

*'My printer must, haue somewhat to his share': Isabella Whitney, Richard Jones, and crafting books*

Article

Published Version

Creative Commons: Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0

Open Access

O'Callaghan, M. (2019) 'My printer must, haue somewhat to his share': Isabella Whitney, Richard Jones, and crafting books. *Women's Writing*, 26. pp. 15-34. ISSN 1747-5848 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2019.1534571> Available at <http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/74416/>

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work. See [Guidance on citing](#).

To link to this article DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2019.1534571>

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

All outputs in CentAUR are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including copyright law. Copyright and IPR is retained by the creators or other copyright holders. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the [End User Agreement](#).

[www.reading.ac.uk/centaur](http://www.reading.ac.uk/centaur)

## **CentAUR**

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online



## “My Printer must, haue somewhat to his share”: Isabella Whitney, Richard Jones, and Crafting Books

Michelle O’Callaghan

To cite this article: Michelle O’Callaghan (2019) “My Printer must, haue somewhat to his share”:  
Isabella Whitney, Richard Jones, and Crafting Books, *Women's Writing*, 26:1, 15-34, DOI:  
[10.1080/09699082.2019.1534571](https://doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2019.1534571)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2019.1534571>



© 2018 The Author(s). Published by Informa  
UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis  
Group



Published online: 20 Dec 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 4



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



OPEN ACCESS



## “My Printer must, haue somwhat to his share”: Isabella Whitney, Richard Jones, and Crafting Books

Michelle O’Callaghan

Department of English Literature, University of Reading, Reading, UK

### ABSTRACT

Given Isabella Whitney’s reputation as the first English professional woman writer, her books are fertile ground for the recent material turn in the study of early modern women’s writing. Women’s engagement in book production meant that their texts were mediated through the work of booksellers, printers, and other agents in the print trade. We need to remember that writers make texts, but books are made by publishers and printers. Whitney’s own working relationship with her printer-publisher, Richard Jones, is well-known. Yet, the precise nature of Jones’s role in the production of Whitney’s books and her fashioning as an “Auctor” remains shadowy, largely because questions of agency have not been explored through the technologies of book production. To understand the ways in which Whitney’s texts were mediated through print, and her participation in this process, this essay will focus on how her books of poetry were made, starting with the role of her printer-publisher, Richard Jones.

Isabella Whitney’s reputation rests, in large part, on her status as England’s first professional woman writer and her “foundational relationship with early print culture”.<sup>1</sup> Whitney’s books are therefore fertile ground for the recent material turn in scholarship on early modern women’s writing. Critical attention has increasingly turned to the study of how women’s texts were mediated by the material conditions of their production and transmission.<sup>2</sup> Acts of publication are understood to be part of a wider communications system involving a series of producers, authorial and non-authorial. Women’s engagement in book production meant that their texts were mediated through the work of booksellers, printers, and other agents in the print trade. We need to remember that writers make texts, but books are made by publishers and printers. Whitney’s own working relationship with her printer-publisher, Richard Jones, is well-known.<sup>3</sup> Yet, the precise nature of Jones’s role in the production of Whitney’s books and her fashioning as

**CONTACT** Michelle O’Callaghan  [m.f.ocallaghan@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.f.ocallaghan@reading.ac.uk)

© 2018 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

an “Auctor” remains shadowy, largely because questions of agency have not been explored through the technologies of book production. In order to understand the ways in which Whitney’s texts were mediated through print, and her participation in this process, this essay will focus on how her books of poetry were made, starting with the role of her printer-publisher, Richard Jones.

Modes of print authorship were a product of the book trade, of how books were made and sold. Publisher-stationers, like Richard Jones, contributed to the “invention of the commodified literary author” through the work they undertook in producing books and creating a market and readership for these works.<sup>4</sup> Publisher-stationers were not passive conduits between the author and the book; instead their work was constitutive of this relationship. That said, how the author was fashioned in the book was not fully determined by the stationer’s work since multiple agents and different forms of materiality are always involved in the production of meaning – bibliographic markers can only tell us so much about the fashioning of authorial identity. The rhetoric of authorial presence, for example, may be anchored in bibliographic features, but it also points beyond the pages of the book by situating the speaker and her auditors in space and time. We therefore need to pay attention to the complex interplay between different forms of materiality, from bibliographic markers to constructions of voice and the crafting of texts.

The working relationship between Jones and Whitney is distinguished by their mutual investment in marketing her books. Theirs was a fairly long-standing publishing relationship, possibly extending to over a decade. Jones entered, edited, printed and sold all of Whitney’s known works: *The Copy of a Letter, lately written in meeter, by a yonge gentilwoman* (c. 1567), *A Sweet Nosgay, of Pleasant Posye* (c. 1573), and “The lamentacion of a Gentilwoman vpon the death of her late deceased frend, William Gruffith Gent”, printed both as a broadside and at the end of *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578).<sup>5</sup> Whitney voices her appreciation of his work when the speaker of “Wyll and Testament”, sends her “Friends” to St Paul’s Churchyard and bids them “there Bookes to bye/of him, with other ware”. Through this act, “the Auctor” aligns her own investment in her text with the commercial interests of her publisher in securing her book a readership.<sup>6</sup> Jones, in turn, marketed this author through the choices he made in preparing her books for the press. Close attention to bibliographic and other material features of these books therefore can show how Whitney’s authorial identity first took shape in print.

The publisher-stationer had overall responsibility for the book, from entrance in the Stationers’ Register to the point of sale. Since Jones was both publisher and printer of Whitney’s works, he was also responsible for the physical, bibliographic construction of the book – format, paper, type, and page design. Many other elements of the paratext – the title-page, the

planning and often writing of preliminary material, table of contents, and related reading aids – were also created by the publisher.<sup>7</sup> Through the craft of making and selling books, publishers fashioned authors, making decisions about how to make them known to the public and how to make them marketable, often based on their experience of marketing other books. Publishers therefore helped to negotiate authors' transactions with readers, not only by making the calculated decision to publish in the first place, but also through crafting the paratext to the book, which provided a framework for how to read the text and its author. In doing so, publishers were also formative readers of authors' texts. When producing the paratext, publishers necessarily read the text, making judgements about its "larger cultural meanings", always with an eye to the market, since their "careers depended on their readings of texts and their assessment of the likely readings of their customers".<sup>8</sup> Understanding the role of the publisher-stationer takes us to the specifics of how Whitney's authorial identity was fashioned and transmitted through the material form of the book.

