Temple of Fame," and "Wife of Bath's Prologue." Griffiths suggests that the collection may be "several distinct books and pamphlets. . . bound up as one." Griffiths, 622. (ESTC)

⁴Twickenham *Pope*, II: 398-99. "Abelard to Eloisa" is also attributed to Pattison in *The Poetical Calendar*, 12 vols. (1762) IV: 27. See L. S. Wright, "Eighteenth-Century Replies to Pope's Eloisa," *Studies in Philology*, xxxi. 519ff.

It is worth noting that Pope's poem took as its material John Hughes' 1713 translation of the letters of *Abelard and Eloisa*.⁵ The fact that John Hughes owed his preferment and independence to the first Earl Cowper, together with the poem that Judith Cowper wrote to him, "Verses occasioned by the Death of Mr. John Hughes" (first printed in J. Ralph's 1729 *Miscellaneous Poems by Several Hands*) argues a close connection with the translator of the Letters. Clearly the Madan family believed the poem to be Judith's, and Colman and Thornton published it in good faith (probably on the authority of the poet's nephew, William Cowper).

The only extant copy of this edition of *Cupid Triumphant*, now in the Bodleian, is significant because here the printed version of Madan's poem evinces considerable variation from the version printed in *PEL*. More importantly, the earlier version of "Abelard to Eloisa" in *CT* contains numerous hand-written alterations that are similar to the version that Colman and Thornton published, and which suggest that the book shelf-marked Bodleian Harding M 109, plus autograph additions, was the copy text followed by the printer for *PEL*.⁶ The extent and the nature of the changes introduced to this earlier printed version of "Abelard to Eloisa" do not indicate that someone used *PEL* to improve the poem as it stands in *CT*.

The handwritten corrections in *CT* are numerous and varied. Punctuation is added and spelling changed. More substantially, words are replaced with others. For example, the word **Here** is underlined, and in the margin changed to **Have**. The word **distant** is crossed out and replaced in the margin by **destin**,^d. These and similar alterations agree with the version of "Abelard to Eloisa" in *PEL*.⁷ The version printed in *Cupid* contains 175 lines, versus 178 in *PEL*. Lines seventeen and eighteen are missing from the poem in *Cupid*, and this lacuna is corrected by a handmarked insertion **x2 ^** which calls the reader's attention to the bottom of the page, where in the same hand is written the couplet that appears in *PEL*:

2 ^ When not these gloomy cloisters, solemn walls

⁵"During the sixty years after the appearance of Pope's *Eloisa*, there was a fairly steady interest in the story of Abelard and Heloise. There were occasional replies to *Eloisa*, and there was a considerable demand for editions of Hughes." Wright, 519.

⁶If Griffiths is right about the nature of the *Cupid* anthology—that it consists of several pamphlets bound together—it may be that the alterations were marked on an individual pamphlet edition of the poem, though no proof of such an individual printing has been discovered. There is no handwriting in any other part of the book.

⁷"Here" *Cupid*, l.43; "Have" *PEL*, II: 137-143, l.45. "Distant" *Cupid*, l.134; "Destine'd" *PEL*, l.165.

O'er whose rough sides y^e languid Ivy crawls,⁸

Similar changes are introduced in the same hand throughout. The instances in which these changes do not correspond with *PEL* are very rare; most do to an extent that makes the connection between the two texts irrefutable.

Most important is the ordering of the poem. The section that makes up lines 147 to 174 in *PEL* occurs in *Cupid Triumphant* much earlier – from line 117 to 143. The tone of instruction found in the handwritten comments at the bottom of page 158 in *Cupid* is telling:

After inclin'd should follow y^e 29th verse of y^e
next page To virtue now let me &c I own
to ye th 6th line in ye 160th page, you sustain

This is not mere correction in order to bring the reader's experience in keeping with a later version. Rather, these are instructions to a printer. The poem ends with a rush of corrections which correspond to handwritten symbols throughout the text on the last page.

V:44. yet my sighs breathe, &c

54 And Heav'en a

nb you sustain-

after this line comes in, if first line of y^e
foregoing page vis If not to Heaven you
feel your bosoms rise &c. down to line
2gs vis And to your mind in mortal Joys
make known then, Set Heaven relenting
ac. to y^e End.

The text that itself served as a model for the changes introduced to the Bodleian copy of *CT* is not certain. If the earlier version had been a printed one, it stands to reason that it would have served as the copy text, rather than correcting "Abelard to Eloisa" in *CT*. Colman and Thornton must have had access both to *CT* and to a later version of the poem, most likely that which is copied into the commonplace-book kept by Judith Cowper's brother, Ashley Cowper (BM MS. Add. 28101, beginning f. 150r). "Abelard to

⁸*Cupid*, p. 156; *PEL*, ll. 17-18.

Eloisa” contains most of the changes that were introduced into *Cupid Triumphant* (i.e. the couplet beginning “When not these gloomy cloisters,” a slight variation of which constitutes lines 17 and 18 in *PEL*). The evidence thus points to the likelihood that William Cowper provided his friends Colman and Thornton with both of Judith Cowper’s poems from his uncle’s manuscript album.

Appendix C: *PEL* and *Love Letters* (1755)

This Appendix describes the 1755 miscellany which combined new manuscript material with a large selection of poetry culled from *PEL*.

A SELECT / COLLECTION / Of the Original / LOVE LETTERS / OF SEVERAL /
EMINENT PERSONS, / OF / Distinguish'd RANK and STATION, NOW LIVING. /
Printed from GENUINE MANUSCRIPTS. / To which are subjoin'd, / POEMS by
Eminent Ladies; Particularly, /

Mrs. BARBER,	Mrs. MADAN,
Mrs. BEHN,	Mrs. MASTERS,
Miss CARTER,	Lady M.W. MONTAGUE,
Lady CHUDLEIGH.	Mrs. MONK,
Mrs. COCKBURN,	Dutchess of NEWCASTLE,
Mrs. GRIERSON,	Mrs. K. PHILIPS,
Mrs. JONES,	Mrs. PILKINGTON,
Mrs. KILLIGREW,	Mrs. ROWE,
Mrs. LEAPOR,	Lady WINCHILSEA.

*We allow'd you Beauty, and we did submit
To all the Tyrannies of it.
Ah, cruel Sex! will you depose us too in Wit?*

COWLEY

LONDON: Printed for the Proprietors, 1755. [price Three Shillings, sew'd]
[8], 152p.; 8°. British Library 10920.cc.20.

The "Preface" is signed "G. Gaylove, the editor." The contents of the first section are letters with such titles as: "A Letter from a Gentleman to a Lady"; "The Lady's Answer"; "Letter from a Courting Squire to a Farmer's Daughter," etc. (pp. 58-59 contains a letter from "Mrs. Jones to the Hn. Miss Lovelace." It is not that reprinted in *PEL*). As I noted in Chapter Eight, the poets in *Love-Letters* are not organized in the same strict alphabetical order as in *PEL*, though there is clearly an attempt at such order, with more haphazard and later additions. Despite the title-page, no names are provided in the body of the text, and no poem is attributed to any poet. The titles are often shortened forms of those in *PEL*.

70 POEMS ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS BY SEVERAL EMINENT LADIES

*Love Letters*source in *PEL* (author and page)

- 70 "Advice to the Ladies at Bath" [BARBER, I: 45]
 "Love's Power" [BEHN, I :66]
- 71 "The Dream" [BEHN, I: 81]
 "Love's Resentment" [BEHN, I: 89]
- 72 "To Love" [BEHN, I: 112]
- 73 "To the Ladies" [CHUDLEIGH, I: 181]
- 74 "The Complaint of a Lover" [KILLIGREW, II: 3]
- 75 "Extemporary Counsel"
 "A Summer's Wish" [KILLIGREW, II: 14]
 [LEAPOR, II: 23]
- 76 "The Month of August "
 [LEAPOR, II: 27]
- 78 "The Mistaken Lover" [LEAPOR, II: 54]
- 83 "Strephon to Celia. A Modern Love Letter" [LEAPOR, II: 65]
- 84 "The Temple of Love. A Dream" [LEAPOR, II: 80]
- 86 "The Lady's Resolve" [MONTAGU, II: 178]
- 87 "The Gentleman's Answer"
 "Receipt for the Vapours" [MONTAGU, II: 178]
 [MONTAGU, II: 183]
- 88 "On a Romantick Lady"
 "Verses. Wrote by a Lady on her
 Death-Bed at Bath, to her husband in London" [MONCK, II: 192]
 [MONCK, II: 195]
- 89 "An Epitaph on a Gallant Lady"
 "Content" [MONCK, II: 193]
 [PHILIPS, II: 215]
- 91 "The Virgin" [PHILIPS, II: 229]
- 92 "To Strephon"
 "Love, Death, and Reputation" [PILKINGTON, II: 251]
 [WINCHILSEA, II: 307]
- 94 "The Princess of Hope" [BEHN, I: 85]
- 97 "The Silent Confession" [BEHN, I: 93]
- 97 "Song, The Vain Advice" [COCKBURN, I: 238]
- 98 "The Cruel Parent, A Dream" [LEAPOR, II: 98]
- 101 "Advice to Sophronia" [LEAPOR, II: 122]
- 102 "To Lucinda"
 "To Lysander, on some Verses he writ,
 and asking more for his Heart than it was worth" [MASTERS, II: 151]
 [BEHN, I: 262]