Jones was an innovative and "discerning publisher".<sup>9</sup> During his long career, beginning around 1564 and probably ending with his last entry in the Stationers' Register in 1602, Jones worked as bookseller, publisher, and printer. He is now of interest to cultural bibliographers because of the way he articulated his role as a publisher and discriminating reader through the "virtually unrivalled amount of prefatory material" he wrote for the books he published.<sup>10</sup> Jones specialised in publishing and printing broadside ballads and small to median-sized books of vernacular poetry, including verse anthologies like *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites*, *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions* and *Brittons Bowre of Delights*. Poetry books were attractive to publishers because they sold reasonably well, with "a sufficient – if not great – number of customers", and there was always a "steady supply of new material".<sup>11</sup> During the ten year period when Jones was publishing Whitney's texts, from around 1566 to 1578, his main business was printing and publishing ballads and literary books, poetry, plays and prose romances. Ballads dominate his output in these years. The type of literary works Whitney could be said to specialise in – ballads and sets of verse epistles – were part and parcel of Jones's stock-in-trade and therefore made Whitney an attractive author for Jones to invest in, and Jones a suitable publisher for Whitney. His Whitney publications belong to a period when Jones had returned to printing and publishing, which enhanced his involvement in the production of her books.<sup>12</sup> What we have in this case is an example of a publisher investing in a woman writer and a productive and comparatively longstanding partnership that necessarily worked for both parties.

The first Whitney-Jones publication, *The Copy of a Letter*, is a compilation, a little anthology of amatory epistles. The publishing history of this pamphlet

is complex and worth untangling because it has implications for the way we assess the transmission of Whitney's works. *The Copy of a Letter* survives in only one copy, which consists of paired female and male-voiced complaints: "To her vnconstant Louer" and "The admonition by the Auctor, to all yong Gentilwomen, and to al other Maids being in Loue", both attributed to Is. W., and "A Loueletter from a faythful Louer to an vnconstant Mayden", subscribed W.G.<sup>13</sup> Bibliographic evidence suggests a publishing history in which a single-authored collection was subsequently turned into a little anthology of female and male complaints. Sketching out this history will provide us with a clearer sense of how Whitney was marketed to readers at this early stage in her career. It should be said from the outset that the full publication history of *The Copy of a Letter* is difficult to uncover because there is only one known copy of this title, bound together with other books in a sammelband now held in the Bodleian Library, with its origins in John Selden's library (8° H. 44. Art. Selden).<sup>14</sup> It reminds us how few of the many books printed in the sixteenth century survive. Don McKenzie cautioned that "[t]here must ... be an *a priori* assumption that the rate of loss is greater the further back we go, and that the difference in figures [for titles listed in the *STC*] across the years from, say, 148 for 1556 to 676 for 1640 simply cannot be read as a difference in output", but instead tells us more about survival rates.<sup>15</sup> This rate of loss has implications for how we analyse the publishing careers of women writers like Whitney. On the one hand, we need to keep in mind Gillian Wright's point that, even taking into account low survival rates, proportionally women published much less than men.<sup>16</sup> Yet, on the other, when faced with gaps in the record, we should also not be too quick to assume that repressive gender ideologies silencing women within print culture are at work.<sup>17</sup> In an otherwise carefully considered essay, Paul Marquis concludes that

The general public were not as discriminating. Although her supporters encouraged her to continue writing in *A Sweet Nosegay*, the limited success of the *Copy* is clear from the fact that it was not given a second edition. The weak reception of the text is understandable, perhaps, because of the sheer novelty of the work: poems by a woman at a time when women were meant to be seen and not heard ... The public's cool response to her work mirrors the ideological opposition in mid-Tudor society to the feminine attempt to liberate women from the oppression of male hegemony.<sup>18</sup>

Yet, can we be so sure that there was no second edition and, relatedly, that there was no market for Whitney's texts because she was a woman? Bibliographic evidence suggests otherwise, pointing instead to a market for the books produced by Whitney and Jones.

The title page of *The Copy of a Letter* and other aspects of the book's organisation seem to indicate that this single surviving copy belongs not to the first edition, but to a subsequent edition. Jones first entered the copy in the Stationers' Register at some point between July 1566 and July 1567 under the

title “The Cotype of a letter lately wretten in myter by a yonge gentelwoman to hyr vnconstaunte loue &c.”, with no reference to the male-voiced W.G. verse letter. This, in itself, does not necessarily mean that the male epistolary complaint was not present when first entered since it could well be covered in the entry, like the “Admonition”, by “&c.” The title-page, however, does identify the male epistle as a new addition that is appended rather than a direct response to the letter written by the “yonge gentelwoman” – *Newly ioyned to a loueletter sent by a bacheler, (a most faithfull loue) to an vnconstant and faithles mayden*. McGrath has similarly puzzled over the meaning of “newly joyned”, wondering if the “newness” refers to the volume as a whole, or just to the conjunction of Whitney’s poems with those of W.G.<sup>19</sup> However, she does not pursue the implications of this second scenario, that there was an earlier first edition, printed in either late 1566 or early 1567, which sold well enough for Jones to make the calculation that it was worth putting out a further edition. He therefore added a male epistolary complaint to turn this single-authored pamphlet into a new type of book, a little anthology. “Newly added” or, in this case, “Newly ioyned”, is a conventional marketing device used to signal to the buyer that a new edition differs substantially from the last because it includes new material. This bookseller-publisher’s formula is typically found on the title-page of poetry anthologies and other compilations. The 1584 edition of *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites*, also printed by Jones, at two points on its title page points to its difference from previous editions through this formula: “Newly deuised to the newest tunes” and “With new additions of certain Songs”.<sup>20</sup>