*Love Letters*source in *PEL*

- 104 "To Alexis, on his saying, I loved a man
that talked much" [BEHN, I: 166]
- 105 "The Caution" [COCKBURN, I: 232]
"The Lover. A Ballad" [MONTAGU, II: 176]
- 107 "Epistle From Arthur Grey, the Footman" [MONTAGU, II: 172]
- 109 "Epilogue. To Mary, Queen of Scots" [MONTAGU, II: 182]
- 111 "A Tale" [MONCK, II: 191]
"Wit" [NEWCASTLE, II: 207]
- 112 "A Country Life" [PHILIPS, II: 222]
- 114 "The Statues: or, The Trial of Constancy.
A Tale for the Ladies" [PILKINGTON, II: 239]
- 120 "The 7th Ode of the 3rd Bk. of Homer paraphrased.
Written by a Lady in the Absence of her Husband." [PILKINGTON, II: 253]
- 121 "Sincerity. A Poem" [BARBER, I: 20]
"Occasioned by seeing some Verse
written by Mrs. Grierson. . . ." [BARBER, I: 33]
- 122 "Respect" [BEHN, I: 73]
- 123 "Little Cares, or Little Arts to please" [BEHN, I: 78]
- 124 "Absence" [BEHN, I: 109]
- 125 "Love's Temple" [BEHN, I: 122]
- 127 "The Prospect and Bower of Bliss" [BEHN, I: 133]
- 133 "Dorinda at her Glass" [LEAPOR, II: 17]
- 137 "Mira's Will" [LEAPOR, II: 22]
- 138 "An Epistle to a Lady" [LEAPOR, II: 30]
- 139 "Essay on Happiness" [LEAPOR, II: 40]
- 145 "Sylvia and the Bee" [LEAPOR, II: 96]
- 146 "Job's Curse, and his Appeal" [LEAPOR, II: 89]
- 148 "Expostulation. Written in Distress" [PILKINGTON, II: 258]
- 149 "The Tête a Tête. DANCINDA" [MONTAGU, II: 165]

151 "To a Gentleman. On his Intent
to cut down a Grove to enlarge his Prospect"

[CARTER, I: 178]

152 FINIS

Appendix D: The 1785(?) Edition

Thirty-four poets appear in this edition of *PEL*, seventeen of them new to the anthology (one is claimed twice: See Darwall and Whateley). Poets new to *PEL* are identified with an asterisk. Their dates, brief histories, and the sources for each poem follow. Most of the new pieces introduced to this edition are from the *Lady's Poetical Magazine, or Beauties of British Poetry*. 4 vols. (London: pr. for Harrison and Co., 1781-82). Again, the names of authors are spelled here as they appear in the original.

Bibliographical Description:

POEMS / BY THE MOST / EMINENT LADIES / OF / GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND.
 / RE-PUBLISHED FROM THE COLLECTION OF / G. COLMAN AND B.
 THORNTON, *Esqrs.* / WITH CONSIDERABLE / Alterations, Additions, and
 Improvements. / - / Vol. I. /-/ *Song, Beauty, Youth, Love, Virtue, Joy! this group / Of
 bright Ideas, Flow'rs of Paradise, / As yet unforfeit! in one blaze we bind, / Kneel, and
 present it.* / YOUNG. /-/ LONDON: / Printed and Sold by W. STAFFORD, Bookseller,
 and / Stationer, Market Street, Oxford Road. / [*Price Seven Shillings and Six-pence, in
 Boards.*] 12o.

CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME (226 pages)

Mrs. BARBER

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 13 "Conclusion of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. C"
- 16 "Apollo's Edict"
- 19 "On sending my Son as a Present to Dean Swift on his Birth-day"
- 20 "The Right Hon. the Earl of Orrery"
- 21 "To John Barber, Esq. on committing one of my Son's to his Care"
- 22 "To a Lady who desire my to send her an Account in Verse how I succeeded in my Subscription"

omitted: "A True Tale"; "Written for my Son. . . at his first putting on breeches"; "An unanswerable Apology"; "Widow Gordon's Petition"; "Written in the conclusion of a letter"; "The Prodigy"; "Sincerity"; "Written for my Son, and spoken by him at school"; "To his Grace the Duke of Chandos"; "Conclusion of a Letter"; "Jupiter and Fortune"; "A Letter to a Friend"; "A Letter for my Son"; "Apology to

Dr. Clayton"; "Occasioned by. . . verses written by Mrs. Grierson"; "The Oak and his Branches"; "Stella and Flavia"; "An Apology for the Clergy"; "Written upon the rocks at Tunbridge"; "To the Earl of Orrery"; "To Mrs. Strangeways Horner"; "Invitation to Edward Walpole"; "Advice to the Ladies at Bath"; "To a Lady who valued herself on speaking her mind."

***Mrs. BARBAULD** [Anna Letita Barbauld, née Aikin (1743-1825)]

Poet, essayist, educational writer, editor

Source: *Poems*, (as Aikin) first, second, and third editions (1773); fourth edition (1774); fifth edition (1777).

- 28 "The Mouse's Petition" [48 lines] **source:** *Poems* (all editions) 36.
 30 "Verse written in an Alcove" [56 lines] **source:** *Poems*, 33.
 32 "Hymn to Content" [54 lines] **source:** *Poems*, 53.

Mrs. BEHN

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 36 "Scot's Song"
 37 "Sylvio's Complaint"
 40 "In Imitation of Horace"
 41 "Song"

omitted: "A Voyage to the Isle of Love"; "The Golden Age"; "Love Armed"; "The Invitation"; "On a Copy of verses"; "On a locket of Hair"; "On Loving Two Equally"; "The Counsel"; "To Lysander"; "Song"; "Cato's Answer"; "To Alexis"; "Ode to Desire."

***Mrs. BROOKE** [Frances Moore Brooke (1724?-89) also wrote under Mary Singleton]

A playwright and Canada's first novelist. Duncombe celebrated her in the second edition of the *Feminiad* (1757): "We could not, with Justice, in this second Edition, with-hold our Tribute of Praise from Mrs. Brooke, Author of the Tragedy of Virginia. . . " (24).

- 42 "Two Pastorals": "Pastoral I" [68 lines] **source:** *LPM*, IV: 458-460. Originally printed in *Virginia, A Tragedy with Odes, Pastorals, and Translations*. By Mrs. Brooke. (London: pr. for the author, sold by A. Millar, 1756) 131.
 "Pastoral II" [48 lines] **source:** *Virginia*, 135

Miss CARTER

Source: *PEL* (1755) and *LPM* (Those in the latter were originally published in Carter's *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1762).

- 48 "Ode to Wisdom" source: *PEL* (1755) 173
 52 "To a Gentleman, on his intending to cut down a Grove to enlarge his Prospect" source: *PEL* (1755) 177.
 53 *"Ode to Melancholy" [lines] source: *LPM*, III: 144.
 56 *"Written at Midnight in a Thunder Storm" [lines] source: *LPM*, II: 56.
 58 *"A Night Piece" [lines] source: *LPM*, I: 50. This poem is untitled in every edition of Carter's *Poems*.

added: "Ode to Melancholy"; "Written at Midnight"; "A Night Piece."

***Miss SALLY CARTER [unknown]**

- 60 "Hymn to Prosperity" [24 lines] source: *LPM*, III: 257.

***Mrs. CHAPONE [Hester Chapone, née Mulso (1727-1801)]**

Letter writer, essayist, educational theorist, she was called "Delia" by Duncombe, who expressed appreciation both for her and her writings: "her genius is only excell'd by the goodness of her heart" (*Feminiad*, 26).

- 62 "Ode to Solitude" [54 lines] source: *LPM*, III: 436. Originally published in *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, by Mrs. Chapone. . . (London: pr. for E. and C. Dilly; and J. Walter, 1775) 119.

Lady CHUDLEIGH

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 66 "To the Ladies"
 67 "The Resolve"
 68 "The Inquiry"

omitted: "To Eugenia"; "A Dialogue of Lucian"; "The Ladies Defence."

Mrs. COCKBURN

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 76 "Calliope's Directions how to deserve and distinguish the Muse's Inspiration"

- 79 "The Caution"
 79 "The Platonic"
 80 "The Needless Deceit"
 81 "A Poem occasioned by the Bust set up in the Queen's Hermitage"
 85 "The Vain Advice"

omitted: none

***Mrs. COLLIER [unknown]**

There is no evidence to suggest that this is Mary Collier (1690?-1762), best known for "The Woman's Labour: An Epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck." Possibly it is Mary Collyer (d.1763), wife of Joseph Collyer the elder. Collyer produced a translation of Gesner's *Death of Abel* (1761) and two volumes of *Letters from Felicia to Charlotte* (1744). The poems in *PEL* do not appear in either of these books.

- 87 "To a Friend in Affliction" [48 lines] source: *LPM*, II: 203.
 89 "Verses addressed to Mrs. Digby" [56 lines] source: *LPM*, II: 461.

***Mrs. DARWALL [Mary Darwall, née Whateley (1738-1825)]**

What is curious about Darwall in the 1785 *PEL* is that she appears twice, under both her married name (Darwall) and her maiden name (Whateley, suggesting that the editors were ignorant that "Mrs. Darwall" and "Miss Whateley" were the same person. The error originates in the *Lady's Poetical Magazine*, where Harrison printed poems by Darwall in different volumes under both names. See Whateley, below.

- 92 "An Ode" [66 lines] source: *LPM*, IV: 231 (First published in *Original Poems on Several Occasions. By Miss Whateley*. London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1764 (rpt. at Dublin for Joseph Sheppard the same year, p.9). I have not located the source for this poem appearing under Darwall before *PEL* (She published a new collection of *PSO* in 2 vols. under her married name in 1794)

***Mrs. GREVILLE [Frances Greville, née Macartney (c. 1724-1789)]**

Lonsdale calls Greville's "Prayer for Indifference" "the most celebrated poem by a woman in the period." The poem was probably written in 1756, when her son died, though Forster notes that "it was said to have been provoked by her husband's difficult temper."¹ It had apparently circulated in manuscript before being printed in incomplete texts in the *Edinburgh Chronicle* in 1759, and the *London Magazine* in 1761. (Lonsdale, 190). Reprinted in miscellanies and magazines from the 1760s onwards, the poem was

¹Harold Forster, *Supplements to Dodsley's Collection of Poems*. (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, Bodleian, 1980) 103.

frequently followed by replies such as Lady Carlisle's 'The Fairy's Answer', which follows it in the 1785 *PEL*.

- 95 "Prayer for Indifference" [64 lines] source: LPM, I: 183. First printed in the *Poetical Calendar* (1761) VI: 76-8. In the *London Magazine*, v. 40 (Feb. 1761)105, it is titled "Ode to Oberon" and is addressed to Lady Carlisle. Mary Scott calls the poem an "Ode" in *The Female Advocate*, 26n.
- 98 "The Answer by the Countess of C-----" [72 lines] source: LPM, I: 186. ("The Fairy's Answer to Mrs. Greville," frequently reprinted with Greville's "Prayer")

Mrs. GRIERSON

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 102 "To Mrs. Pilkington, at a Country Assize"
 104 "To the same on the same Occasion"
 105 "The Speech of Cupid"
 107 "Prologue to Theodosius"

omitted: "To Mrs. Mary Barber"; "Occasioned by Mrs. Barber's son speaking Latin."
 "To the Hon. Mrs. Percival"; "To the same with Hutcheson's Treatise."

*Miss HEYS [Mary Heys or Hays (1760-1843)]

Novelist, essayist, and letter writer, Heys is best known for *Female Biography* (1803).

- 109 "Invocation to the Nightingale" [48 lines] source: LPM, II: 464-5.