There are other bibliographic features of *The Copy of a Letter* that indicate what the structure of an earlier edition might have been. The extant copy is an octavo pamphlet printed on one sheet (signature A) and a half sheet (B1-4). The two Is.W. ballads were printed as a discrete unit, framed by the initials of their author, Is.W., on both sides of one sheet (A1r-A8v). The second ballad, the “Admonition”, does not start on a new page, but follows “The Copy of a Letter” directly, probably because the text of both poems needed to fit on one sheet so it could be printed quickly and cheaply – this iteration of *The Copy of a Letter* was therefore a “little job”, staple work of a bookseller-printer like Jones.<sup>21</sup> If this was the case, then when Jones came to reprint this pamphlet in a new edition, he must have set the Whitney ballads from this first edition, since the text fits on one sheet, and this feature is unusual in terms of the layout of the pamphlet as a whole. If the Whitney and W.G. poems were intended to be printed together from the outset, then the three texts would have been cast-off for printing at the same time, and one would expect to see a more even distribution of white space across the pamphlet as a whole than is the case – the section with the W.G. ballad is very liberal in its use of white space compared with the *mis en page* of the Whitney section, which is rather cramped. To print the W.G. ballad, Jones used a



half-sheet, casting-off the poem separately to the Whitney ballads, so that it makes up a distinct unit adjoining the Is. W. ballads. This “newly ioyned” section begins on a new divisional title page (B1r) with its own lengthy title – “A Loueletter, or an earnest perswasion of a Louer: sent of late to a yonge Mayden, to whom he was betrothed. Who afterward being ouercome with flattery, she seemd vtterly to swerue from her former promise without occasion, and so to forsake him. By W. G.” – completed by a large woodcut of an eglantine rose.<sup>22</sup> A blank page follows, and the ballad is headed by a short title – “A Loueletter, sent from a faythful Louer: to an vnconstant Mayden” – on a new page (B2r). The presence of a catchword between the Is. W. and W. G. sections (A8v) indicates that in this iteration they were intended to be bound together to make up a little book of epistolary complaints.

If this publishing scenario is correct, then *The Copy of a Letter* had at least two editions, which suggests Whitney’s poetry was more marketable and had a longer life in print, circulating more widely, than Marquis has assumed. Given that its colophon is undated, we cannot know precisely when *The Copy of a Letter* was printed or how long it was in circulation in various iterations. The publication date provided by the ESTC derives from its entry in the Stationers’ Register in 1566/67. The precise details of his print shop provided by the colophon – “dwelling in the upper end of Fleetlane: at the Signe of the spred Egle” – are the same as those provided in the colophon to a ballad he published in 1572 (STC 6235) – other colophons simply identify “upper end of Fleetlane”, without the sign. This is a period when Jones is publishing Whitney’s poetry. F. J. Fehrenbach has speculated that Jones employed Whitney to write ballads between the publication of *The Copy of a Letter* and *Gorgious Gallery* (1578), which he then printed in his anthologies, *A Handfull* and *Gorgious Gallery*.<sup>23</sup> McGrath similarly concludes that Whitney “had a more or less regular place among a group of writers tapped by Jones to supply poems for his publications”.<sup>24</sup>

The precise nature of Whitney’s career in print is crucial since it underpins her reputation as England’s first professional woman writer. McGrath has warned we need to take some care here, since “professional” does not mean in Whitney’s case – or indeed that of other writers in this period – that she could live on “earnings from her writing” or had “a continuous or fully committed writing career”.<sup>25</sup> Instead, Whitney, like male poets working in this market for cheap print, worked casually and intermittently for the book trade alongside other occupations, in Whitney’s case, probably that of a maid-servant. Provisionality is both a socioeconomic fact of her various occupations and a rhetorical device. Laurie Ellinghausen locates Whitney within an emerging class of labouring writers, who define writing in terms of work and self-consciously characterise this occupation in terms of marginality. Economics, as much as gender, determine Whitney’s construction of her own

“placelessness”.<sup>26</sup> An unsettled relationship to work defines the way her ballads narrativise her authorial identity, imagining the speaker’s working life as beset by risk. It is noticeable how shifting and complex authorial identities and occupations are when looking across *The Copy of a Letter* and *A Sweet Nosgay*: the speaker is a young gentlewoman author, a working woman writer, a maidservant both in and out of service. Such an unsettled textual identity is a creative and necessary response to the mobile economy of early modern England.<sup>27</sup>

There is a productive tension between how Whitney textualises an authorial persona in her writing and how Jones fashions her as an “Auctor” through the paratext to the book and his own publishing strategies. Jones provides Whitney with a more settled, conventional social identity that derives, in part, from his location of *The Copy of a Letter* within a particular market for small books of vernacular poetry. His publication of this volume of epistolary complaints followed hot on the heels of his publication in January 1566 of Thomas Underdowne’s *The Excellent Historye of Theseus and Ariadne. Wherein is declared her feruent loue to hym: and his Trayterous dealyng towards her: Written in English Meeter in Co[m]mendacion of all good women: and to the Infamie of suche lyght Huswyues as Phedra the sister of Ariadne was: which fled away w<sup>t</sup> Theseus her Sisters Husbande: as is declared in this History*. As the full title suggests, Jones framed Underdowne’s Ovidian romance through the *querelle des femmes* tradition. Underdowne’s preface undertakes similar work, although he concentrates less on the “Commendacion of all good women”, and criticising Theseus as a negative male exempla of “Crafte, Dissimulacion, Perfidye, Periurye, or forgetfulnes of good turnes”, than on dispraising women’s beauty and idleness and a misogynist admonition to women to guard their virtue by staying at home.<sup>28</sup> Just as Whitney’s volume of Ovidian epistolary complaints intervened in this market for *querelle* material, Jones located Whitney alongside male authors, such as Underdowne, within his repertoire of publications. By marketing her as a “yonge gentilwoman”, Jones gave Whitney comparable status to these university-educated male authors within the trade in *querelle* literature and vernacular classicised poems, more broadly.

One could argue that this is also how the maker of the Selden sammelband read *The Copy of a Letter*. This work, written “by a yonge Gentilwoman”, is gathered together with a selection of books printed from the mid-1560s to early 1570s by gentleman poets and translators.<sup>29</sup> It therefore captures a particular early Elizabethan moment in print when vernacular literary works were recasting and marketing classical and continental Renaissance works for an increasingly diverse readership. Four of the eight works are translations of classical tragedies and romances and Italian *novelle*, others are on love and friendship, often using Ovidian exempla, and, a number, like *The Copy of a Letter*, note that they are “Translated ... into Englishe verse” or “drawen

into English meeter". *The Copy of a Letter* fits neatly into this collection stylistically and in terms of the way its authors and readerships are framed. If this *sammelband* was compiled by Selden, then its contents accord with his antiquarian interest in early print culture, evident in his collection of Caxton's printed books, and the value he placed on popular print culture more broadly, notable in his collection of broadside ballads. Selden's views were not, however, those of the Bodleian; his ballads were acquired instead by Samuel Pepys, who did recognise their cultural value.<sup>30</sup> *The Copy of a Letter* similarly seems to have been regarded as a lesser work. When Hyde compiled his catalogue of Selden's library in the early 1670s, he recorded *The Copy of a Letter* in a different format to the other books in the *sammelband*. These all have alphabetical entries under either name, initials, or title. By contrast, *The Copy* is obscured under the generic description, "LETTERS. V. Cabala./ Some Love-Letters. Lond. --- 8<sup>o</sup> H. 44. Art. Seld.", and so turned into an anonymous product of the print trade.<sup>31</sup> There are no entries under the initials Is. W., G. W., or indeed R. Witc. Instead Hyde's catalogue introduces a gendered distinction, which is not present in the *sammelband*, between the credible works of a masculine vernacular classicism and the valueless ephemera of a feminised print culture.

The structure of *The Copy of a Letter* as it stands, with the W.G. epistle "newly ioyned" to Is. W.'s letters, results from Jones's literary agency as a publisher and his strategic reading of these ballads within a Heroidean *querelle* tradition, as well as his understanding of how to manufacture anthologies and other small books of poetry. The counterpointing of female and male-voiced complaints evident in *The Copy of a Letter* is a common structural feature of poetry anthologies. It draws from both Ovid's *Heroides*, which provided a model for organising a collection of verse letters, and the *querelle des femmes* tradition, in which texts praising and blaming women are often presented dialogically. The counterpointing of female and male complaints in *The Copy of a Letter* and other contemporary anthologies owes a great deal to ways of making books in this *querelle* tradition. Distinct sections of *Songes and Sonettes*, *Paradyse of Daynty Devices*, *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites*, and *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, as Lindsay Ann Reid has noted, consist of "a *querelle*-like rhetorical game of defence and offence, blame and explanation".<sup>32</sup> The reason why this *querelle* structure was a ubiquitous feature of early poetry anthologies was because it had provided English stationers with a ready-made formula for making books for a "rapidly expanding readership" since the early days of print.<sup>33</sup> These paper gender wars were therefore a recognised and recognisable structure for making printed books and provided a schema for repackaging texts. The version of the *querelle des femmes* as it appears in these early printed books, Anne Coldiron argues, is not primarily courtly or learned. Instead, as is also the case with Whitney's ballads, its

protagonists are predominantly drawn from the working or middling classes, typically located in urban settings, and the view of gender relations is prosaic, rather than courtly.<sup>34</sup>

Jones's ballad in front of *The Copy of a Letter* packages the compilation for the buyer, identifying the reading interests to which it will appeal. The way he markets *The Copy* is very similar to his ballad before *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* in that the terms of both are speculative rather than prescriptive. In the case of *A Handefull*, what is advertised to the buyer, who is asked to "Peruse it wel ere you passe by", is variety, from "fine Histories" to "sundrie sorts" of songs, and the range of consumers to which they will appeal, including women consumers, whose tastes are themselves marketed to the male buyer, since "Within this booke such may you haue,/ as Ladies may wel like" (A1v). The ballad before *The Copy* similarly opens with the cry of the bookseller to the male customer, "What lack you Maister mine?", offering both novelty and variety, perhaps "some trifle that is trew",

Or yf you minde to reade,  
some Fables that be fained:  
Buy this same Booke, and ye shall finde,  
such in the same contained. (A1v)

Both books of ballads, *A Handefull* and *A Copy*, are merchandise, one of the many commodities on sale to the discerning customer. However, while *A Handefull* specifically identifies women as part of its market, Jones's ballad before *The Copy* makes no direct appeal to a female readership and is silent on the gender of its author. Gender may be at work in the paradox that the pamphlet is "both false and also true", and in the latter case, "true as many know", potentially promising the readers of these ballads access to the "real-life experience" of their female author and so conjuring the "bodily presence" of the young gentlewoman.<sup>35</sup> Even so, the question remains as to why Jones did not take this opportunity to introduce Whitney as a woman writer by identifying "the Auctor" he invokes with the "yonge Gentilwoman" of the following letters.

Instead, the terms of sale are very general, generic even, a ballad seller's cry, and could have prefaced any number of miscellanies in this period. This is not to say that the author's gender is not signalled in the paratext; the initials I.W. and Is.W. are clearly gendered on the title-page and in the frames to the two ballads – the titles and subscriptions at the beginning and end and in the running title "Is. W. to her vnconstant Louer". The play of initials throughout the compilation – Is.W., I.W., W.G. – it should be said, is conventional for this type of book. Initials signified "gentle" status and were ubiquitous in sixteenth-century print culture. When standing in for the woman author, initials could take on gendered associations with female modesty or shame, or both, in the latter case inviting a voyeuristic reading of the erotic secrets revealed in the text that bears the initials.<sup>36</sup> Jones's paratextual frames do not attempt to

determine how the initials are to be read beyond their perhaps tantalising attachment to the “yonge Gentilwoman”, yet, even this figure is arguably unremarkable, a convention of early print culture frequently found in the headnotes of other female-voiced love complaints printed in poetry anthologies.<sup>37</sup>

If “the Auctor” Jones fashions in the paratext is a commonplace print convention, then the authorial persona fashioned in the ballads themselves is something more than this. The publisher’s paratext may interpret the text for its readers and invest the book with wider cultural significance, but it does not fully determine its range of meanings. The dialogic relationship between text and paratext is open, dynamic, uneven, and unpredictable. In the case of *The Copy of a Letter*, the authorial persona could be said to dominate this conversation and, in good part, to speak for herself. It is the distinctive authorial voice of the text, and not the publisher’s paratext, that invests Jones’s “Auctor” and “yonge gentilwoman” with an embodied and not simply generic presence. Whitney’s ballads “sound” like Whitney – her poetry has a distinctive style both in terms of the sound patterning of her phrasing and its performativity. If Is. W. is a type of “paper-author”, and so, in Barthes’s terms, less the “origin of [her] fiction”, than a “fiction contributing to [her] work”, then this figure should also be understood as embodied and sounded as well as inscribed and textualised.<sup>38</sup>

The distinctive liveliness of the protagonist’s textual presence is a rhetorical effect of the vocality of Whitney’s ballads, which are characteristically imagined as events in a sounded world.<sup>39</sup> The soundscape of both the letter “To her vnconstant Louer” and the “Admonition” is focused in the body of the speaker and her audience. “To her vnconstant Louer” opens mid-conversation, with a question that demands to be heard and insists on a response from its auditor:

As close as you your weding kept  
yet now the trueth I here:  
Which you (yer now) might me haue told  
what nede you nay to swere? [A2r]