Mrs. JONES

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 112 "Epistle to Lady Bowyer"
 117 "Of Patience, and Epistle to the Right Hon. Lord Masham"
 128 "Of Desire to the Hon. Miss Lovelace"
 134 "In Memory of the Right Hon. Lord Aubrey Beauclerk"
 139 "To Mr. Clayton, with a Hare"
 140 "To Miss Clayton"
 142 "Elegy on a favourite Dog supposed to be Poisoned"
 145 "The Spider"
 147 "After the Small Pox"
 148 "The Lass of the Hill"
 150 "Consolatory Rhymes to Mrs. East on the Death of her Canary Bird"
 152 "Holt Waters, A Tale"

- 157 "Soliloquy on an Empty Purse"
 159 "Epistle from Fern-Hill"
 162 "In Memory of the Right Hon. Lord Lovelace"

omitted: "To the Prince of Orange"; "Ode to the Right Hon. Lady Henry Beauclerk."

Mrs. KILLIGREW

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 168 "The Complaint of a Lover":
 170 "Love the Soul of Poetry"
 171 "Upon the saying that my Verses were made by another"

omitted: "St. John Baptist"; "Herodia's[sic] Daughter"; "The Discontent"; "Epitaph on herself"; "Extemporary Counsel."

Mrs. LEAPOR

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 175 "Dorinda at her Glass"
 180 "Mira's Will"
 181 "A Summer's Wish"
 182 "Collinetta"
 185 "Month of August"
 188 "Epistle to a Lady"
 191 "The Proclamation of Apollo"
 195 "Essay on Happiness"
 199 "Essay on Hope"
 202 "A Prayer for the Year 1745"
 204 "The Mistaken Lover"
 210 "The Way of the World"
 215 "Strephon to Celia, a modern Love-Letter"
 217 "The Inspired Quill"
 221 "The Libyan Hunter"
 227 "The Temple of Love"
 230 "The Sacrifice"
 232 "The Power of Beauty"
 234 "Winter"
 235 "To a Gentleman with a Manuscript Play"
 238 "Sylvia and the Bee"
 240 "Mopsus, or the Castle Builder"
 258 "Advice to Sophronia"
 260 "Mira's Picture"

263 "Upon her Play being return'd to her stain'd with Claret"

omitted: "The Fall of Lucia"; "The Crucifixion and Resurrection"; "Essay on Friendship"; "On Mr. Pope's Universal Prayer"; "Advice to Myrtillo"; "Job's Curse, and his Appeal"; "The Cruel Parent"; "Crumble Hall."

CONTENTS OF THE SECOND VOLUME (223 pages)

Mrs. LENNOX [Charlotte Lennox née Ramsay (ca. 1729-1804)]

Novelist, playwright, poet. Scott refers to her as "Another SAPPHO with a purer mind!" (*Female Advocate*, 24, l. 280).

5 "The Art of Coquetry" [108 lines] source: *LPM*, IV: 303. It was originally printed in *Poems on Several Occasions. Written by a Young Lady* (London: pr. for and sold by S. Paterson, 1747) 61. The source for *LPM* was the corrected version in *GM* (November, 1750, 518-19).

Mrs. MADAN

Source: *PEL* (1755)

10 "Abelard to Eloisa"

16 "Verses in her Brother's Coke upon Littleton"

omitted: none

Mrs. MASTERS

Source: *PEL* (1755)

17 "Defence of Myrtillo"

19 "To Lucinda"

omitted: "Psalm xxxix"; "Psalm xxxvii. Inscribed to a friend."

Lady M. W. MONTAGUE

Source: *PEL* (1755)

23 "Town Eclogues-- Roxana, or the Drawing Room"

26 "St. James' Coffee-House"

30 "The Tête a Tête"

33 "The Small Pox"

- 37 "Epistle from Arthur Gray the Footman"
 41 "The Lover, a Ballad"
 43 "The Lady's Resolve"
 44 "The Gentleman's Answer"

omitted: "An Epistle to Lord B---t"; "Epilogue to Mary Queen of Scots";
 "Receipt for the Vapours."

The Hon. Mrs. MONK.

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 47 "On Providence"
 48 "On the Invention of Letters"
 48 "Sonetto from Petrarch"
 49 "Sonetto from Mons. Della Casa"
 50 "Sonetto from Marini"
 50 "From Tasso's Jerusalem"
 51 "A Tale"
 52 "Epigram"
 52 "On a Romantic Lady"
 53 "An Epitaph on a Gallant Lady"
 53 "Orpheus and Eurydice from the Spanish of Quevedo"
 55 "Verses wrote on her Death-Bed"

omitted: "Song"; "Epigram. To Cloe."