Inscribed in the ballad is a speech act that takes place between Is. W. and “her vnconstant Louer” and so located both in the bodies of these interlocutors and in the present moment. Whitney’s responsiveness to the acoustic dimensions of the text and evocation of a “sounded reality” is conditioned by the performative qualities of the ballad as a genre and speaks to her own work within the ballad trade.<sup>40</sup> “An Admonition” opens with a conventional ballad address that draws its audience into the ambit of the poem, “Ye Virgins y<sup>t</sup> from Cupids tentes”,

To you I speake: for you be they,  
that good aduice do lacke:  
Oh, if I could good counsell geue  
my tongue would not be slacke.<sup>41</sup>

This address is phatic and performative, describing material acts of speaking and listening that situate both speaker and audience in the here and now.<sup>42</sup> The “autobiographical effect” of these ballads is thus created through a soundscape that affirms the embodied selfhood of the speaker and her audience.<sup>43</sup>

The soundscape of these ballads is secured through the manufacture and use of common literary properties: sets of tropes, characters, and commonplaces, said in common, which make up “The matter of it selfe”, in the words of Jones’s ballad, which “is true as many know” (A1v). In telling “the story of [their] first-person speaker”, this matter also narrativises “a female life” that claims common ground with its audience.<sup>44</sup> The speaker portrays her own textual agency in putting this story together through commonplacing: the authorial persona spends her time reading through a range of cultural material, digesting and extracting useful exempla, recycling this matter, and putting it to new uses when making her own texts. Commonplacing, the craft of compiling and manipulating cultural matter, provided English humanists with “an influential model for authorial practice” and poetic invention.<sup>45</sup> By the time Whitney and Jones put together these volumes, such practices had long provided ways of making books of poetry within a wider print culture. Whitney’s particular mode of crafting ballads in *The Copy of a Letter* is shared with commonplace poems, which gather proverbial lore, sayings and other pieces of excerpted text to create new poetic matter, and were ubiquitous in contemporary poetry anthologies.<sup>46</sup>

Commonplacing deeply ingrained a materialist understanding of classical literature and other literary “sources” as matter, textual fragments. The aim was to excerpt rather than assimilate the work as a whole.<sup>47</sup> Whitney’s letter “To her vnconstant Louer” and “The admonition by the Auctor” excerpt characters from Ovid’s *Heroides* and other histories, citing these figures as moral exempla that then stand as common knowledge and communicable experience about the contemporary state of gender relations. “To her vnconstant Louer” compiles a list of characters: Aeneas and Dido, Theseus and the unnamed Ariadne; Jason, Medea and the unnamed Hypsipyle. Through commonplacing, listing and accumulating exempla, the authorial persona shows herself to be a critical and discriminating reader of the Ovidian text.<sup>48</sup> Yet, what is also noticeable are the details and names that are left out. Ariadne is silently behind the reference to Theseus’s “faithfull loue” and Hypsipyle is one of the “two Ladies” beguiled by Jason, but otherwise absent (A3r), similarly the speaker offers the “vnconstant Louer” the role of Troilus, and yet she leaves Cressida out of the story (A4r). These sources are digested in parts, fragments, rather than whole. The focus instead is on the craft of the poet-compiler and her skill in manipulating and reworking these figures to fit the logic of the commonplace, the shared story the speaker tells. For example, she reverses the exemplary status of Theseus,

Jason, and Paris through the rhetorical device of *correctio*, demanding why these men “did get perpetual fame” “for their vnfaithfulnes” when she “should haue cald it shame” (A3v).<sup>49</sup> The virtuosity of this commonplacing epistoler is displayed in the skill with which she turns these exempla to unexpected uses that are both surprising and highly functional, in the sense that they can be put to use proverbially to explain everyday dilemmas and experiences. “The admonition by the Auctor” commonplaces its Ovidian sources under the heading of a piece of proverbial lore – “Try before you trust”. The process of gathering examples and excerpting sources – mermaids, crocodile tears, Ovid’s “Arte of Loue” (A5r), the tale of Scilla, and other stories from the *Heroides* – provides a mechanism for organising and building stanzas within the ballad. The “Auctor” crafts the ballad from this shared matter, creating a storehouse of common knowledge that is itself available for excerpting and reframing in other texts and other compilations.

The type of textual work and demotic mode of authorial craftsmanship evident in *The Copy of a Letter* looks forward to her own printed commonplace book, *A Sweet Nosgay*. Here, she takes on the role of poet-editor, working alongside Jones, her publisher-printer, appropriating and recrafting Hugh Plat’s commonplace book, *The Floures of Philosophie, with Pleasures of Poetrie annexed to them* (1572). Since the title-page is missing and there is only one copy, now in the British Library, it is impossible to tell whether this was the first and only edition of *A Sweet Nosgay*.<sup>50</sup> Intriguingly, given the peripatetic structure of “Will and Testament”, Jones entered a ballad, now lost, in August 1576 under the title “a walkynge Ladyes now goo we somme pleasant thinges to view and see”.<sup>51</sup> Whitney’s *Sweet Nosgay* may well have prompted Jones to publish Nicholas Breton’s *A smale handfull of fragrant flowers selected and gathered out of the louely garden of sacred scriptures, fit for any honorable or woorshipfull gentlewoman to smell vnto*, printed a few years later in 1575. The paratextual similarities between these two single-authored miscellanies suggest that Breton’s volume was marketed as a sequel to *Sweet Nosgay*: they share a florilegium motif and have a femino-centric frame, although in the case of Whitney’s collection, this focus is organised through the figure of the woman author-editor, rather than the woman reader of Breton’s *A smale handfull*. Both collections provide a storehouse of vernacular didactic literature for a diverse and growing readership and straddle the ballad trade and the expanding market for commonplace books. The alliterative material textuality of the headnote to *A smale handfull*’s opening commendatory verse, “Iohn Parcels pamphlet in the prayse of this handfull of flowres”, describes the nature of the work: parcels of text, gathered in a pamphlet, an example of the small jobs that were the staple of the print trade and fed the demand for small books of vernacular didactic poetry.

Yet, while *A Sweet Nosgay* and *A smale handfull* were aimed at the same broad readership, they are positioned differently within this market for

small books by both their publishers and authors. With *A smale handfull*, Jones and Breton targeted the woman reader: it is dedicated to Lady Sheffield and the title announces that this miscellany is “fit for any honorable or woorshipfull gentlewoman”, a directive that is elaborated in “John Parcels Pamphlet”, which addresses “fayre Ladies al” and instructs

... virgins, wyues, and widowes too,  
 If that you tender your estate,  
 Learne as he teacheth you to doo,  
 That framde this Posie for your sake.