Dutchess of Newcastle

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 56 "Pastime and Recreation of the Fairies"
 58 "Pastime of the Queen of the Fairies"

omitted: "Mirth and Melancholy"; "Dialogue betwixt Peace and War"; "Where Poetry chiefly consists"; "Nature's Cook"; "Wit."

*Miss PENNINGTON [?Elizabeth Pennington (1734-1759)]

Duncombe praised Pennington as the "much lov'd FLORIMEL," and described her as walking in the footsteps of Katherine Philips (*Feminiad*, 24-26. Pennington's best-known poem, "The Copper Farthing," after John Philip's "Splendid Shilling," was printed in Fawkes and Woty's 1763 *Poetical Calendar*, X: 48.

- 63 "Ode to Morning" [42 lines] source: *LPM*, IV: 439.

65 "The Copper Farthing" [127 lines] possible source: *LPM*, IV: 447.

Mrs. PHILLIPS

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 73 "Against Pleasure"
- 74 "A Country Life"
- 78 "To Lady Elizabeth Boyle"
- 79 "The Virgin"
- 80 "To my Antenor"
- 81 "Tendres Desirs, from French Prose"

omitted: "Content"; "To the Queen of Inconstancy"; "The Enquiry"; "On the Welch Language"; "Against Love."

Mrs. PILKINGTON

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 85 "The Petition of the Birds"
- 86 "To the Rev. Dr. Swift, on his Birth Day"
- 87 "The Statues, or the Trial of Inconstancy, a Tale"
- 95 "Carte Blanche"
- 96 "Sent with a Quill to Dr. Swift"
- 97 "Ode in Imitation of Horace"
- 98 "To Strephon"
- 98 "Queen Mab to Pollio"
- 99 "The Seventh Ode of the Third Book of Horace Paraphrased"
- 100 "Consolatory Verses to her Husband"
- 101 "A Song"
- 102 "A Song"
- 103 "Expostulation--written in Distress"
- 104 "To Mr. Cibber, on his asking for something New"
- 139[sic] "To the Hon. Col. D-nc-be"

omitted: "Delville, the seat of the Rev. Dr. Delany"; "Memory"; "Advice to the People of Dublin"; "Sorrow"; "To the Rev. Dr. Hales"; "To his Grace the Lord Archbishop of York"; "Epilogue to Virtue Triumphant"; "Written on her death-bed."

*Mrs. **HAMPDEN PYE** [Jael Henrietta, née Mendez (1737?-1782)]

She produced a volume of verses, *Poems by a Lady* (1767, pr. privately). Reprinted in 1772 as *Poems by Mrs. Hampden Pye*, it was dedicated to and printed for J. Walter.

Mary Scott praised her in the *Female Advocate*, 34. Both the poems below had initially appeared in her own *Poems*.

- 111 "Elgiva to Edwy" [126 lines] source: *LPM*, IV: 72.
 116 "Earl Walter" [132 lines] source: *LPM*, IV: 406.

***Miss ROBERTS [R[achel] Roberts? 1730?-88]**

It is possible that this is Rachel Roberts, elder sister of Dr. Roberts, High Master of St. Paul's School, London. Miss Roberts wrote sermons, translations from French, and possible some fiction in periodicals as well.² A Miss Roberts appears in Scott's *Female Advocate*.

- 125 "On a supposed flight from a Friend" [36 lines] source: *LPM*, II: 189.
 126 "Effusions of Melancholy" [24 lines] source: *LPM*, I: 443.

Mrs. ROWE

Source: *PEL* (1755)

- 131 "Despair"
 132 "On the Death of Mr. Thomas Rowe"

omitted: "In praise of Memory"; "Hymn to the Deity"; "Hymn on the Sacrament";
 "Dialogue between the Fallen Angels and a Human Spirit"; "Revelation.
 Chap.xvi."; "Hymn of Thanks on my recovery from the Small-Pox."

***Mrs. SAVAGE [Mary Savage (fl. 1763-1777)]**

According to Lonsdale, "the only clue to her identity is [a] poem to her son at Eton, who was probably George Savage (1750-1816), born in London, the son of William and Mary Savage." (*ECWP*, 346). None of the below are in *LPM*.

- 139 "Nothing New" [49 lines] source: *Poems on Various Subjects and Occasions; from the author's manuscript, in the hand of the editor. By Mrs. Savage*. 2 vols. (London: pr. for C. Parker, 1777) I: 1
 141 "Letter to Miss E. B. at Bath" [74 lines] source: *Poems* I: 10
 143 "Letter to ditto" [78 lines] source: *Poems* I: 19 (titled "To my friend E.B.")
 146 "The Recluse and Fortune" [98 lines] source: *Poems* I: 26
 150 "Miss Fashion, a Tale" [134 lines] source: *Poems* I: 35
 155 "To Echo" [22 lines] source: *Poems* I: 47

²See J. R. de J. Jackson's *Romantic poetry by women: a bibliography, 1770-1835*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 274. I am grateful to Isobel Grundy for suggesting this possibility for Roberts.

- 156 “Oeconomy” [101 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 50; first printed by Hawkesworth in the *GM* (November 1763, 558-9) when he accidentally saw it in ms. (Preface, *Poems*, I: vii).
- 159 “Merit” [81 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 59
- 162 “The Prophecy” [54 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 70
- 164 “Ode to Peace of Mind” [38 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 191
- 166 “A Transient Thought” [44 lines] **source:** *Poems* I: 25

***Miss SCOTT** [May be Mary Scott (later Taylor) (1752?-1793)]

Gae Holladay, who wrote an Introduction to the facsimile edition of Mary Scott’s *The Female Advocate* in 1984, argues that the “content and versification” of the following two poems suggest that they were composed by this Miss Scott.

- 171 “Dunnotter Castle” [112 lines] **source:** *LPM*, I: 200.
- 176 “Verse on a Day of Prayer for Success in War” [32 lines] **source:** *LPM*, IV: 456, as by Mrs. Steele. This is by Anne Steele, Mary Scott’s friend and the dedicatee of “The Female Advocate.”

***Mrs. THRALE** [Hester Thrale, née Salusbury, later Piozzi(1741-1821)]

Letter writer, diarist, poet, she compiled *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson* in 1786, and contributed to numerous anthologies, including in Italy, where she lived with some years with her second husband (Lonsdale, *ECWP*, 389-90).

- 178 “The Three Warnings, a Tale” [110 lines] **source:** *LPM*, I: 82.
This was first printed on its own as *Three Warnings to John Bull before he dies* (1748) in Anna Williams’ *Miscellanies* (1766), later in the *Poetical Calendar* (1763) and *Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (later Mrs. Piozzi)* (1776).

***Miss TOMLINS** [Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins (1763-1828)]

Prolific novelist who penned *The Victim of Fancy* (1787) and *Memoirs of a Baroness* (1792?) among others.

- 180 “Connal and Mary” [72 lines] **source:** *LPM*, IV: 384. This pastoral dialogue later appeared in Tomlin’s *Tributes of affection: with The slave; and other poems. By a lady; with her brother* (London: pr. by H. and C. Baldwin; for Longman and C Dilly, 1797) 103-108.

*Miss WHATELEY [See Darwall, above]

187 "Ode to May" [40 lines] source: *LPM*, II: 231 (under the name of Whateley).
First printed in *Original Poems on Several Occasions. By Miss Whateley*.
(London: pr. for R. and J. Dodsley, 1764) 36.

189 "Pleasures of Contemplation" [106 lines] source: *LPM*, I: 129. (under Whateley).
First printed in *Original Poems*, 72.

Anne, Countess of Winchilsea

Source: *PEL* (1755)

195 "The Brass Pot and Stone Jugg, a Fable"

197 "There's no To-Morrow"

198 "The Spleen"

omitted: "The Atheist and the Acorn"; "The Young Rat and his Dam, the Cock and the Cat"; "To Mr. Finch"; "The Eagle the Sow and the Cat"; "Love, Death, and Reputation"; "The Decision of Fortune"; "The Hog, the Sheep and Goat"; "Cupid and Folly"; (Pope's) "To Lady Winchilsea"; Finch's "Answer to the foregoing verses."

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 BOD Ballard 42. ff. 29, 218
 BOD Ballard 43. ff. 237, 250
- Behn, Aphra. MS. Firth c.16
- Dunton, John. BOD MS. Rawl. poet. 173. (Commonplace-book)
- Chudleigh, Mary. BOD MS. Rawl. Lett. 90 ff. 6263
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