Breton's own florilegium is a feminised flower list, in which the flowers are virtues planted by exemplary women, both biblical and classical; the woman reader is advised to imitate their cultivation of these virtues as part of her housewifery and moral and spiritual regimen. Women's domestic work, both practical, tending the garden, and religious, tending to the spiritual health of the household, is incorporated metaphorically into the humanist commonplacings tradition resulting in a particularly feminised florilegium mode. Whitney's strategy in *A Sweet Nosgay* is very different. Unlike *A smale handfull*, the compilation that Whitney and Jones put together is not exclusively addressed to a female audience, but is instead directed at readership composed of women and men. Whitney dedicates her collection to George Mainwaring, a friend from a local gentry family, and the section of “Certain familier Epistles and friendly letters by the Auctor: with Replies” extends this kinship to a wider network. These dialogic verses, depicting men and women in conversation within kinship networks, imagine a reading formation that maps onto the household, not as a specifically female space, but as a place where women and men read, write and converse familiarly.<sup>52</sup>

Whereas Jones was responsible for the front matter for *The Copy of a Letter*, it is Whitney as author-editor who provides much of the paratext, including the dedication and the verse “Auctor to Reader”, thus establishing her editorial authority over the miscellany. Although this work would have been undertaken in association with Jones, who as publisher had final authority over the volume, by fashioning herself as author-editor in the paratext, Whitney claimed responsibility for gathering and assembling the texts in the collection; a role that is made manifest through the authorial markers in the book. The signature to the Mainwaring dedication, “From Abchurch Lane, the 20. of October, 1573” (A4v-A5r), materialises the “labour” undertaken by Whitney on the compilation, which is of her “owne gathering and makeing up”, in time and space – Abchurch Lane is part of the area of London, off Canwick Street, described in the peripatetic ballad “Will and Testament” in the collection. This signature establishes a continuity between the author-editor and poetic speaker that is demonstrative of the distinctive



“autobiographical effect” of Whitney’s poetry. All the verses contributed by other writers find their point of reference in Whitney: the commendatory verse, penned by Th. Bir. (Thomas Berry) is occasioned by her poetic labours; and the section of “Certain familiar Epistles and friendly Letters by the Auctor: with Replies” is similarly brought together by her authorial presence and her editorial and epistolary work.

Whitney’s ballad, “The Auctor to the Reader”, which frames the collection, providing an interpretive guide to the compilation as a whole, charts the transformation of a working woman into a working author-editor. It is a remarkable poem for the way it narrates a working life and recasts the florilegium formula in these terms:

This Haruesttyme, I Haruestlesse,  
and servicelesse also:  
And subiect vnto sicknesse, that  
abrode I could not go.  
Had leasure good, (though learning lackt)  
some study to apply:  
To reade such Bookes, wherby I thought  
myselfe to edyfye. [A5v]

“Haruesttyme” is an appropriate trope for a writer working in a florilegium tradition – Breton will later describe himself as “a yong and vnskilful husbandman” whose “little handful of Flowers” have been “gathered in so fruitful a time” (*A smale handfull*, A1v). Yet rather than functioning solely at the metaphoric level, as is the case in Breton’s epistle, the speaker’s labour describes the personal circumstances of the authorial persona. This working woman author is a version of Walter Benjamin’s storyteller, in that her interweaving of narration and craft is situated in the world of work.<sup>53</sup> What impels the narration is the uncertainty of work – this author has leisure to read precisely because she is out of work. Whereas Whitney Trettien aligns Whitney here with the aristocratic women readers who were the dedicatees of florilegia, like Breton’s *A smale handfull*, and her composition in the specifically feminised domain of “huswifery”, arguably there is a social difference that works against such an identification since the working world is primarily defined by the economic instability and mobility that characterised the lives of servant and artisanal classes.<sup>54</sup>

Such provisionality generates a detailed and embodied narrative of textual agency in which the physical and intellectual actions of reading books prompts the author to walk abroad through the streets of London, presumably from “Abchurch Lane”, and then stop to harvest wholesome, medicinal flowers at Hugh Plat’s garden, “his Plot” (A5v-6r). Readers are counselled to go themselves “to Master *Plat* his ground”, gather their own herbs, and to make sure that they do not let in swine, dogs or thieves that might despoil the garden (A7v-A8r). The intellectual, textual, and material activities

of commonplacing are translated into remarkably mundane detail describing everyday physical actions, the labour of harvesting medicinal herbs for the household. Whereas for Breton, husbandry remained at the level of a metaphor for commonplacing, in Whitney's verse the florilegium motif is so thoroughly grounded in recognisable manual activity that it starts to become metonymic, realised in the here and now, and set towards its context in the lives of working people in sixteenth-century London. As in *A Copy of a Letter*, Whitney's narrative craft aims at the "communicability of experience", "woven into the fabric" of everyday life.<sup>55</sup> Commonplacing is represented in terms that are material, physical, and above all demotic. A florilegium tradition is thereby made accessible to the working commonality as a practical method and as a discourse for understanding their own intellectual activity when reading and crafting their own texts. Standing alongside these readers in this ballad is an author represented not simply through the more conventional artisanal craftsman, but through the figure of the working woman author who toils with her hands as well as her pen. This figure returns us to the concept of the labouring author, whose literary activity is provisional, framed in terms of a working life, possible when she is "serviceless", and so simultaneously at liberty and at risk.<sup>56</sup>

As publisher-printer, Jones was responsible for the overall structure of the book, including the choice of font. One typographical choice he made was the use of a disproportionately large font for "The Aucthor", further marked out by a vertical printer's ornament, so that it functions as a type of a header, which then frames the detailed fiction of authorship provided in the lengthy headnote to "Wyll and Testament": "The Aucthour (though loth to leaue the Citie) vpon her Friendes procurement, is constrained to departe: wherfore (she fayneth as she would die) and maketh her Wyll and Testament, as solo weth: With large Legacies of such Goods and riches which she moste abundantly hath left behind her: and therof maketh London sole executor to se her Legacies performed" (C2r). The correspondence between the work of the publisher and that of the author-editor culminates at the end of the book when Jones's printer's emblem has its textual counterpart on the page in the "standers by" who have witnessed the labours of this "Aucthor" – the tools of her trade, her "Paper, Pen and Standish" (C8v). That said, the economic and literary interests of Whitney and Jones, as well as those of other authors and publishers, were not identical. Whitney may claim ownership of her text, however, it is Jones who owns the copy and will profit economically from its sale.<sup>57</sup>

Our understanding of how stationer-publishers made authors through their books should be tempered by an awareness of how authors and their texts might resist and redirect these publishing strategies. Such an approach allows us to see those points of alignment, tension, and contestation. In the case of Whitney and Jones, it reveals both their combined skills in marketing

her books to emerging and diverse readerships and Whitney's own complex and innovative interventions in the crafting of texts and modes of print authorship. What stands out, above all, from the study of the publishing history of her pamphlets is not Whitney's marginality as a woman writer in the early modern marketplace of print, but rather how effective her publishing partnership with Jones was in creating fictions of the "Auctor" grounded in the everyday and in crafting small books of vernacular poetry that made learned reading and textual practices accessible to those new constituencies of readers emerging in the early to mid-sixteenth century with the rapid growth of the English print trade.

### Bodleian 8° H. 44. Art. Selden

1. *A Notable historye of Nastagio and Trauersari. Tr. into Engl. verse by C.T.* (London, Thomas Purfoote, 1569). 8° H 44 Art.Seld. (1)
2. *The arbor of amitie wherin is comprised pleasant poems and pretie poesies, set foorth by Thomas Howell Gentleman* (London, Henry Denham, 1568). 8° H 44 Art.Seld. (2)
3. Edmund Tilney, *A briefe and pleasant discourse of duties in Mariage*, c1. called *the Flower of Friendshippe* (London, Henry Denham, 1571). 8° H 44(3) Art.Seld.
4. *The Eyght Tragedie of Seneca. Entituled Agamemnon. Translated out of Latin in to English by Iohn Studley, student in Trinitie Colledge at Cambridge* (London, Thomas Cowell, 1566). 8° H 44(4) Art.Seld.
5. *A pleasant and delightful History, of Galesus Cymon and Iphigenia: Describing the ficklenesse of Fortune in love. Translated out of the Italian into Englishe verse, by T.C. Gent.* (London, Nicholas Wyer, n.d. [1560?]). 8° H 44(5) Art.Seld.
6. *The copy of a letter, lately written in meeter, by a yonge gentilwoman: to her vnconstant louer* (London, Richard Jones, n.d. [1567?]). 8° H 44(6) Art.Seld.
7. *R.W. Against the wilfull Inconstancie of his deare foe E.T.* (London, Richard Jones, n.d.). 8° H 44(6) Art.Seld.
8. *The Tragical and lamentable historie of two faythfull Mates: Ceyx Kynge of Thrachine, and Alcione his wife: drawen into English meeter. By W. Hubbard* (London, Richard Jones, 1569). 8° H 44(7) Art.Seld.

### Notes

1. Lynette McGrath, *Subjectivity and Women's Poetry in Early Modern England: 'Why on the ridge should she desire to go?'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 123–33. Other key studies on Whitney and the figure of the professional

- woman author include: Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540–1620* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 36–52; and Laurie Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567–1667* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
2. See, for example, Helen Smith, “Grossly Material Things”: *Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press, 2012), and Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith, eds., *Material Cultures of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
  3. McGrath provides the most detailed account, *Subjectivity*, pp. 124–34.
  4. John Jowett, “Henry Chettle: ‘Your old Compositor’”, *Text*, 15 (2003): 143. On the cultural agency of publishers, see Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Kirk Melnikoff, *Elizabethan Publishing and the Makings of Literary Culture* (University of Toronto Press, 2018).
  5. See the attribution made by R. J. Fehrenbach, “Isabella Whitney (fl. 1565–75) and the Popular Miscellanies of Richard Jones”, *Cahiers Elisabethains*, 19 (1981): 85–7 and Randall Martin, “Isabella Whitney's ‘Lamentation upon the death of William Gruffith’”, *EMLS* 31.1 (1997), 2.1–16.
  6. *A Sweet Nosgay, of Pleasant Posye* (London, c. 1573), C6v.
  7. On the publisher, see Lesser, *Renaissance Drama*, p. 47; on the publisher's paratext, see Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane Lewin (Cambridge University Press).
  8. Lesser, *Renaissance Drama*, p. 8.
  9. Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 82. Kirk Melnikoff gives detailed attention to Jones's career in two important essays: “Richard Jones (fl. 1564–1613): Elizabethan Printer, Bookseller and Publisher”, *Analytical & Enumerative Bibliography*, 12 (2001): 153–84; “Jones's Pen and Marlowe's Socks: Richard Jones, Print Culture, and the Beginnings of English Dramatic Literature”, *Studies in Philology*, 102 (2005): 184–209.
  10. Melnikoff, “Richard Jones”, 158.
  11. Lukas Erne and Tamsin Badcoe, “Shakespeare and the Popularity of Poetry Books in Print, 1583–1622”, *Review of English Studies*, 65 (2011): 45–6.
  12. In the intervening years between 1568 and early 1571, Jones concentrated on publishing, employing the printer, William How, Melnikoff table, “Richard Jones”, 177.
  13. It has been assumed that the complaint, “R. W. Against the wilfull Inconstancie of his deare Foe E. T.”, signed “R. Witc.”, was originally part of this compilation, see, for example McGrath *Subjectivity*, p. 124. However, taken together the bibliographic evidence indicates that the R.Witc. epistle (STC 25873) is a fragment from another, now lost pamphlet missing the preceding leaves which would have run from A1 to A8: it is not listed on the title-page of *The Copy of a Letter* (STC 25439); the collation of STC 25439 (including STC 25873) is [A1]-A8, [B1]-B4, B1-B4 (B4v of STC 25439 bears the colophon “Imprinted at London, by Richard Jhones” with no catchword to signal that a further text follows, and so marks the end of the volume; the signatures of STC 25873 are not continuous with STC 25439, but start at B1r after B4v); STC 25873 is printed in a smaller front to STC 25439, and ends with its own colophon, “Imprinted at London, by Richard Johnes”. Finally, the chain lines show that STC 25873 is printed on paper from different stock to that of STC 25439:

- the distance between the chain lines of STC 25439 measure 2.65/2.7 cm, whereas for the half-sheet on which STC 25873 is printed (B1-B3) the distance is 3.1 cm.
14. The binding of this sammelband dates from the nineteenth century, when it was rebound – the collection of texts in this volume can be dated to at least the late 1660s, soon after Selden's books entered the Bodleian Library, from the evidence of Thomas Hyde's catalogue, *Catalogus Impressorum Librorum Bibliothecae Bodlejanae*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1674), I, 122, 346, 397; II, 155, 206.
  15. D. F. McKenzie, "Printing and Publishing 1557–1700: Constraints on the London Book Trades", *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol IV: 1557–1695, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 556–7.
  16. Gillian Wright, *Producing Women's Poetry, 1600–1730: Text and Paratext, Manuscript and Print* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 9.
  17. For this type of repressive hypothesis, see Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), esp. 1–26.
  18. Paul Marquis, "Oppositional Ideologies of Gender in Isabella Whitney's *Copy of a Letter*", *Modern Language Review*, 90 (1995), 324.
  19. McGrath, *Subjectivity*, p. 133.
  20. For other examples of "newly added" from this period, see: James Pilkington, *Ageus and Abdias prophetes the one corrected, the other newly added, and both at large declared* (STC 19927, London, William Seres, 1562; 1st edition STC 19926, London, 1560); *Two hundred epigrammes, vpon two hundred prouerbes with a thyrd hundred newly added and made by Iohn Heywood* (STC 13296, London, Thomas Berthelet, 1555), previous edition, *An hundred epigrammes. Inuented and made by Iohn Heywood* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1550); William Bourne, *An almanacke and prognostication for three yeares that is to saye for the peace of oure Lord.rule 1571. and 1572. & 1573. now newly added vnto my late ruelles of nauigation, was printed iiii yeres past. practised at Grausend for the meridian of London by William Bourne student of the mathematicall science* (STC 417, London: Thomas Purfoote, 1567).
  21. Peter Sallibrass, "Little Jobs': Broad-sides and the Printing Revolution", in Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric Lindquist and Eleanor Shevlin (eds.), *Agents of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 315–41.
  22. This woodcut is also used by Jones for *The Wyll of the Devyll* (1566?, STC 6794), A1v.
  23. "Isabella Whitney", 85–7, on the difficulties of attribution in these cases, see Marcy North, *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 226–28. Raphael Lyne has plausibly attributed to Whitney a "Dido-Aeneas" epistle printed in a 1600 translation of *Remedia Amoris* by F.L., see "A Case for Isabella Whitney", <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/ceres/aeneas/attrib.htm>
  24. McGrath, *Subjectivity*, p. 126.
  25. McGrath, *Subjectivity*, p. 127.
  26. Ellinghausen, *Labor*, pp. 12, 19.
  27. On an "'economy' of unsettledness", see Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 3–11.

28. See Sophie Chiari's "Introduction" to her edition of the poem for the complexities of Underdowne's response to this tradition, *Renaissance tales of desire: Hermaphroditus and Salmacis, Theseus and Ariadne, Ceyx and Alcione* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), pp. 73–96.
29. See appendix.
30. G. J. Toomer, *John Selden: A Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 2009), II, pp. 796–7.
31. See Hyde's *Catalogus Impressorum*, I, 122, 346, 397; II, 155, 206.
32. Lindsay Ann Reid, *Ovidian Bibliofictions and the Tudor Book: Metamorphosing Classical Heroines in Late Medieval and Renaissance England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 98–9, 104.
33. Ann Coldiron, *English Printing, Verse Translation, and the Battle of the Sexes, 1476–1557* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
34. Coldiron, *English Printing*, pp. 10–11.
35. Ilona Bell, *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 116; Reid, *Ovidian Bibliofictions*, pp. 142–3.
36. On initials, see North, *Anonymous Renaissance*, pp. 67–75, 226–30.
37. See, for example, *Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions*: "To a gentilwoman that sayd: all men be false and think not what they say" (A3r); "A Letter written by a yonge gentilwoman and sent to her husband vnawares (by a freend of hers) into Italy" (H1v)
38. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text", *Image, Music, Text*, ed. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 161.
39. See Paul Zumthor, *Oral Poetry: And Introduction*, transl. Kathryn Murphy-Judy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 7.
40. On the acoustic of texts, see Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 21–3.
41. For similar addresses, see "You Dames (I say) that climbe the mount of *Helicon*", "A new Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie", and "You Ladies falsely deemd, of anie fault or crime", both printed in *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites*, sigs. C2r, D4v.
42. See Zumthor, *Oral Poetry*, pp. 21–2.
43. Jean Howard, "Textualizing an Urban Life: The Case of Isabella Whitney", *Early Modern Autobiography: Theories, Genres, Practices*, ed. Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis, and Philippa Kelly (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp. 217–21.
44. Howard, "Textualizing", p. 220.
45. Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England*. (Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 3–4.
46. See the discussion of aphoristic poems in Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 7–8.
47. Crane, *Framing Authority*, pp. 3–4.
48. See also Reid's description of the speaker as an Heroidean "epistoler", who "draws upon copious mythological *exempla*, revising these Ovidian intertexts, reinventing them, reinterpreting their meanings, and applying them to both her own situation and the circumstances of others", *Ovidian Bibliofictions*, p. 140.
49. On *correctio*, see Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Harlow: Longman, 2001),

50. There is no record of its entry in the Stationers' Register because the records from 1571 to 1576 are lost. However, Jones can be identified as the printer-publisher since the printer's emblem following "Will and Testament" was also used by Jones for Thomas Twyne's commonplace book, *The schoolemaster, or teacher of table philosophie* (1576, STC 24411, sig. U2v).
51. Edward Arber, ed., *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640*, 5 vols. (London, 1875-94), II, p. 302.
52. Louise Schleiner, *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 4-14.
53. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections of the Works of Nikolai Leskov", *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Bodley Head, 2015), pp. 84-6.
54. Whitney Trettien, "Isabella Whitney's Slips: Textile Labor, Gendered Authorship, and the Early Modern Miscellany", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 45 (2015), 505-16; Fumerton, 3-
55. Benjamin, "The Storyteller" p. 86.
56. See also Ellinghausen, *Labor*, pp. 19-22.
57. See Ellinghausen, *Labor*, p. 29.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## Funding

I would like to acknowledge the support of the Leverhulme Trust in funding the research for this essay.

## Notes on contributor

*Michelle O'Callaghan* is Professor of Early Modern Literature in the Department of English Literature at the University of Reading. She is the author of *The 'shepherds nation': Jacobean Spenserians and early Stuart political culture, 1612-1625* (Oxford University Press, 2000), *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), and *Thomas Middleton, Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009), and co-editor of *Verse Miscellanies Online*, a digital edition of Elizabethan poetry anthologies. Department of English Literature, University of Reading, Whiteknights Campus, Reading RG6 6AA, UK.